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Phelan, Craig Lawrence

WILLIAM GREEN AND THE LIMITS OF CHRISTIAN IDEALISM: THE AFL YEARS, 1924-1952

The Ohio State University

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WILLIAM GREEN AND THE LIMITS OF
CHRISTIAN IDEALISM: THE AFL YEARS, 1924-1952

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Craig Phelan, B.A., M.A.

* * * * * *

The Ohio State University
1984

Reading Committee:
Warren Van Tine
Bradley Chapin
Allan Millett

Approved By
Adviser
Department of History
VITA

August 13, 1958 . . . . Born - Detroit, Michigan

1978 . . . . . . . . . B.A., Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

1980 . . . . . . . . . M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1980-1984 . . . . . . Teaching Associate, Department of History, The Ohio State University

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: American History
U.S. Labor History. Professor Warren Van Tine

Colonial American History. Professor Bradley Chapin

Nineteenth Century U.S. History. Professor Merton L. Dillion

Tudor-Stuart English History. Professor Clayton Roberts
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FOREWORD

In the textile mills which dominated the economic life of southern Appalachia, the year 1929 witnessed a dress rehearsal of the militant labor uprising which would occur across the United States in the 1930s. Sixty-hour work weeks, subsistence wages, and oppressive working conditions had long been the predicament of Southern textile operatives. When mill owners further intensified the pace of work, the operatives resisted with a vengeance. Beginning in 1929, a series of spontaneous strikes wracked the mill towns of Tennessee and North and South Carolina. Battle lines hardened throughout Appalachia as contestants on both sides prepared for an aggressive struggle.¹

For the first time since William Green had assumed the American Federation of Labor presidency in 1924, the Federation had an opportunity to organize large numbers of hitherto nonunion workers. Unlike the auto workers whom the AFL was also attempting to organize in 1929, the textile operatives could not be accused of indifference to unionism. Nor were the craft unionists apathetic to their plight. Delegates to the 1929 AFL convention exhibited, in the words of one observer, "a pitch of enthusiasm not seen in
labor gatherings since the spring tide of the Knights of Labor." Indeed, they unanimously agreed to launch a massive campaign, involving all international affiliates, to organize Southern workers.

On January 6, 1930, the AFL opened its drive with a conference at Charlotte, North Carolina. Although delegates from the South urged militancy, Green, in a two-hour speech, explained that while he sincerely desired to unionize Southern workers, he would not countenance force or violence. In fact, he devoted much of his speech to contrasting the methods of the Communists (who were also organizing mill workers) with the peaceful, constructive, and Christian mission of the AFL. The AFL would achieve better results, Green suggested, if it set out not to antagonize, but to convince employers and the public of the social and economic benefits of trade unionism. "There is no sword in our scabbard," he declared. "There is no weapon in our hand. We come not with the mailed fist but with the open hand to the employers of the South appealing to them to give us the opportunity, to try us out and see whether we can help this industrial situation in the South." 

Green formulated a tripartite strategy for the drive: organizers would try to interest workers in the AFL;
an industrial engineer, Geoffrey Brown, would attempt to persuade employers of the merits of trade unionism; and Green himself would sell the idea of unionism to the Southern public. Green made two extensive speaking tours through the South in the early months of 1930. He mustered all the charm and eloquence at his command as he appealed to college gatherings, chambers of commerce, Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, three state legislatures, and four governors. Green assured the South that the AFL was not composed of godless radicals and troublemakers. Rather, members fully believed that, in resolving differences between employers and employees, "the law of righteousness, religion and morality must control if settlements arrived at are to be just and fair to all." Above all, he declared that the AFL was not a violent, destructive force. Its ultimate purpose was to create "a healthy environment, a favorable psychological condition in the homes and communities where workers dwell so that the seeds of Gospel Truth may not fall upon stony ground ..." 

Although the Southern public responded favorably to Green and his message, the AFL organizers and Geoffrey Brown met only resistance. Green had instructed organizers to counsel against spontaneous strikes in the hope that...
employers would recognize the AFL's peaceful mission. But such advice alienated the operatives who sought tangible support in their struggles. Only three employers, all of them located in Columbus, Georgia, agreed to allow the AFL to organize their workers. The combined workforce at the three firms -- a syrup factory, a food packing plant, and a hosiery mill -- was at most eighty-two workers. Not a single textile employer expressed interest in working with the Federation.

The climax of the Southern campaign occurred at Danville, Virginia, home of the Dan River and Riverside cotton mills, the largest in the South. Confronted with a ten per cent wage cut imposed in early 1930, employees asked the United Textile Workers to help them form a union. UTW Vice-President Francis Gorman took personal charge of organizing activities, while Geogffrey Brown and Green tried to sell the AFL to the mill's management. In response, Dan River began to fire all operatives suspected of union affiliation. By September, two thousand workers had been dismissed. Thus the AFL had little choice but to override Green's protests and support the workers in a strike that lasted four months. The management of the mills resorted to injunctions, evictions, and the state militia. In the end,
the strike failed, and with it died the hope of a peaceful campaign to introduce unionism to the South.

Several factors accounted for the defeat of the Southern organizing campaign: cotton manufactures proved determined and resourceful foes of unionism; Southern political leaders inevitably brought state power to the aid of corporations; AFL affiliates proved unwilling and sometimes unable to provide the necessary financial support for a large scale campaign; and the South had a large pool of unskilled workers willing to break strikes, a pool made larger by the onset of the Great Depression. Added to these factors was Green's adamant refusal to sanction militant rank-and-file action to secure union recognition and collective bargaining rights. All that Southern workers received from the Federation were warnings against ill-advised strikes. Oppressed mill workers found no relief in Green's religious commitment to industrial peace and cooperation between labor and capital.

Strange as Green's preachment of a Christian cooperative ideal may seem in the face of Southern realities, it was nonetheless explicable. Green was among the last heirs of a strain of labor thought that can be traced back into the nineteenth century. Religious idealism had
been a major component of the Knights of Labor ideology in the 1870s and 1880s, and Green's own union, the United Mine Workers, was particularly suffused with social gospel thought in its early years. Moreover, in the Progressive Era, as Green rose to power in both the AFL and the UMW, the Federation sought to establish close ties with churches through such activities as "Labor Sunday," and association with groups such as the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. A surprising number of labor officials joined Father Peter Dietz in the Militia of Christ for Social Service, and from 1912 to 1916, the AFL launched an organizing drive, the Labor Forward movement, that borrowed the methods of evangelism and the ideals of the social gospel. Thus as Green matured, he was only one of many trade union officials who embraced a religiously inspired dream of labor-management cooperation.

By the 1920s and 1930s, however, as industrial relations became increasingly complex and depersonalized and as society became more secular, the ideal of Christian cooperation waned. Yet Green was so strongly wedded to those values that he proved incapable of abandoning them even after years of failure. His became an increasingly estranged and isolated voice for Christian fellowship in
industrial relations. Under his guidance the evangelical-labor tradition, while still upholding the virtue and humanity of labor, became, as we shall see, a hindrance to working-class organization, a handmaiden to craft unionists, and a contributor to the division of the labor movement.
NOTES


2. Bernstein, The Lean Years, p. 34.

3. American Federation of Labor, Report of the Proceedings of the Forty-Ninth Annual Convention (1929), pp. 60, 265283. (Convention proceedings will be cited hereafter as AFL, Proceedings, with the year following.)


5. AFL, Proceedings, 1930, p. 86.

6. Address to Atlanta Central Labor Union, February 14, 1930, Reel 7, frame 377, William Green Collection, Ohio Historical Society (hereafter cited as WGC OHS.)


9. On the Danville strike, see, Bernstein, The Lean Years, pp. 36-40; McKelvey, pp. 108-111; Lorwin, pp. 254-256.

10. Lorwin, pp. 256-258.
CHAPTER I

CHRISTIAN IDEALS AND UNION POLITICS:

THE RISE TO THE AFL PRESIDENCY

William Green was born in a miner’s shack in Coshocton, Ohio on March 3, 1870, the first child of Hugh and Jane Oram Green. His parents were recently arrived immigrants from Great Britain — the father a coal miner from Frampton-Cottrell near Bristol and the mother from the coal mining community of Abersychan, Wales.¹ They had moved to the United States as part of the large migration of English, Welsh, and Scottish miners in the 1860s, inspired to some extent by the British miners' leader Alexander McDonald, who urged his followers to go to America where they might eventually acquire land and become farmers.² Those immigrants who settled in Coshocton were perhaps more fortunate than most, for while few were able to escape the pits and become farmers, they nonetheless built a stable community of British miner families. This helped cushion the adjustment to life in a foreign land and also saved the Greens from the fate of so many immigrant miners, who were

¹
²
forced by economic necessity to move from town to town in search of steady work.

Life in a nineteenth-century mining town -- in which the entire economy rested on the pits -- created a communal solidarity born out of a common plight. A strike or a shutdown could spell disaster, not just for the miners, but for the shopkeepers and professionals who were dependent upon the miners' business. Green recalled that especially among the miners there was always "a sort of friendly, fraternal feeling ... The very nature of the work brings the men engaged in it into a close, friendly and sympathetic relationship." Another UMW official, John Brophy, remembered that feelings of solidarity bound the whole community: "Especially when the work became slack the whole community drew together. The boss was not so different than the rest of us; slack times were almost as hard on him as on the miners. And we were all the same breed of cats; we shared the burdens of the mine."

Green was twenty-five years old before he left Coshocton for the first time to attend a UMW district convention in nearby Columbus, and by then his character was well marked by this sense of community. Coshocton remained Green's home for his entire life, and even as AFL president, he would try to return there twice each month to be with his family and friends. Throughout his life he remained an
active participant in community affairs, a member of not only the local union, but also such fraternal societies as the Elks, Odd Fellows, and Masons.\(^7\)

One of the bonds holding Coshocton together was Protestantism. Green's parents were both devout Baptists who, like so many of their immigrant neighbors, clung tenaciously to their religious faith in the new land. Twice each day, at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., the family would hold religious services in their home. Since neither his father nor mother were literate, it was up to William, the eldest of five children, to read from Scripture. In his youth, Green aspired to the Baptist ministry, but the paltry earnings of a coal miner denied him the requisite training for such a career.\(^8\) Later, as a local union official, Green would conduct Sunday school classes for the local Baptist church, and as AFL president, he pursued opportunities to address churches and religious organizations.\(^9\)

An intensely religious young man in a working-class community, Green was alive to the rising concern in later nineteenth-century Protestant churches over the suffering of workers. He became aware of Washington Gladden, a minister in Columbus, who was one of the leading proponents of the "social gospel." The principal message of Gladden and the social gospellers was that "the power of Christian love" was the only force strong enough "to smooth and sweeten all
relations of capitalists and labor." In 1892 the Baptists, led by Walter Rauschenbusch, established the Brotherhood of the Kingdom, dedicating themselves to "obedience to the ethics of Jesus." The Brotherhood was a body of progressive churchmen who sought to apply the true meaning of the Kingdom of God to industrial society and "to assist in its practical realization in the world." While there is no evidence that Green was ever a member of the Brotherhood, he sympathized with its goals and, indeed, the ideas of the social gospel had a profound influence on Green's trade union philosophy.

At the age of seventeen Green began full-time work at the mines, where he remained for nineteen years. He continued to entertain hopes of pursuing the ministry, but finally abandoned this dream in 1892 when he married Jenny Mobley, the daughter of a local miner. In time he fathered five daughters and one son. As a matter of course, Green followed his own father into the local chapter of the Progressive Miners' Union in 1888. An eighth-grade education served him well, for he was one of the few men in his local of about sixty-five miners who was able to record the minutes of a meeting, compose a formal letter, or frame a resolution for subdistrict or district conventions. In 1891, one year after the Progressive Miners' Union merged with Knights of Labor District 35 to form the United Mine
Workers, Green was elected secretary of his local.\textsuperscript{12}

Green threw himself wholeheartedly into his union work and served his local in every capacity: as secretary, business agent, vice-president, on committees, and ultimately as president. The union movement became for him the "calling" he had once sought in the ministry.\textsuperscript{13} It offered a way to serve his fellow miners while at the same time receiving recognition, gaining status, and fulfilling his need to be useful.

Green's work at the local level in the UMW, combined with his interest in the social gospel, nurtured his belief in the necessity of Christian cooperation in labor relations. The early issues of the \textit{United Mine Workers Journal} revealed that the union was steeped in Christian idealism and social gospel values. Religious treatises, sermons, and prayers could be found in most issues. Early UMW national conventions always began with a prayer, and even resolutions were sometimes drowned in religious rhetoric. As has often been noted, Christian precepts could sanction militant as well as conservative trade union practices.\textsuperscript{14} But for a man such as Green, Christianity would be more apt to justify a conservative, cooperationist approach.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, bituminous coal mining developed into a major industry, displacing wood as the principal fuel in homes and
industries. By 1898 about 245,000 miners extracted over 163 million tons of soft coal every year. The industry, however, was beset by ruinous competition and overproduction. Because a relatively small capital outlay was required to begin operations and because soft coal could be found in various parts of the country, the bituminous industry defied the rationalization common to other major industries at this time.

Overproduction and cutthroat competition created serious difficulties for labor as well as operators. Wage slashing, temporary layoffs, and unemployment were all too common. UMW officials and a few progressive employers recognized the need for rationalization -- the establishment of uniform costs of production and the limitation of output. Indeed, in its early years the UMW tried to "sell" itself to operators by pointing out that a national union, by standardizing wage rates, could stabilize the industry.

Realizing that the traditional union goals of higher wages, shorter working hours, better working conditions, and job security could be gained only if industry was stable, UMW officials led a massive and successful strike in 1897 which established the eight-hour day and a standard tonnage rate with local differentials in the key coal producing states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Equally important, the settlement of the strike
created the Central Competitive Field, composed of the above four states, in which operators agreed to recognize the UMW and set up a system of resolving labor-management disputes which lasted into the 1920s. Through collective bargaining, operators and union officials hammered out contracts which allowed operators to plan their production and marketing and provided some assurance that competitors in the Central Competitive Field would face similar labor costs.¹⁷

Leading economists such as John R. Commons and W. J. Ashley praised the new system of labor-management cooperation in the soft coal industry.¹⁸ So, too, did William Green. His espousal of the union's approach, along with his energy and administrative talent, led to steady advancement. He was elected subdistrict president in 1900 and president of the entire Ohio district in 1906.¹⁹ As a frequent participant in the joint conferences and wage scale committees, Green had first-hand knowledge that when capital and labor were both well organized, they could work together for mutual benefit. He concluded that the interests of capital and labor, far from being irreconcilable, were in fact mutually dependent. The relationship was "an interdependence so fixed and irrevocable as to make complete success attainable only through understanding and cooperation."²⁰ Cooperation would bring workers increased job security and stable wages, while employers would reduce wasteful
competition and strikes. The policies and practices of the infant UMW revealed that Green's Christian cooperationist views were not ethical abstractions divorced from economic reality.

Intense personal ambitions and commitment to labor-capital cooperation led Green to run for the UMW presidency against the incumbent Tom L. Lewis in 1909. Lewis had unwisely allowed each district to negotiate separate contracts, and Green ran on the popular campaign promise to restore the Central Competitive Field. Yet Green quickly realized the difficulty of running against an incumbent in the UMW administration: Lewis controlled the union journal; he used his corps of organizers as campaigners; and his lieutenants administered the elections. The fact that Green hailed from the same state as Lewis further weakened his chances. He was defeated soundly.

Green was not the only kicker in the union during Tom Lewis's tenure. Lewis's willingness to allow the Central Competitive Field to lapse and his dictatorial control of the union gave rise to an insurgent movement within the UMW spearheaded by John Mitchell, a former UMW president and perhaps the most popular figure among the rank-and-file. Green had the savvy to associate himself with the insurgents and in 1910, when they put forth a slate of opposition candidates, they ran John P. White of the Iowa
district for president, and Green for secretary-treasurer. As in so many UMW elections, cries of fraud and illegalities abounded. But when the smoke cleared, White emerged victorious but Green had again suffered defeat.

Having lost two elections in two years, Green's future seemed in doubt. He received several offers of employment from coal operators, but he considered a career with management "distasteful." Counting on his popularity among local miners, Green abruptly decided to seek a seat in the Ohio State Senate as a Democrat in a largely Democratic district. He captured the nomination and won the election easily. In a rare achievement for a first-year senator, Green was elected president pro tem.

The Coshocton coal digger proved himself to be an adept Progressive politician. His election as president pro tem placed him in the position of mediator between contending political forces, the most powerful of which at this time were the Ohio Manufacturers' Association and the Ohio State Federation of Labor. As he had done in the UMW, Green pursued a course of mutual accommodation, hoping to improve capital-labor relations through the rationalization of industry. During his first term, Green authored and led the successful fight for passage of the 1911 Workmen's Compensation Act, which established a state insurance fund to be paid into by all employers with five or more workers who
chose to participate. This act was rewritten with support from both employers and organized labor when the Ohio General Assembly unanimously approved the Green Compulsory Workmen's Compensation Act on February 26, 1913. By compelling employers to contribute, the new law rationalized production costs at the same time that it benefitted workers. It proved so successful that it served as model legislation for other states.²⁸

Another example of how Green pressed for labor advances by accommodating industry was his Ohio Mine Run Law, enacted in February 1914. Miners were paid according to the weight of coal dug, but until this law passed, Ohio miners were not compensated for coal falling through the mine screen, the size of which varied from mine to mine. The Mine Run Law rectified this situation, thereby increasing miners' wages and at the same time standardizing labor costs for operators.²⁹

As a preacher of harmony between capital and labor, Green denounced radical unionism as vociferously as any employer. When armed police and vigilantes in Akron crushed a rubber workers' strike led by the Industrial Workers of the World, Green headed up an investigating committee that exonerated the employers for their refusal to deal with the strikers because the Wobblies' doctrines were "immoral and destructive."³⁰ The report of the Green Investigating
Committee made no mention of police brutality, arrests of strikers, or the role of vigilantes. Green held that the I.W.W.'s espousal of sabotage justified the employers' refusal to settle with the strikers.\textsuperscript{31}

During his second term, Green authored and campaigned successfully for bills establishing a maximum nine-hour work day for women, a one per cent income tax measure, the direct election of senators, and the nonpartisan election of judges. He labored fruitlessly for a minimum wage law and a state health insurance plan.\textsuperscript{32} By promoting legislation which advanced the interests of capital and labor through mutual accommodation, Green not only implemented his Christian cooperationist ideals, but also became quite popular in state politics. Rumors circulated in Columbus that Green would become the next lieutenant governor.\textsuperscript{33} Yet just when his political career seemed most promising, Green returned to full-time work as a labor official.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \*

The chief reason Green did not pursue a career in politics was the affinity he felt for miners and the UMW. Even while a state senator, Green considered himself to be first and foremost "the servant of the miners."\textsuperscript{34} More than
politics, trade unionism offered him the opportunity to practice what he preached: voluntary Christian cooperation. Thus he was pleased when President White, who considered Green "one of the finest young men in the Organization," appointed him International Statistician in 1911. He served so dutifully at this post in between senate sessions that it was not long before he advanced in the UMW hierarchy.

According to Frank Farrington, an executive board member of the UMW, White decided in 1913 to oust Secretary-Treasurer Edwin Perry and appoint Green to that post for political reasons. White considered Perry a political liability because the latter also came from Iowa and thus weakened White's appeal in elections. White assigned Farrington and two other executive board members to dredge up any incriminating evidence with which he could force Perry to resign. Farrington discovered that Perry had accepted a small Victrola as a gift from an operator, an indiscretion Farrington used to browbeat Perry into resigning. Under such sordid circumstances, White offered Green the post of secretary-treasurer on August 1, 1913. At the time Green was perhaps unaware of the maneuver that led to his advancement, but the machinations of UMW officials revealed how difficult it was to maintain a high standard of morality in the world of trade unions.
Green was an unusually active secretary-treasurer, a champion of White's administration, and an advocate of progressive union reform based on religious ideals. He constantly reminded both operators and the rank-and-file that the Bible should serve as their guide in industrial relations. As he wrote in the 1911 Christmas issue of the miners' journal, "The teachings of the Master if obeyed and practiced would establish the Brotherhood of Man." The selfishness and greed of those employers who refused to cooperate with unions were responsible for much of the misery in the world, and it was up to union members to show recalcitrant employers the light, to make the UMW a "vital force for righteousness and social progress."  

By no means was Green the sole advocate of religiously inspired unionism in the Progressive Era. He was only one of many labor officials who shared a vision of society perfected through trade unionism and Christianity. Indeed, the AFL in these years conducted organizing drives in 150 cities which advertised labor's commitment to the social gospel and Christian cooperation. Green undoubtedly shared the desire of the editor of the Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers' journal who wrote in 1912 that he hoped some day to see the rise of a "band of preacher-labor leaders" who would not be "bound by narrow creeds, but ... will teach the intensely human Gospel which Christ Himself preached."
Along with becoming UMW secretary-treasurer, yet another unexpected honor befell Green in 1913. The death of an AFL vice-president created a vacancy on the Executive Council, and AFL President Samuel Gompers offered the post to White because the powerful miners' union was unrepresented. White scorned the position of seventh vice-president as beneath his dignity, pointing out that the last UMW official to serve on the Council, John Mitchell, had been second vice-president. Gompers, still eager to have the UMW represented, then offered the post to Green, who proudly accepted.

In light of later events, it is ironic that before 1924 Green as a Council member was a persistent critic of AFL policy. His experiences as a Progressive politician and as an official of a progressive union led him to speak out against a number of established AFL practices, practices he would later have to enforce as AFL president. First, Green was the highest ranking spokesman for industrial unionism in the AFL. In 1912 and again during World War I, he introduced resolutions to AFL conventions calling for the restructuring of the labor movement along industrial lines. He railed against the "selfishness, ill-feeling and obstinacy" of the craft organizations as they butted heads in jurisdictional disputes. When the industrial union resolution was defeated in 1912, Green wrote in the miners' journal that "great reforms come slowly. Men are slow to
change their views even in the labor movement. However, this progressive change will come -- in fact, it is inevitable, because it is fundamentally right and economically sound." Little did he imagine that in the 1930s he would be the agent of those standing in the way of industrial unionism.

Second, Green rejected the AFL's opposition to labor legislation on behalf of working people. He struggled to secure Federation endorsement for a government-sponsored health insurance plan. And at the 1915 convention, he spoke strongly in favor of an eight-hour day law for all workers. He made an eloquent, if unsuccessful, attempt to convince Gompers, the Executive Council, and delegates that politics served to advance worker interests. "Is there anyone here," he asked, "who believes that the man who enjoys the benefit of the eight-hour day through the strength of his economic organization, appreciates and enjoys it more than the man who secured the eight-hour day through legislation?"

The rise to power of William Green in the labor movement was a matter of ambition, talent, and luck. But it also attested to the pervasiveness of the vision of cooperation in labor circles. His tremendous popularity among the UMWA rank-and-file would have been impossible had not his religious idealism struck a responsive chord. The failure of the Labor Forward movement, however, revealed that
Christian cooperation resonated less among unorganized workers in mass-production industries, many of whom were immigrants less influenced by the social gospel movement. And the dramatic rise of John L. Lewis demonstrated that even in established industrial unions, such as the UMW, hard-nosed, opportunistic union leadership was becoming increasingly common.

In the fall of 1917 John P. White resigned the presidency of the UMW to accept a position on the Federal Fuel Board and, in fulfillment of the union's constitution, Vice-President Frank Hayes automatically succeeded to the top post. Hayes and White together selected John L. Lewis, at that time UMW statistician, for the vice-presidential slot. But when Hayes proved to be an alcoholic and an incapable administrator, Lewis literally took over. On January 1, 1920, Hayes' drinking problem forced him to resign the presidency and Lewis replaced him.

Working for Lewis was a novel and not entirely pleasurable experience for Green. Between 1922 and 1924, Lewis authorized the expenditure of more than $12,000 in union funds to secure information or influence. When he told Green not to record these expenditures in the union's books, Green was aghast. He protested, but ultimately bowed to his boss's will. In 1923 and again in 1924, when Green performed his duties in accordance with the constitution and
union precedent, Lewis upbraided him. "I would be very glad to have you accommodate your bookkeeping arrangements...so as to square with the President's office."  

While the working relationship between the two men was hardly ideal, there is no evidence that Green ever defied Lewis or spoke out in opposition to him. On the contrary, Green praised his boss in public, as he did in 1921 when he nominated Lewis for the AFL presidency. A successful bid by Lewis would have closed Green's only avenue for advancement, yet he supported him. In 1924, when the Executive Council chose Green to replace Gompers, Green accepted the position only after conferring with Lewis and receiving his approval. Green's actions as secretary-treasurer under Lewis showed not timidity or an unwillingness to stand up for his convictions so much as implacable loyalty to his organization, a trait he would later exhibit as AFL president.

* * * * * * *

Gompers trounced Lewis in the 1921 election for the AFL presidency. The result was hardly a surprise since Gompers dominated the affairs of the Federation. He had served as president for all but one of the thirty-eight years of the AFL's existence. Not only was he the founder,
but many considered him the Federation's life blood and guiding spirit. Thus his death in 1924 was such a profound blow that there was some concern over the AFL's ability to survive without him. John P. Frey, president of the AFL's Metal Trades Department, articulated the despair of Federation officials upon Gompers' death when he wrote a friend that "the stars by which we have guided our ship have suddenly been blotted out." Even the selection of a successor threatened to tear the AFL asunder.

Certainly Green seemed an unlikely choice for the vacant post. Other men wielded far more power in the labor movement, particularly John L. Lewis, president of the largest affiliate, and Matthew Woll of the Photo Engravers' Union, considered Gompers' favorite and known as the "crown prince." Neither candidate, however, could command a majority of votes on the Executive Council. It was Lewis, in his determination to keep Woll out of the presidency, who offered Green as the compromise candidate. Lewis used his influence to persuade Council members to vote for his lieutenant. This proved an easy task, for although Green had been a critic of AFL policy, he had always upheld majority rule, was well liked by Council members, and was not prone to aggrandize power. In the end, even Woll decided to vote for Green.53

Upon his elevation to the AFL presidency on December 19, 1924, Green appeared to be a man torn by contradictions.
He was an intensely spiritual man, and yet he was now in charge of the oftentimes crassly materialist affairs of the largest trade union federation in North America. And although he was the product of an industrial union, Green now became the executor of the will of the craft union leaders who dominated the AFL Executive Council.

The key to understanding how Green resolved these contradictions lay in his unswerving commitment to majority rule. Despite his opposition to various AFL policies, Green always respected the decisions of the Executive Council or convention majority. Indeed, Green's willingness to allow the Council majority to determine policy may have been the deciding factor in his election, for Council members were well aware of Green's conviction that "if a policy is adopted by a majority, objectionable as it may be, it is our duty as loyal union men to subordinate our individual sentiments and submit to the majority will." Thus Green's commitment to Christian cooperation, industrial unionism, and political action posed no threat to the continued rule of the powerful craft unionists. As journalist Benjamin Stolberg wrote in 1926, Green could "continue to lead the American Federation of Labor as long as the hard men on its Executive Council . . . think he is safe . . . They found him weak. They are for him."

Upon assuming office, Green immediately put to rest any possible doubts Executive Council members may have had
regarding his intentions. Council members expected a
commmitment from Green that he would not in any way attempt
to control Federation policy, and Green did not disappoint
them. He assured the AFL's high command that he would
follow Gompers' precedent and leave the formation of
strategy in the hands of the Council. In one of his first
editorials in the AFL monthly journal, the American Federa-
tionist, Green pledged "to adhere to those fundamental
principles of trade unionism which President Gompers so ably
promoted and defended and which form the great foundation of
our movement." Foremost among those "fundamental princi­
ples" was a commitment to democracy. Green argued that the
AFL was, above all, a movement for democracy in industrial
relations, and that Gompers had fought his entire life so
that some day all forms of autocracy, coercion, and
restraint would no longer play a role in human relations.

Green was attracted not only to democracy in the
work place, but also the supposedly democratic way in which
Gompers managed the AFL:

The American Federation of Labor stands as a
monument to the rightness of the principle of
voluntary action -- of action by common agreement.
The American Federation of Labor is bound
together by common agreement upon the rightness
of an ideal. There is no force that can for an
instant hold a single union in affiliation, but
there is a moral power in a common idealism and
a common purpose that holds all together in an
unbreakable unity.
In practice, the policy of voluntarism placed strict limits on the powers of the AFL president. The AFL was a loose confederation of autonomous unions, and the real power rested in the international unions. "To the International Unions," Gompers had declared, "belong all power not specifically delegated to the Federation." The presidents of the most powerful internationals composed the Executive Council, and the role of AFL president was merely that of mediator. His function was to coax, advise, and reconcile differences between the internationals, but he did not possess the authority to impose his will on them. Throughout the twenty-eight years of his presidency, Green never questioned this role. It was for him the essence of the AFL's democratic approach. He did not consider it his duty or privilege to initiate policy, only carry it out. And if in executing the will of the Executive Council or convention he inevitably placed his stamp on Federation policies, the policies always originated with the powerful union leaders. Nevertheless, Green wholeheartedly accepted most of the policies put forth by these men. The conservative strategy of the AFL in the 1920s, as we shall see, suited Green's temperament and his deepest convictions.
NOTES


3. Green to Thomas Van Lear, January 9, 1925, Reel 4, frame 447, WGC OHS.


6. Green's frequent trips to Coshocton are recorded in his "Expense Accounts," Reel 14, frames 40-240, WGC OHS.

7. "Biographical Sketch", Reel 1, introduction, WGC OHS.


12. "Biographical Sketch", Reel 1, introduction, WGC OHS.

13. Address to Duluth, Minnesota Central Labor Union, May 18, 1926, Reel 6, frames 770-771, WGC OHS.


19. "Biographical Sketch," Reel 1, introduction, WGC OHS.

20. Green's Address to the Harvard Union, March 30, 1925, Reel 14, frame 661, WGC OHS.


22. UMWJ, December 30, 1909.


24. John Mitchell to Green, March 2, 1910, JMP CUA.

25. John Mitchell to John P. White, December 23, 1910, JMP CUA; "Biographical Sketch," Reel 1, introduction, WGC OHS.

26. Green to John Mitchell, March 7, 1910, Reel 19, JMP CUA.


29. Green to W.K. Field, January 6, 1925, Reel 4, frame 361, WGC OHS; John Moore to Green, January 2, January 7, January 15, and no date, Reel 1, frames 136-7, 138, 139, and 140, WGC OHS.

33. Green to John Mitchell, March 7, 1910, Reel 19, JMP CUA.
34. Green to W.K. Field, January 6, 1925, Reel 4, frame 361, WGC OHS.
35. John P. White to John Mitchell, December 26, 1910, Reel 21, JMP CUA; "Biographical Sketch," Reel 1, introduction, WGC OHS.
36. Frank Farrington to Green, September 8, 1934, Reel 8, frames 265-271. WGC OHS.
37. "Biographical Sketch," Reel 1, introduction, WGC OHS.
38. *UMWJ*, December 21, 1911.
40. Quoted in Fones-Wolf, p. 169.
42. *UMWJ*, November 21, 1912.
43. Ibid. November 28, 1912.
46. See Fones-Wolf, pp. 175-178.

49. Ibid. pp. 100-101

50. AFL, Proceedings, 1921, pp. 451-454.

51. "Extracts from UMW Executive Board Meeting," January 1925, Reel 4, frame 655, WGC OHS.


54. Coshocton Age, January 10, 1907.


56. American Federationist, January 1925, p. 29.

57. Green to T.C. McCullough, January 7, 1925, Reel 4, frame 396, WGC OHS.

58. American Federationist, January 1925, p. 29.

The AFL presidency was a prestigious office but not a powerful one. The president was the servant and not the master of the Federation. His principal duties were presiding over Executive Council sessions and annual AFL conventions, lobbying on Capitol Hill, settling squabbles between affiliates, and publicizing the AFL's program. In his first years in office, Green devoted most of his energies to publicizing work. He directed the Federation's massive but ineffective marketing campaign in the 1920s to sell unionism to industry and the public. Audiences responded favorably to Green's moralistic addresses, but the campaign netted few tangible union gains. Green had much better success as the AFL's chief lobbyist in the 1920s, securing legislative relief from the labor injunction.

* * * * * * *

Becoming AFL president was a crowning distinction for Green, but the honor came at a time when the resources
of the Federation were in decline and the opposition to it most powerful. The membership of many of the most powerful affiliates were dwindling; the glorification of the free enterprise system that marked the 1920s did not provide a climate favorable to union growth; and labor faced the hostility of both the judiciary, through the increased use of the labor injunction, and employers. In the early part of the decade a great number of employers implemented the American Plan, a frontal assault on unions using every conceivable belligerent tactic. By the end of the decade a more subtle approach to the "labor problem," paternalistic welfare capitalism, grew in popularity, as employers consciously sought to supplant unions by directly providing employees' benefits.¹

Under Green the AFL reacted to these developments by changing strategy. The new strategy was simple -- the AFL endeavored to sell itself to industry. In the hope that employers voluntarily would allow their workers to organize and bargain collectively, the AFL leadership abandoned whatever militancy it retained and advertised all the virtues of trade unionism.² For most, if not all, Executive Council members, the shift in strategy was a calculated response to union weakness and employer hostility, a temporary maneuver they would readily abandon when times grew more auspicious for union growth. But Green viewed the new approach as a secularized expression of the timeless
ideal of Christian cooperation, a major step toward establishing an ethical basis for capital-labor relations. His role would be that of public relations director. He packaged and marketed the new AFL, and he took his product door-to-door to industrial associations, financial groups, patriotic organizations, college campuses, churches — in short, to anyone willing to listen.

The most publicized expression of the AFL's campaign for respectability and acceptance was union-management cooperation. In many ways similar to Green's religious vision of cooperation, union-management cooperation was a concrete plan to extend collective bargaining procedures. Once a union had been recognized, collective bargaining would determine wages, hours, and working conditions. Militancy would then give way to harmony, and unions would join with management to make production more efficient. Green set out on a quixotic quest to persuade employers of the benefits of such a scheme. He described his ideal of union-management cooperation in May 1927 to a labor gathering in Reading, Pennsylvania:

I would like to see a condition established where the manufacturers, exercising their right to organization would grant to the workers the exercise of the same right and then I would like to see their respective committees sit down around a conference table, at stated periods, and discuss together the common problems of industry. At these conferences, the workers . . . could point out to the management how waste could be eliminated, how duplication could be avoided, how economies could be introduced...
Green based his appeals for union-management cooperation on labor's commitment to efficiency, on labor's newly found readiness to avoid strikes and work stoppages, and, most importantly, on the employers' sense of justice and fair play. Indeed, the moral dimension of industrial relations was central to Green's approach. He remained forever the Baptist minister calling on sinners to repent. Employers who denied their workers the right to organize, let alone attempt union-management cooperation, were simply not good Christians. The root cause of all industrial controversies, the real reason behind employers' disregard of labor's rights, was the failure to follow the teachings of the Bible. Most of the suffering, bitterness, and hate in the world resulted from the un-Christian vices of selfishness and greed. "We are far from observing the Golden Rule in the relationship between employers and employees," Green told an audience at Carnegie Hall in September 1926. "The rule of brute force and selfishness prevails in the policies of many large employing groups rather than the rules of morality, religion, and Christianity." A willingness to implement union-management cooperation, Green concluded, was the first step toward rectifying this situation.4

Green and the Executive Council clearly distinguished between union-management cooperation and company unions. The AFL had always denounced the company union, but
by the time Green took over as president, it was apparent that denunciation alone would not do away with the menace. The AFL's high command could not ignore claims that employee representation plans spurred productivity. In 1925 Green proposed a "scientific" study of the operation of company unions. Although the 1926 AFL convention authorized such a study, the results of any possible investigation that might have been made were never released. Green, nonetheless, was always confident that the benefits of union-management cooperation far outweighed those of company unions.

An essential corollary to union-management cooperation in the packaging of the AFL was the new wage policy. In order to stimulate rank-and-file interest in cooperation, the AFL leadership devised a wage policy that promised high wages and periodic wage increases based on labor's constructive contributions to efficient production. Thus employers were told that cooperation from unions carried a price tag.

In his endeavor to convert industry and the public to the new wage policy, Green employed both economic and moral arguments. He often posed the question of how employers planned to market the ever increasing volume of goods produced. Unions, he asserted, could not only aid industry by eliminating waste and improving efficiency, they were also central to the process of distribution. If unions were unable to maintain high wage rates, manufacturers would have no market for their products. Green offered industry
what he thought was a fair exchange. Workers would cooperate with management to increase productivity if "employers will cooperate with labor in making it possible for labor to buy back the things it produces."\(^8\)

Progressive businessmen, engineers, economists, and others warmly applauded the AFL's new wage policy. The *New York Times*, for instance, welcomed the new policy as a "wholesome change." By relating wages to productivity, the AFL had finally recognized that "the pockets of the 'capitalist' were not inexhaustable."\(^9\) At first the AFL did not claim vital significance for the new policy, but once Green and other AFL leaders realized that the new policy was being well received by segments of the business community, the wage policy grew in importance. At the 1927 AFL convention, John P. Frey, a leader of the metal trades, praised the Federation for "being the first trade union movement to open the book of sound and true economics."\(^10\) Speaking at the same convention, Green expressed his joy that the AFL had finally presented a policy that evoked a positive response from the business community, and declared that the new wage policy signalled "the beginning of a new era -- a position far in advance of any we have ever taken before."\(^11\)

In speeches across the country, Green focused on the one truly novel aspect of the AFL's new wage policy -- that wages should increase in proportion to labor's increased productivity. By 1927 Green referred to compensation based
on this ideal as "social wages." The social wage, Green argued, was the third phase of the AFL's struggle for higher pay. Organized workers, he claimed, had already won their battles for higher "money wages" and "real wages." But higher "money wages" did not improve the workers' economic situation if price increases outstripped any advance, and higher "real wages" did not improve their situation if productivity rose faster. If "real wages" did not keep pace with productivity, it meant that the additional product was being consumed by others than workers. The social position of wage earners in comparison to other groups actually worsens, because the workers' standard of living did not increase in proportion with those of other groups. Social wages, therefore, would not only give workers bigger paychecks, but would raise their social status as well.¹²

Not only did continued prosperity demand the social wage, but justice and morality necessitated it. "It would be unjust for employers to appropriate to themselves all the benefits resulting from increased productivity through the installation of new and improved methods of production," Green lectured. "Decency and justice require that the workers share fully and equitably in all the blessings and benefits which flow from the source of enlarged and ever-increasing production."¹³
Closely related to the new wage policy was the call for a shorter work week. Although the reduction of working hours had been a goal of the AFL from its birth, only in 1926 did an AFL convention officially endorse the five-day week. The Federation did not seek to attain the five-day week through legislation; it hoped that employers would accept the plan without compulsion. As was the new wage policy, the push for the five-day week was an attempt to capitalize on the staggering increase in productivity that occurred in the 1920s.

Green endeavored to convince the public and employers that working fewer hours would benefit industry by making workers better consumers. "With leisure time people develop greater and more discriminating needs and therefore a greater desire to buy the goods that industry is producing." Thus if employers accepted union-management cooperation and social wages, they would surely recognize the need to give workers more free time to consume.

The moral dimension always took precedence over economic arguments in Green's addresses, however. The monotony and high speed of work in automated factories meant that workers required more time to recover -- physically, mentally, and spiritually. The five-day week would also provide workers the time to become active in civic affairs. It would give rise to a "better citizenship, with finer qualities and higher ideals."
Union-management cooperation, social wages, and the five-day work week were the key tenets of the AFL's marketing campaign. If accepted by employers, they would have secured the same results the AFL had always sought: union recognition and collective bargaining, better working conditions, higher wages, and fewer working hours. But instead of flexing economic muscle to bring these conditions about, the AFL and its constituent unions developed arguments to convince, rather than force, employers to accept them. For most Executive Council members, the shift in strategy was a response to union weakness and employer hostility. But for Green, the new approach represented the great strides unions had made. No longer must unions fight tooth and claw for gains; now they could use their brain power to convince employers of the reasonableness of their position. The conservatism of the AFL in the 1920s promised to raise labor-management relations to a higher, ethical plane.

From Green's perspective, the AFL in the 1920s was not simply pursuing "more, more, now." Union-management cooperation promised a new era in industrial relations. It could improve workers' social as well as economic status. Under it, management might come to respect the opinions of workers. Employers would recognize that their employees were something more than production costs, that they could contribute to the successful operation of industry. And
once relieved from the strain of excessive working hours, workers could become active community leaders advancing the common good. Green thus sought for workers a voice in decision-making on the job, a rising standard of living, and the respect and status due productive and responsible citizens.

Green perceived himself not as a mere trade unionist pursuing higher wages, but also as a missionary among the public and industry. He recognized, quite correctly, that if the AFL marketing campaign were to be successful, employers would have to experience something akin to a religious conversion. Green was calling for nothing less than a radical change in human behavior. Spiritual values must overcome material concerns, and the nature of industrial relations must be permanently altered. "Human welfare, spiritual values and social well-being," he wrote, "must be made paramount to industrial success. Industry must be made a contributing force to the advancement and promotion of all that is good and beautiful in life."

Despite his conviction that the AFL had a moral mission, Green was not a utopian visionary. He held that human nature contained so many contradictions that perfection in human or industrial relations was unattainable. Yet he did believe that America had the resources -- both natural and human -- to create a cooperative and egalitarian society. Capitalist structure would be maintained, but the rights of
each party to the production process would be guaranteed by mutual need and respect.

* * * * * * *

In furtherance of his marketing campaign, Green tried to dispel long held assumptions that organized labor was dangerous and un-American. Time after time Green would tell his audiences that he loved America and American institutions, and that the AFL had no desire to alter the nation's system of government. The AFL hoped to organize workers "in accordance with American traditions, and in thorough-going, American fashion. We have at no time employed any other than American means and American methods." The AFL and its affiliates were red, white, and blue, Green declared, and they wanted only the chance to prove it.

One prominent aspect of the AFL's campaign to appear loyal and patriotic was the ties it established with the military in the 1920s. Relations with the military were initiated under Gompers, but they expanded under Green. When Green accepted an invitation to address the Army War College in Washington, as Gompers had done from 1919 to 1924, he took the opportunity to declare that the AFL "is intensely patriotic and conscientiously devoted to American ideals, to American institutions and to the American form of
government." Green went to great lengths to make sure that his own patriotism was never brought into question. In 1925 he made a special point of urging workers to observe Flag Day. He led the Executive Council to West Point in 1929 where they received the cadets. And he also joined the U.S. Flag Association and the National Security League.

The AFL was marketed not only as a defender of American political institutions, but as a champion of American capitalism. Green saw praise of capitalism as the best defense against charges of radicalism. "With all its imperfections the so-called capitalist administration of industry is the best of any thus far devised." But AFL actions in the 1920s spoke louder than its words. In the labor banking and labor insurance movements of that decade, AFL business unionism was transformed into trade union capitalism.

The independent Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers launched the first labor bank in 1920, and by 1926 there were 35 labor banks with assets totaling more than $126 million. The reasoning behind labor banking was that the savings of workers' should be pooled in order to promote trade union activities. Green encouraged the growth of labor banks, but when the Locomotive Engineers' bank collapsed in 1927, he joined with the Executive Council in issuing a "solemn warning" to AFL unions to "halt further expansion in labor banking until the labor movement makes a
critical study of banks. The decline of the Engineers' bank was followed by the decline of other labor banks, so that by 1929 there were only 18 left.

In response to employer-sponsored insurance programs, the AFL in 1925 created the Union Labor Life Insurance Company. Green presided over the founding conference represented by 50 internationals. By 1927 over 60 internationals, hundreds of locals, and over 300 individual union members owned stock in the company. Green himself purchased ten shares for $500 in 1927.

The proper packaging of the AFL required not merely support of American political and economic institutions, but vociferous denunciation of those who dared to offer an alternative. All Executive Council members were accomplished red-baiters, and upon Green's election, some feared that he was too progressive and that his condemnation of radicals was not strenuous enough. Green, after all, was from one of the more radical unions, the UMW. He had supported the Plumb Plan at the 1920 AFL convention which would have led to partial government ownership of the railroads, and some traditional unionists were wary that his advocacy of old age pensions smelled of creeping socialism.

But Green soon dispelled all doubts as he set about sharpening his red-baiting skills. In August 1925, Green warned black trade unionists not to attend the American Negro Congress to be held by the Workers' (Communist) Party
in Chicago later that year. Green really proved his red-baiting mettle at the 1925 AFL convention, the first over which he presided. When Green recognized delegate A. A. Purcell, former president of the British Trades Union Congress and current president of the International Federation of Trade Unions, he probably expected little more than a formal but hollow greeting from the international body. But Purcell was also a member of the Anglo-Russian Committee and a recent visitor to the Soviet Union. Purcell urged the convention to send its own delegation to the Soviet Union and, among other heresies, to support U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union, and to move toward establishing closer ties between Russian unions and the AFL. If there were still Council members uncertain as to the depths of Green's anti-Communist militancy, his response must have pleased them. Green told Purcell that the AFL would never send a delegation, would continue to oppose recognition of the Soviet regime, and would never establish ties with any organization that supported Communism.

Within the United States, the actual Communist threat to "bore within" AFL unions, represented by the Trade Union Educational League, was weak throughout the 1920s. The only major TUEL success in the decade came in the fur industry. Led by Ben Gold, the Communists captured a number of New York City Fur Workers' locals. Their strength was such that they almost took control of the AFL union at the
1925 convention. Gold led a strike in 1926 in New York that was so successful that locals in Philadelphia, Boston, Newark, and Chicago came under Communist control. It looked as if Gold and the Communists would take over the Fur Workers' International at the 1927 convention.\textsuperscript{30}

Green was alarmed. Loss of the Fur Workers would prove a damaging blow to the marketing campaign. In July 1926, Green appointed a committee to investigate the 1926 New York strike. To no one's surprise, the committee's report condemned the strike and accused Communists of attacking non-Communists, misappropriating union funds, and even bribing police in New York. On January 12, 1927, Green publicly vowed to purge New York unions of all Communist influence.\textsuperscript{31} The following day the Executive Council instructed the executive board of the Fur Workers to expel Communist officers and revoke the charters of Communist locals. Yet the executive board, lacking funds and rank-and-file support, was never able to carry out the Executive Council's order. Communist domination of the Fur Workers remained firm. Green was never able to admit defeat in the fur industry. As late as February 1928, Green still claimed an AFL victory.\textsuperscript{32}

The Communists also had some temporary success boring within the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. The climax of the battle between the Communists and the conservative ILGWU executive board, led by President
Morris Sigman, occurred in the 1926 Communist-led strike in the New York City cloak industry, which began in July and lasted for twenty-eight weeks. Green did not intervene as he had done in the fur industry, because the strike was not going well and defeat would guarantee the end of Communist influence. In November 1926, the strike collapsed and Sigman again resumed control of the union. Green then appointed a five-man committee to assist Sigman and the ILGWU rid the union of Communist influence.

When the Communists shifted their strategy from one of boring from within AFL unions to boring from without by creating independent organizations in December 1928, Green was relieved. The disbanding of the TUEL and the creation of the Trade Union Unity League meant that Communists would no longer subvert established AFL affiliates. Their approach was now one of competition with AFL unions, or dual unionism, and Green felt confident that the AFL could defend itself. In a March 1929 interview, Green commented that although there was a "red element" in the U.S., "its bark was more dangerous than its bite." For the time being, Green felt the AFL was safe from Communist attack.

It was not just the Communist Party and the TUEL that Green and the AFL hoped to disassociate themselves: it was every smack of radicalism. If the AFL were to be properly packaged, it had to be divorced from every progressive labor effort within and without the AFL. For instance,
Green received an invitation to speak at the semi-annual meeting of the American Academy of Political Science set for March 9, 1925. It would have been a golden opportunity to discuss his views on union-management cooperation. But when an invitation was extended to Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, considered at this time to be an advocate of the Soviet Union, Green declined to attend. If the AFL's marketing strategy were to have any chance of success, Green reasoned, all progressive criticism of AFL policies would have to be silenced. Thus Green had little patience with a potentially hostile and independent Workers' Education Bureau, and he led the assault on Brookwood Labor College.

The Workers' Education Bureau was formed in 1921 by labor educators and trade unionists, headed by James Maurer, president of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, John Brophy, president of UMW District 2, and J.B.S. Hardman, education director of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. Their hope was to reform the leadership and policies of the AFL. They wanted to popularize the need for industrial unionism, a labor party, and greater militancy in the labor movement. From the beginning, the AFL expressed an interest in the affairs of the WEB, and by 1922 had effected a "working plan of cooperation" with it. Slowly but surely, the AFL assumed control of the bureau. In 1927 Green took
control of WEB publications, and received assurances that the WEB "would not concern itself in any way with trade union policies but would function strictly as an educational and research organization." The WEB was thus slowly transformed into a defender of the conservative policies of the Federation.

While a few labor progressives remained in the WEB throughout the decade, most of them focused their attention on the activities of Brookwood Labor College. Maurer, Brophy, A.J. Muste of the independent Amalgamated Textile Workers, and Rose Scheiderman, president of the Women's Trade Union League, were among the founders of Brookwood, which opened its doors in October 1921 at Katonah, New York. The objectives of the college were similar to those of the original WEB, except that the founding convention of Brookwood explicitly called for the emancipation of the working class and the destruction of capitalism.

The abolition of capitalism did not figure prominently in the curriculum, however, and most courses dealt directly with trade union principles. AFL unions were quick to offer their support and, within a few years, thirteen international unions provided financial support and four others had spoken highly of the school at their conventions. One member of the Brookwood board of directors wrote Green in January 1927 asking for an official AFL endorsement of the college, but Green refused on the grounds
that such an endorsement "would open the way for similar requests" and cause the AFL to become "involved in the problem of making decisions which properly belong to the Workers' Education Bureau."  

Most of the Brookwood faculty were progressive labor reformers and, since there were no faculty members sympathetic to old line craft unionism, lectures and reading material did not often reflect the official AFL point of view. William Green was one of the first to sense the danger of the Brookwood heretics. He made several inquiries about the faculty and curriculum as early as 1926. The answers he received confirmed his suspicions. In an American Federationist editorial in April 1927, Green made a veiled threat against the college when he wrote that workers' education must be "a safeguard against revolutionary doctrines." Green's suspicion became alarm at the May 1927 Executive Council meeting in Indianapolis when Martin Ryan, president of the Railway Carmen, handed him a letter from a Canadian official of Ryan's union, a certain Mr. Rattigan. According to Green, the letter "contained much inside information regarding certain activities being carried on at Brookwood," and even though Green had "rather suspected the atmosphere at Brookwood was sort of surcharged with radical tendencies," he had not realized the situation was "quite as bad as reported by Mr. Rattigan."
Green took no action against the college, however, until he received letters from students there concerning the celebration of May 1 as a labor holiday. With the letters as a pretext, Green authorized Matthew Woll, chairman of the executive committee of the WEB, to make an official investigation of the school. Woll's report was made in secret, and the full report was never made public. But the investigation convinced Green that the faculty at Brookwood was "left-wing," that three faculty members had served on the board of advisors of the New York City Communist Workers' School during the 1927-1928 school year, and that A.J. Muste supported Communism. "Radical doctrines," Green declared, permeated the curriculum. 43

In August 1928, after the Executive Council had digested Woll's report, the Council announced its intention to advise all unions to disaffiliate from the school. It did so on October 29, and the AFL convention of that year approved the action. Many unions resisted the move, arguing that Brookwood should at least have a hearing. 44 From Green's point of view, however, Brookwood had to be silenced because it represented growing internal opposition that could prove embarrassing to the AFL marketing campaign.

For Green, Woll, and the Executive Council, academic freedom was not at issue in the case of Brookwood; the right of the Executive Council and the convention to maintain exclusive control over the formation of the AFL policies was
the only concern. The Brookwood faculty who perceived workers' education as a means to achieve gradual reform of trade unionism threatened this control. Add to this the AFL's suspicion of intellectuals and Green's actions are more easily understood. As Green said later, the AFL will not give money to "any institution that ridicules our policy and undermines the work of our leaders." 45

Thus throughout the 1920's, Green made many appeals to advance labor's interests. By pointing to the AFL's patriotism, its opposition to radicalism, particularly Communism, and its commitment to free enterprise, Green consciously courted the support of the middle class. But the moral dimension of industrial relations remained the basis of his marketing campaign. Religion always informed his thought and actions. At no time was his religious idealism more apparent than when he crusaded to increase the prestige of the AFL by succoring support from religious organizations.

From the early days of the Federation, many labor officials addressed local churches during conventions, but Green went further, hoping to enlist the active support of religious bodies. Green appealed to Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups, urging them to make a study of labor problems and AFL policies. As he told a packed Carnegie Hall audience in September 1926, "it is inconceivable that the Church could remain indifferent to the spiritual and
material needs" of working people. Exactly what type of support Green expected from church groups was unclear. He did not expect them, for instance, to take a stand "upon the question of open-shop or closed-shop or upon technical trade matters." At times it seemed that Green simply wanted church bodies to recognize the legitimacy of organized labor in the same way it recognized organized capital. But at other times he called for more active involvement on the part of the churches in capital-labor relations. He often argued that "the Church prescribes a formula ... for the solution of all problems and all controversies which arise between employers and employees." Whatever support he ultimately hoped to receive from religious bodies, it was clear to him why the Church must support organized labor: "The seeds of the Gospel cannot take root in the soil of human poverty."

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Thus the AFL was a beautiful package: AFL workers were efficient, concerned about eliminating waste and increasing productivity; they respected the "rights" of employers and did not question managerial prerogative; they were patriotic Americans devoted to the free enterprise system; and they did not condone radicalism of any sort. Green had added a heavy dose of moralism to the package, and
he expended a great deal of energy selling it across the country.

And yet no employer wanted to buy the package. The whole approach failed miserably. Among employers who already recognized AFL unions, union-management cooperation was a disaster outside of a few well publicized cases. The Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company of Salem, Massachusetts introduced a cooperation plan in 1927. The United Textile Workers and several Northern mill owners established "joint councils." In 1928 the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, fourteen years after the bloody Colorado strike, entered into a cooperative arrangement with the United Mine Workers that proved successful for a time. The Printing Pressman, the Street Railway Employees, and the Hoisery Workers also worked out a few cooperative agreements with employers. But, on the whole, very few employers were interested in cooperation and many of those who did implement plans quickly abandoned them. Few industrialists had any desire to extend the boundaries of collective bargaining.50

Green's salesmanship proved even less appealing to firms that did not already possess collective bargaining agreements with AFL unions. The serious deficiencies of the AFL strategy were most visible in the two organizing drives the Federation conducted in the late 1920s. As we have seen, the militancy of Southern mill operatives had stirred the fighting spirit of AFL members, many of whom urged an
aggressive organizing campaign. Yet driven by the logic of cooperation, Green refused to support strike action. Southern workers, who expected financial aid and a commitment to militancy, quickly became disillusioned with the AFL.

In retrospect, the auto campaign (1926-1929) was from the start a lost cause. First, the question of which AFL affiliates would have jurisdiction presented a serious obstacle. Green pressed for the organization of all workers into a single industrial union, but craft union leaders on the Executive Council refused to waive their jurisdictional claims over potential union members. A compromise was reached at the January 1927 session of the Executive Council, one which later would be applied to the organizing campaigns of the 1930s. All production workers were to be temporarily organized into federal labor unions (local unions chartered directly by the Federation), and then later parcelled out among the various craft unions. Auto workers themselves vehemently opposed this policy and demanded in its place the creation of an industrial union.51

Second, auto workers in the 1920s lacked the militancy found among textile operatives in the South. The intense anti-unionism of employers, the large surplus of unskilled labor in Detroit and other centers, and dissatisfaction with federal labor unions all diluted militancy. The auto workers' relative quiescence reinforced the belief
common among craft unionists that mass-production workers were unorganizable.\textsuperscript{52}

Finally, Green's moralistic leadership killed whatever chance of success the AFL had. Applying his strategy of gentle persuasion, Green, on September 10, 1926, asked Max S. Hayes, editor of the \textit{Cleveland Citizen}, to determine Henry Ford's attitude toward union-management cooperation:

Could you learn if it would be possible for the American Federation of Labor to establish contractual relations with the Ford Motor Company along cooperative lines ... ? Could you find out if it might be possible to arrange a conference to be composed of responsible representatives of the American Federation of Labor and the Ford Motor Company where a frank, full, and free discussion might take place?\textsuperscript{53}

Several months later, Green officially launched the campaign by issuing a "challenge to Henry Ford" in the \textit{American Federationist}: "We have brains as well as brawn, give us a chance to mobilize the creative ability of workers and cooperate with management." Green hoped that Ford would become a "manager of men, cooperating with them in a quest for better methods and better results."\textsuperscript{54} Green issued a similar "challenge" to General Motors.\textsuperscript{55}

Green honestly expected Ford and GM to respond. He did not even assign organizers to auto centers until June 1927, and even then he told them to counsel against strikes.\textsuperscript{56} A little over one month later, the chief
organizer, Paul Smith, wrote Green complaining that organizers were already discouraged because no progress had been made. Green suggested that instead of concentrating on the recruitment of workers, organizers should devote their energies to persuading employers "to try collective bargaining."57

Green could not comprehend the refusal of Ford and GM to confer with him. His belief that he could, through rational argument and moral suasion, convince these militantly anti-union companies "to try collective bargaining" revealed incredible naivete. His faith in the public image campaign of the AFL clouded his understanding of reality. By the end of 1929, Green was virtually the only AFL representative trying to organize the industry, an effort fated to fail.58

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As we have seen, the efforts of the AFL under Green to sell itself to industry was a failure. The package Green had created was attractive enough, but union-management cooperation did not interest firms that already recognized AFL unions, nor was it a sound basis for an organizing drive. The decline of many unions in the 1920s and the hostility of employers made the strategy of the AFL in the 1920s understandable, if not justifiable. Lack of funds,
declining union membership, craft union domination, and Green's moral vision all shaped AFL policy. But while one may applaud the creativity Green showed in the public relations campaign, one must question why, after experiencing nothing but failure, Green clung to the strategy. Indeed, not only did Green maintain his confidence in the plausibility of union-management cooperation, he convinced himself that the new strategy was working.

As early as January 1927, Green wrote a friend that "Leaders of industry as well as representatives of labor are understanding more and more that industrial strife and industrial war mean waste and injury while constructive cooperation and constructive effort mean increased production, better wages, and better profits." At the 1927 AFL convention, Green told delegates that the outstanding achievement of labor in the past year had been the success of cooperation. By 1928 the Executive Council shared Green's delusion. In its report to the convention, the Council declared that "At no time in its history has the trade union movement had greater influence in industrial circles. The constructive policies which we advocate and follow challenge the attention and respect of employers in this country and abroad ..." One year later, Green made a similar claim, even in the face of the collapse of the auto drive.
Green also claimed that AFL's wage policy was a success. On Labor Day, 1926, Green asserted that "The declaration of the American Federation of Labor upon the theory of wages exploded the long-accepted line of reasoning regarding wages." While many interested onlookers applauded the new wage policy, public reception hardly merited such jubilation. Yet Green made similar speeches on every Labor Day until 1930. His Labor Day message of 1927 claimed a "most amazing" change in the attitudes of "employers as well as of financial and commercial interests" toward recognition of labor's contention that "high wages make for prosperity." Were one to follow only Green's speeches and press releases, one would have believed that the AFL was also making great strides toward realizing the five-day week.

Green and the Executive Council, one historian has written, were "whistling in the dark." In full retreat against the employer offensive, the Federation claimed victory even as it ran away. But in Green's case claiming victory represented more than a strategem to keep up courage. First, Green felt a great deal of pressure as Gomper's successor, and he found it difficult to face the fact that the organization he revered was declining under his leadership. Second, Green firmly believed that trade unionism had entered a "second phase," one characterized by rationality rather than force, and he could not face the prospect that
unions would once again find militancy necessary. Green was morally committed to the cooperationist strategy, and it would take more than AFL losses in the 1920s to convince him that the strategy was unworkable.

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Compared to the abominable efforts of the AFL in dealing with employers in the 1920s, the Federation's rather limited ventures in the political arena were a partial success. Some labor observers expected a shift in AFL policy under Green toward greater involvement in politics. Green, after all, had been a member of the Ohio Senate and a champion of progressive labor legislation. A professor of economics at The Ohio State University, M.B. Hammond, expressed the view of many upon Green's election when he wrote to the new president that, although Gompers had been a great man, "his opposition to the legislative route was, in my opinion, out of harmony with the tendencies of the times. Hammond believed that Green could better "appreciate that labor can gain some things by legislation which is cannot expect to secure by collective bargaining." But for those who held such expectations, Green's performance in the 1920s must have been a disappointment, for the AFL's legislative and political aspirations did not change significantly during the first years of his
presidency. The reason for this, of course, was that Green saw himself as simply the executor of the will of Executive Council. His personal views on political action were of small consequence. The role of the president, as Green saw it, was not to initiate policy, only carry it out.

The AFL did support certain types of legislation. It continued to press for the abolition of child labor, something for which it had fought since its founding in 1886. The child labor law Congress passed in 1916, which forbade the shipment in interstate commerce of goods produced by firms with employees under the age of fourteen, had been declared unconstitutional nine months after its adoption. In 1922 the Supreme Court struck down a similar law passed by Congress in 1919. Thus when the proponents of restrictions against child labor recognized that such laws had little chance of surviving, they threw themselves behind a drive for a constitutional amendment to outlaw the employment of children. The amendment passed both houses of Congress in 1924 by more than the two-thirds majority required, despite the opposition of the American Farm Bureau Federation, many industrialists, prominent members of religious organizations, and leading educators who saw the amendment as an attempt to subvert states' rights and assert federal control over minors.69

Against these formidable opponents, Green led the AFL in an energetic campaign to secure ratification of the
amendment by the states. Green quickly revealed a strong personal interest in the issue of child labor, and he called on labor organizations to prepare for a difficult fight. "The campaign against the amendment is perhaps as thoroughly organized as any in the interests of special privilege has ever been." Labor and other friends of the amendment, he wrote, "must bestir themselves and devote their full energy to the task of educating the public and the newspapers." Education would be effective, he believed, because many farmers and other opponents had been duped "by the greedy employers." Manufacturers' associations, chambers of commerce, and textile employers were guilty of "vicious propaganda" which could be counteracted only by education.  

As with most issues on which he held strong opinions, Green employed two arguments against child labor: the economic and the moral. The economic argument against child labor was as old as the Federation itself. As Green put it, "Each child who works is taking the place of an adult worker who supports a dependent family." Although unemployment did not become a major concern of the AFL until 1929, the Federation refused to sit back and allow children to displace organized adult workers. Particularly in the textile industry, child labor was an obstacle to union growth.

But for Green, the moral argument was even more compelling:
It is a natural right for all children to be free from bodily toil and the crushing discipline of time ... It is inhuman to take a child from its mother's care, love and protection and place it by a hazardous piece of machinery to perform manual labor. It is criminal to maim and cripple these little ones. It is a sin against Heaven to earn a profit from the fatigue of an undeveloped, undernourished girl or boy.

Here was the cry of a deeply religious father of six against one of the most overtly exploitative aspects of industrial capitalism. Green did not want to abolish capitalism by any means, but he did hope to effect a radical change of heart among employers so that capitalism would become less profit oriented and more humane.

Unfortunately, Green's endeavor to abolish child labor in the 1920s proved unsuccessful. The opposition was too powerful and organized. Manufacturing interests, educators and others who opposed the transfer of authority from the states to the federal government, and religious groups who opposed any governmental control over the child-parent relationship, combined to defeat the drive for ratification. By 1929 only five states had ratified the amendment; by 1932, thirty-five states had rejected it. Thus the AFL proved politically too weak to induce government to protect children in the labor market.

What success Green had in the legislative field came in the AFL's most ambitious crusade of the decade -- the drive to secure relief from the labor injunction. As applied to labor disputes, court injunctions threatened to
restrict severely the use of the strike and the boycott. In its most virulent form, the injunction was combined with the yellow-dog contract to effectively prevent unions from organizing. And while the injunction had always been a thorn in labor's side, the problem was acute in Green's first years as president because employers resorted to injunctions more often in the 1920s than any previous decade.  

As always, Green was careful not to make the anti-injunction movement appear too radical. "Every good citizen must have a reverential regard for our form of Government, our institutions and particularly for the courts of our land," Green lectured. "In denouncing injunctions, as used in labor controversies, we are not striking at the courts as institutions. We are pointing out their defects and we are protesting against favoritism and injustice." But because Green was well aware of the ill-effects of the labor injunction, he, along with other members of the Executive Council, was adamant that some protection be found. And as usual, Green's arguments were those of a moral crusader. "We propose to fight against judicial error and judicial wrong until we succeed in maintaining our equality before the law and in establishing the sanctity and sacredness of human rights as paramount when they clash with the right to own property and to use and enjoy it."  

On December 12, 1927, Senator Henrik Shipstead of Minnesota placed a bill in the Senate's coffers. Shipstead
was not terribly interested in his own bill, and had introduced it as a favor to his old chum, Andrew Furuseth, president of the Seamen's Union. Furuseth had actually written the bill himself. The bill read: "Equity courts shall have jurisdiction to protect private property when there is no remedy at law; for the purpose of determining such jurisdiction, nothing shall be held to be property unless it is tangible and transferable, and all laws and parts of laws inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed."

Furuseth's line of reasoning was similar to the logic behind the labor section of the Clayton Act of 1914 — that labor was not a commodity and was not subject to the jurisdiction of the equity courts. 77

A subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Republican George Norris of Nebraska, heard testimony on the bill in February and March 1928. Since no one besides Fruseth and his legal counsel appeared to defend the bill, it never made it out of the subcommittee. A February 7 conference of 125 AFL and railroad brotherhood officials revealed that even a majority of labor leaders opposed the Shipstead bill. Some believed the bill would prove as ineffectual as the Clayton Act, while others considered the language too vague to merit labor support. Thus when Green appeared before the Congressional subcommittee, he vociferously denounced yellow-dog contracts and injunctions, but he could not endorse Furuseth's bill. 78
After the subcommittee hearings, Senator Norris, with the aid of expert advisers, drew up and introduced a substitute for the Shipstead bill. Some of the most prestigious legal minds in the country either actively aided Norris in the preparation of the substitute or supported it before the subcommittee: Felix Frankfurter, Roscoe Pound, Francis Sayre, and Donald Richberg. The Senate subcommittee reported favorably on the substitute bill, but the Judiciary Committee failed to act on the bill before the Senate adjourned for the 1928 presidential election. 79

Green immediately expressed interest in the Norris substitute, but the 1928 AFL convention proved unwilling to abandon the Shipstead bill. Green was now in a quandary. Personally in favor of the substitute, he could not support it without convention approval. The Executive Council decided the matter for him by setting up a committee, headed by Matthew Woll, to consider both bills. In June 1929, Woll's committee recommended acceptance of the Norris substitute. The AFL convention that fall witnessed a heated debate between Woll and Furuseth, who still clung to the Shipstead bill. But, as Green told Furuseth during the convention, "enough time has been wasted" on that piece of legislation and the report of the Woll committee was carried with Furuseth alone dissenting. 80

Securing AFL support for the Norris bill had caused problems enough, and making it law promised to prove much
more difficult. The new President, Herbert Hoover, however, unwittingly aided labor's cause by nominating Judge John J. Parker for the Supreme Court on March 21, 1930. Parker, a circuit court judge from North Carolina, had earlier alienated labor and progressives across the country in his notorious Red Jacket decision of 1927, which effectively barred the UMW from organizing West Virginia coal miners.\(^{81}\) Upon Green's urging, the AFL launched an aggressive campaign against Parker's confirmation. International unions and individual unionists flooded senators with telegrams and letters. Green appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee on April 5, 1930 and argued that Parker had "a judicial and mental bias in favor of powerful corporations and against the interests of the people."\(^{82}\)

Partly due to the AFL's campaign, Parker's appointment encountered massive opposition. On April 11, Green wrote Hoover suggesting that he withdraw Parker's name. Hoover was outraged. He replied that Green was mistaken about Parker's sympathies and was "doing great injustice" by campaigning against him. Hoover even defended Parker's decision in the Red Jacket case! Green remained unconvinced, and on April 16 wrote Hoover that Parker would "carry the point of view he expressed in the Red Jacket Consolidated Coal and Coke case to the Supreme Court if his appointment would finally be confirmed."\(^{83}\)
When the Senate rejected Parker by a vote of 41 to 39 on May 7, 1930, Green claimed it as "a victory for justice, righteousness and human rights." "It will confirm the faith of the plain people in American institutions." More specifically, the debate on Parker focused national attention on injunctions and yellow-dog contracts, creating widespread opposition to them. Just two weeks before the Senate's rejection of Parker, the Judiciary subcommittee reported favorably on the Norris bill. But the full Judiciary Committee voted 10 to 7 against it on June 9. The bill remained pigeonholed for a year and a half.

Green made the fight against injunctions the paramount issue for labor in the congressional elections of 1930. The AFL's nonpartisan political committee, Green said, "would concentrate its fire against the men who voted for the ratification of Judge Parker for the Supreme Court" and support those who favored the Norris bill. The 1930 elections did bring changes in the Senate Judiciary Committee and produced a more favorable climate for labor in Congress as a whole. On March 11, 1932, the Senate passed the Norris bill by an overwhelming majority. Representative Fiorello LaGuardia of New York introduced the bill into the House, which passed it on March 8. Hoover's signature made the Norris-LaGuardia bill law on March 23. The act was one of the most progressive pieces of labor legislation passed up to that time. It severely limited the use of
injunctions in labor disputes and signalled the eventual extinction of the yellow-dog contract.

But there was little hoopla in the office of the AFL president upon passage of the act. The American Federationist ran only one short story summarizing its content. Green issued no statements about a new era being established in industrial relations. The act was labor's greatest legislative achievement in the 1920s, but Green was not jubilant. By this time the depression was in full swing, and signs of labor unrest could already be seen.
NOTES


2. On the shift in AFL policy in the 1920s, see Jean Trepp McKelvey, AFL Attitudes Toward Production, 1900-1932 (Ithaca, 1952), pp. 79-98.

3. Address at Reading, Pennsylvania, May 14, 1927, Reel 16, frame 872, WGC OHS.

4. Labor Sunday Address, New York City, September 5, 1926, Reel 16, frame 808, WGC OHS.


6. See, for example, Green's editorial in the American Federationist, October 1925, pp. 873-874.

7. On the AFL's new wage theory, see McKelvey, pp. 80, 91-97, 117.

8. Address at State Normal School, Duluth, Minnesota, May 18, 1926, Reel 16, frames 773-774, WGC OHS.


11. Ibid., p. 217.


17. Address to Rotary International Convention, October 17, 1928, Reel 15, frames 178-179, WGC OHS.

18. Green, "American Trade Unionism," Radio Speech, delivered at Kansas City, Missouri, May 2, 1925, Reel 14, frame 701, WGC OHS.


21. New York Times, May 25, 1929, p. 10:8; Green to General R.L. Bullard (president of the National Security League), November 12, 1928, Reel 12, frame 662, WGC OHS; Green to James L. Moss (president of the U.S. Flag Association), April 15, 1929, Reel 13, frame 136, WGC OHS.

22. Green, "American Trade Unionism," Radio Speech, delivered at Kansas City, Missouri, May 2, 1925, Reel 14, frame 702, WGC OHS.

23. Bernstein, The Lean Years, p. 103.


29. AFL, Proceedings, 1925, pp. 139-143, 152-153.
30. Bernstein, The Lean Years, pp. 139-141.


32. Bernstein, The Lean Years, p. 139; Green to Frank X. Sullivan, June 15, 1927, Reel 6, frame 511, WGC OHS; New York Times, March 12, 1927, p. 17:4; Green to International Unions, February 14, 1928, Reel 6, frame 662, WGC OHS.

33. Bernstein, The Lean Years, pp. 140-141.

34. "Interview," March 3, 1929, Reel 16, frame 639, WGC OHS.


36. Morris, pp. 87-88.

37. Ibid., pp. 89-90.

38. Ibid., pp. 90-93.

39. Ibid., pp. 94-95.

40. Green to Robert Fechner, January 11, 1927, Reel 6, frame 877, WGC OHS.

41. American Federationist, April 1927, p. 402.

42. Green to Martin F. Ryan, June 3, 1927, Reel 6, frame 501, WGC OHS.

43. Morris, pp. 113-116; American Federationist, April 1927, p. 402.

44. AFL Proceedings, 1928, pp. 315-323.


46. Labor Sunday Address, New York City, September 5, 1926, Reel 16, frame 808, WGC OHS.

47. Address at Vassar College, March 18, 1929, Reel 15, frame 196, WGC OHS.

48. Ibid., frame 198.


51. Lorwin, pp. 243-244.

52. Morris, p. 57.

53. Green to Max S. Hayes, September 10, 1926, Reel 6, frame 994, WGC OHS.


59. Green to Joseph Shepler, January 7, 1927, Reel 6, frame 506, WGC OHS.


61. Ibid., 1928, pp. 50-51.


63. Labor Day Address, Philadelphia, September 6, 1926, Reel 14, frame 1008, WGC OHS.


67. Address to the Harvard Union, March 30, 1925, Reel 14, frames 659-664, WGC OHS.

68. M.B. Hammond to Green, December 26, 1924, Reel 3, frame 590, WGC OHS.


71. Address to the Ohio State Federation of Labor, Steubenville, Ohio, August 10, 1925, Reel 16, frame 776, WGC OHS.

72. Ibid., frame 778.


74. Ibid., pp. 195-206.

75. Address to Fellowship Council Meeting, New York City, April 12, 1926, Reel 14, frame 736, WGC OHS.

76. Ibid., frame 737.


83. Quoted in Taft, The A. F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger, p. 22.


88. American Federationist, April 1932, pp. 426-428.
CHAPTER III

WEATHERING THE DEPRESSION: 1929-1935

As long as wage rates for organized workers continued to rise, as long as a handful of experiments in union-management cooperation still existed, and as long as a few employers favored the shorter work week, Green could maintain that the AFL's cooperationist strategy was a success. He could deceive himself and try to convince others that a majority of employers were steadily moving toward the Christian cooperative ideal, that they were beginning to act in accordance with human values rather than naked self interest, and that they were coming to recognize their long-range interest in bolstering mass purchasing power.

The Great Depression shattered this illusion. Green was slow to realize it, but the depression proved clearly that AFL policies had failed and that employers did not regard their interests as being identical to labor's. Extensive wage cuts and layoffs revealed that self interest, not morality, determined corporate policy. As the economic crisis deepened, Green continued to preach the gospel of
cooperation. When at last his patience was exhausted, Green composed sermons predicting imminent class warfare and social revolution. He even made veiled threats about a general strike and a labor party. But militancy violated every precept Green held dear. Green's dilemma was resolved by the AFL rank-and-file, who forced him and the Executive Council to turn to the federal government for assistance. Once forced to appeal to the state, Green proved to be an effective lobbyist. Yet he always maintained the hope that capital and labor could find a cooperative solution to economic adversity.

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Just weeks prior to the collapse of the stock market, Green's Labor Day address bubbled over with enthusiasm as he cheerfully reported that the number of strikes was declining every year, that the organization of the unorganized was proceeding smoothly, and that "collective bargaining is coming to be accepted more and more as a preventive of labor disputes." "To give labor's victories in detail would fill pages," he continued. "It is sufficient to say that labor is progressing at a greater speed than for any year in the past, that it knows what it wants and is aware of the way to secure it, and that it will grow in numbers and in strength every year in the future."1 The
crash of the stock market did not shake his confidence. He closed his eyes to the growing seriousness of the situation just as he had closed his eyes to the failure of AFL policies in the 1920s.

On November 21, 1929, President Hoover called to the White House leaders of labor and industry for a conference with the pretentious title of "Conference of Continued Economic Progress." In the morning the President met with such giants in industry as Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., Pierre du Pont, Henry Ford, and Owen D. Young. At a separate meeting in the afternoon, Hoover conferred with Green, William Hutcheson of the Carpenters, John L. Lewis, John P. Frey, Matthew Woll, and other labor officials. Although Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon and other conservatives had called for deflationary tactics, Hoover sought to convince both groups of the need to maintain high wages to bolster consumer purchasing power. Although the President did not receive the labor-industry agreement he hoped for, Hoover was satisfied that the employers at the conference, "on their individual behalf," would oppose wage reductions. Ford even announced a wage increase for workers at his plants immediately following the conference. Green and the other labor officials, of course, needed no encouragement to accept the President's advice. In return for the employers' pledge not to reduce wages, Green and the others agreed that
"no movement beyond those already in negotiation should be initiated for the increase of wages."²

Green left the conference fully persuaded that the President's conference had prevented the crash from leading to depression. He released a statement to the press claiming that the ill-effect of the stock market collapse "has been successfully overcome." Industry's intention to maintain wages, he argued, would "serve as a guarantee against widespread unemployment."³ Green's outlook for the year 1930 was as cheerful as ever.

Green's trust in the morality and vision of employers was, as usual, misplaced. Even though many businessmen shared Hoover's commitment to the high wage doctrine, economic reality would force them to act otherwise. As demand dropped production also fell and decreased the amount of work available. Many of the smaller firms initiated wage cuts and layoffs as early as 1930. Progressive businessmen resisted the traditional response to hard times and undertook work sharing schemes to maintain employment. But as demand continued to plummet, even the large firms could not hold the line. U.S. Steel's announcement of a ten per cent wage cut effective October 1, 1931, began a wave of retrenchment throughout industry generally. In July 1931, there were an estimated 8 million people out of work. By March 1933, 15 million were unemployed, one-third of the labor force.⁴
Growing joblessness exacted a heavy toll on trade union membership. The number of organized workers declined from 3,442,600 in 1929 to 2,973,000 in 1933. Had the Mine Workers, the United Textile Workers, and the ILGWU not already lost so many members during the 1920s, the decline would have been much greater. The construction trades were the hardest hit, losing 336,300 members in four years. The transportation and communication unions also suffered severely. In this climate, individual unions struggled only to maintain their membership; organization of the unorganized was out of the question. And along with the decline in membership came the attendant problems of depleted treasuries and loss of political influence.

If AFL failures in the 1920s could persuade neither Green nor the Executive Council to abandon their fruitless marketing strategy, the devastation of the depression forced them to. A few years of depression made a mockery of Green's approach. The few existing experiments in union-management cooperation were abandoned. The labor banks collapsed. And the AFL's wage policy became meaningless in the face of declining productivity. In short, there was little left to sell. At a time when employers turned to massive layoffs and wage cuts to salvage their concerns, Green's call for cooperation to increase productivity and the payment of high wages seemed ludicrous. Nevertheless,
it was only with the imminent collapse of the AFL itself and the pressure exerted by the rank-and-file that Green and the Council abandoned their sales campaign.

Green's reaction to the first years of depression roughly paralleled the reaction of President Hoover. Being a staunch Democrat, Green did not vote for Hoover in 1928, but the economic outlooks of both men were surprisingly similar. As Secretary of Commerce, Hoover had urged businessmen to cooperate voluntarily in an effort to reduce waste and restrain competition. Hoover preached high wages and the need for massive consumer purchasing power. The role of government in Hoover's scheme was to provide information, the facilities to mediate differences between employers, and to demonstrate the advantages of cooperative capitalism. Unlike most of his Republican contemporaries, Hoover did not condemn trade unionism. He applauded the AFL's wage policy and the Federation's emphasis on cooperation and efficiency. Hoover's policies won him the support and the friendship of the two prominent Republican trade union leaders, William Hutcheson and John L. Lewis.

Both Green and Hoover responded to the economic crisis as educators. In their addresses, both men hoped to convince businessmen that their long term interests would be best served by avoiding wage cuts and layoffs. Green's role as educator was made necessary by union weakness, but it
also grew out of his conviction that cooperation between labor and capital was still viable. Businessmen must be convinced, not coerced, to see the light of economic truth. Green shunned harsh criticism of employers in the early months of depression. He talked humbly with them. "No person abusively denounced and criticized," Green wrote, "is in a good frame of mind to sit down and work out an agreement." 8

The analysis of the depression presented by Green and Hoover was essentially correct. Wealth in American society was distributed inequitably because wages had not kept pace with productivity. As the gap widened, the home market for manufactured goods shrank. And because there were more goods being produced than the public could consume, prices began to fall. Many progressive businessmen understood this but could do nothing about it. Without a market for their goods, industrialists were forced to cut back production. When wage cuts and layoffs resulted, both Green and Hoover were at a loss as to what to do. Hoover proved himself to be doctrinaire, rigid and uncompromising in his attitudes toward federal intervention in the economy; Green was finally able to adapt.

Because Green believed that capital-labor cooperation was a moral imperative, he found it difficult to forsake the AFL's conservative strategy. And as the
depression became acute, he devised a number of arguments to cajole employers into maintaining high wages and full employment. First, he continued to lecture businessmen on the need for consumer purchasing power. Second, he told employers that they were morally responsible for their workers' welfare. Third, he warned employers that their policy of retrenchment might lead to social revolution. And fourth, he threatened the use of labor action to resist layoffs and wage cuts.

Green reasoned that since every firm depended on the investment of both capital and labor, employers had an equal responsibility to both groups of investors, stockholders and workers. "Who would say," Green asked in the American Federationist, "that responsibility to those who invest their lives is a less serious obligation than responsibility to those who invest their wealth?" Employers had no more right to pay substandard wages or dismiss workers than they had to appropriate the capital investment of stockholders. Firms that paid dividends while laying off workers and reducing wages violated Christian precepts. After U.S. Steel imposed their first major wage reduction in 1931, Green charged that it was "nothing less than rake-offs engineered for the benefit of stockholders." When the Ford Motor Company announced in July 1930 that it would close for two weeks, Green asked, "Why has Ford or any other employer the right to shift responsibility for incomes of
his employees to local charity organizations or merchants?" By March 1931 Green was asking "What moral right has an industry to lay off workers as it would dispense with power?"

Unless businessmen repented and accepted their social obligations, Green warned, America faced the possibility of social revolution. Green hoped to change employer practices by warning that large-scale unemployment bred revolutionary sentiment. As early as July 1930, he told delegates at the Sheet Metal Workers' convention that "there is nothing so disastrous to the social order as unemployment, which provides a fertile field for discontent and even revolution." Green's warnings became increasingly shrill as unemployment mounted. On July 14, 1931, at the International Longshoremen's Association convention, Green wailed that unemployment in America had "brought on a serious condition of social unrest and industrial discontent." That same month he told employers to "Face Fundamentals." He asked if they had the "courage" to raise wages and refuse layoffs, "or will we drift until revolution forces action?"

When particularly upset, Green threatened militant labor action. Toward the end of Hoover's administration, Green began to counsel workers to employ every weapon at their disposal to resist layoffs. In an early 1932 interview with Nation's Business, organ of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Green said that labor would no longer wait for
voluntary action by industry to redeem humanity "from the lawlessness of human greed," and was prepared to use force if necessary to "compel the plain remedies withheld by those whose malfeasance caused our woe." The 1932 AFL convention witnessed perhaps the greatest fighting speech of Green's career. An exasperated Green declared that labor's patience with industrial management was at an end and that labor would not hesitate to use "forceful methods" to bring about full employment.17

The New York Times condemned Green's speech the following day, and bemoaned the fact that Green had forgotten his usual "spirit of moderation" and "proper sense of responsibility." In response Green proclaimed that he was a peaceful man, and yet employers steadfastly refused to listen to his proposals. "Nothing was done," he said, and "now we are meeting in the congress of labor to seek a solution of our problem. What do they expect us to do? To sit still? The fighting spirit of the labor movement is aroused. We are going to fight ... with our entire economic strength."19

Green never felt comfortable wearing the mantle of a class warrior, however. Militancy violated everything he stood for: Christian brotherhood, social harmony, a concert of interests. The plight of working people in the early 1930s often infuriated Green and led him to make militant
speeches, yet he never abandoned the principles of Christian cooperation. Indeed, it was ironic that Green's burst of militant rhetoric came just when he received the Theodore Roosevelt Distinguished Service Medal for his efforts in establishing "industrial peace." When James Garfield, president of the Roosevelt Memorial Association, presented Green with the medal, he praised him for facing "the citadels of industry" armed only with the desire for peace. And Green's acceptance speech revealed far more about his attitudes toward labor militancy than anything else he muttered in the desperate year of 1932. "The cause of industrial peace," he began, "must ever appeal to the judgment and sentiment of all who believe in human well-being and social justice. Strife, class hatred and industrial war are wasteful and destructive. They represent the basic elements of force and are the antithesis of reason, judgement and cooperation." That a person committed to such views would call for militant strike action shows just how desperate things were for the AFL in 1932. And it was the problem of unemployment, above all, that would force Green and the Executive Council to abandon the traditional policy of voluntarism and turn to the state for assistance.

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Green believed that the primary responsibility for both the cause and cure of unemployment rested with industry. By stabilizing production, employers could do away with seasonal unemployment. And Green humbly asked employers to respect labor's rights by not introducing new technology that would displace large numbers of workers. "Labor believes there is enough intelligence in industry so that technical change need not be marred by a human scrapheap." The entire unemployment problem, Green told employers, would be solved if industry learned to cooperate with labor. Both labor and capital could work together by introducing the one component of the AFL's marketing strategy to survive the depression: the five day week. The shorter work week would become, for Green at least, the cure-all for unemployment in the early years of the depression. "The kernel of the unemployment problem, the chief question which manufacturers and labor have to face is this: should we dismiss an ever-increasing number of workers, or should we shorten the hours of work?" In the 1920s Green asked employers to introduce voluntarily the shorter work week; by 1932 rank-and-file pressure forced him to turn to the government to achieve this end.

Green asked very little of the federal government in the fight against unemployment in the years prior to 1932. To combat technological displacement, he meekly asked that the federal government set up an agency that would serve as
"a clearing house of information for displaced workers." This was suggested not as a cure, but as an aid to help workers locate the dwindling number of jobs in their respective fields. He also called on the government to gather accurate statistics on unemployment in the 1930 census. Finally, he asked Congress to initiate "a constructive and scientific program for timing public works," arguing that specific public works projects should be available during periods of massive unemployment. His plea for a system of public works in times of depression was no more than a restatement of the recommendations of President Harding's unemployment commission of 1921, of which Hoover was the guiding spirit.

Even before the depression, Green chose his words carefully when discussing unemployment compensation. Having no desire to advocate any program not endorsed by the Executive Council, Green argued that while some form of unemployment compensation was necessary, it was a concern of unions and employers, not government. He doubted the efficacy and justice of the compensation plans of the Photo Engravers, Printing Pressmen, Brewers, and others in which the union alone footed the bill. Instead he praised the ILGWU's unemployment compensation plan in which both union workers and employers contributed to a benefit fund.

Thus Green's attitudes toward the problems of unemployment and relief were decidedly conservative. He did
not envision an active role for the state other than information gathering, unemployment exchanges, and public works on a small scale. Along with Hoover, he shared the conviction that labor and capital could resolve their differences through joint and voluntary action. With the onset of depression, however, employers proved they were not interested in cooperation, and Green and the Executive Council moved haltingly in the direction of political action.

The slowness with which Green and the Council turned to the federal government was primarily a result of the AFL's long-standing aversion to state intervention in labor affairs, but it was also due to the AFL's political weakness in these years and the unfriendliness of government toward organized labor. As long as Washington turned a deaf ear to the AFL's limited political objectives, Green could not envision an expanded role for the state.

Hoover's selection of William Doak as Secretary of Labor in 1930 reinforced the AFL's voluntarism. In November 1930, James J. Davis resigned as Labor Secretary to assume his seat in the U.S. Senate. The AFL regarded the Department of Labor as its sole voice in the federal government. Davis, who occupied the post of Secretary under all three presidents in the 1920s, belonged to the Iron, Steel and Tin Workers. His predecessor, William B. Wilson, who served under Woodrow Wilson, was a member of the United Mine
Workers. Samuel Gompers had been instrumental in the creation of the Department of Labor in 1913. Thus Green had every reason to expect that Davis's successor would be an AFL member. He confidently asserted that "The A. F. of L. is ... the American labor movement ... The officers and members of this organization believe that the Secretary of Labor, sitting in the President's cabinet, should be a man that understands the American labor movement, its problems and the thought and mind of labor."  

At an Executive Council meeting in January 1930, Green promised Frank Duffy, secretary of the Carpenters, that if Davis won the primaries he would endorse the Carpenters' president, William Hutcheson, for Secretary of Labor and talk to President Hoover personally in his behalf. In June Green informed Duffy that he "was not favorably impressed with the reaction of the President ... to the suggestion that President Hutcheson be appointed or that someone associated with the American Federation of Labor should be selected to serve as Secretary of Labor."  

Nevertheless, Green visited Hoover at the White House soon after Davis announced his resignation and submitted the names of five AFL leaders who would be acceptable to labor: Hutcheson, John L. Lewis, Matthew Woll, John P. Frey, and John Alpine, president of the Plumbers.  

Again Green was rebuffed. When Hoover declared that he was considering William Doak for the post, Green wrote
the President an angry letter, declaring that he would oppose Doak's appointment because Doak was a member of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, which was not affiliated with the AFL. On November 28 Hoover named Doak Secretary of Labor. "I have the highest respect for Mr. Green and the American Federation of Labor," Hoover explained, "but Mr. Green's enunciation that appointments must come from one organization in fact imposes upon me the duty to maintain the principle of open and equal opportunity and freedom in appointments to public office." Hoover may not have been an enemy of the AFL, but he was not a close friend.

The AFL's lack of influence on Capitol Hill was painfully apparent when the Federation tried to secure passage of Senator Wagner's unemployment bills. In April 1928, Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York introduced three bills to relieve unemployment that were remarkably similar to Green's proposals. One called for improved methods of acquiring statistics on unemployment, another for a comprehensive system of unemployment exchanges, and a third for advanced planning of public works. All three bills received official AFL support. Because 1928 was a presidential election year, the bills received little attention. They languished in a committee pigeonhole until the beginnings of depression compelled the Senate to pass them in April 1930. From the Republican dominated House, however, the only bill to emerge was the one dealing with statistics, which Hoover
signed on July 7, 1930. Green was outraged. The federal government, he said, "has neglected its part" by adjourning without passing the Wagner bills.

According to Wagner, Hoover's attitude toward his bills ranged "from indifference to active opposition." Hoover espoused the same general concepts embodied in the bills, but he did not believe that additional legislation was necessary. Legislation would only focus attention on the depression. As the crisis became acute and Hoover refused to act, Wagner reintroduced his public works measure on January 19, 1931, and it quickly passed both houses. Hoover reluctantly signed it on February 9, 1931.

The third measure, dealing with unemployment exchanges, encountered more serious opposition from the House, the Administration, and particularly Secretary of Labor Doak. The Federation put forth a massive lobbying effort in support of the unemployment exchange bill. Local unions and state federations flooded Congress with telegrams. Green addressed a long letter to Congress detailing the reasons why the Wagner bill should be passed, and he made sure that every representative received a letter with his signature on the morning of the final vote in the House. The effort proved successful, and the House passed the bill by a large majority. "Labor concentrated all its efforts in support of the Wagner bill," Green said with satisfaction, "and after three years of constant effort finally prevailed
Green's elation was short lived, however, because Hoover vetoed the bill in March 1931. Hoover claimed that he was preventing a "serious blow to labor," but Green condemned the veto message as "unconvincing and unacceptable." As most labor officials, Green opposed a state directed system of unemployment insurance. His reasoning, at least on the surface, reflected a narrow trade union outlook on social legislation. At the 1931 AFL convention, he cautioned that a government administered program was an unsafe policy that would "pull at our vitals and destroy our trade union structure." Later, before the ILGWU's 1932 convention, he explained that upon "the question of unemployment insurance, the A. F. of L. is not so much opposed to the principle as it is jealous of its own protection and its own life. We don't want to exchange our birthright for a mess of pottage." What worried Green and other AFL leaders was that unemployed union members might have to
accept jobs alongside nonunion workers or lose their unemployment benefits. Unemployment insurance also threatened to shift worker allegiance from the union to the government. For most AFL leaders these arguments can be viewed as an attempt to safeguard their craft fiefdoms, but Green had no such fiefdom to protect. He spoke with conviction. For Green, the AFL represented the only hope for workers to achieve high wages and middle-class respectability. Any legislation that posed a threat to the AFL therefore, no matter what benefits were promised, had to be defeated.

Green also argued against federal unemployment insurance on the grounds that employers alone, not all taxpayers, bore responsibility for the suffering of those out of work. Unemployment, he argued, "results from the failure of industries openly to assume their responsibility toward workers who participate in creating the good name and reputation of those industries." The fact that some industries spent part of their earnings on charities was "an indirect recognition" of their obligation to the unemployed. "Because industries have not openly and honestly accepted their responsibility for regular payment of incomes to all working together in production they have been able to shift many of their problems upon public and private relief agencies." Federal unemployment insurance would be simply another way of abdicating responsibility.
Green was also concerned that unemployment insurance threatened the morale of American workers. Work alone made them proud, and "the dole" would sap their pride. Furthermore, by making workers wards of the state, insurance threatened their independence. In making this argument Green sounded more like an official of the National Association of Manufacturers than a labor leader. He told a Rutgers University audience in June 1931 that "In consideration of any plan of compulsory unemployment relief the American organized worker regards the preservation of his individual liberty and freedom as of primary importance."

Despite Green's opposition, the movement for unemployment relief within the ranks of labor grew by leaps and bounds between 1930 and 1932. At the 1931 AFL convention, the state federations of California, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin urged the AFL to support a federal program of relief. The Railway Clerks, the Machinists, the Teamsters, the Iron Molders, and the Textile Workers were some of the unions that also pushed for an AFL endorsement. Equally important, Daniel Tobin of the Teamsters and W.D. Mahon of the Street Railway Employees, two powerful figures in the Federation, broke with the voluntarists on this issue. Those favoring some form of compulsory insurance garnered over 11,000 of the 30,000 convention votes in 1931, and New York Times labor correspondent Louis Stark predicted that the anti-voluntarists
would capture the 1932 convention if economic conditions did not improve. Opponents of compulsory insurance still dominated the Executive Council, however, and Green expressed their outlook at the convention. "Our duty," he declared, "is plain, and that is, first of all, to protect the movement that we love and represent." Yet even Green braced himself for the inevitable. If the next convention passed a resolution in favor of compulsory insurance, he would abide by its will. He told the convention that "we are rapidly travelling" toward an endorsement, but "the time has not arrived."

Just nine months after the 1931 convention, the Executive Council directed Green to draw up a plan for government sponsored unemployment insurance. This sharp reversal in AFL policy startled many but was easily understood. AFL leaders had not abandoned their commitment to voluntarism; they had succumbed to rank-and-file pressure. Sentiment was already strong in 1931 and the disastrous winter of 1931-1932 created a mandate for action. The Mine Workers endorsed a compulsory measure in January and the New York State Federation came around in February. The pressure from below could no longer be resisted. Ironically, employers also exerted pressure on the Executive Council. Gerald Swope of General Electric, a company dependent upon mass consumption, met with Green and Woll in the spring of
1932, urging them to change their attitudes toward insurance. 44

The 1932 AFL convention accepted the Council's recommendation following a short debate. After the vote, Green declared that the AFL would never be quite the same again. "We have been irresistibly forced to take new positions, to pursue a flexible policy and adjust ourselves to the changed order." 45 Voluntarism was not dead, but rank-and-file pressure had led to a significant change in policy, as John P. Frey wrote to a friend less than two months after the 1932 convention. As Frey saw it, "a number of the members of the Executive Council were in rather strong opposition (to unemployment insurance) but did not care to state their position because of the popular movement which has developed in favor of this utterly impossible and visionary program." 46

If the debate on unemployment relief forced Green to reassess his commitment to voluntarism, his determination to implement the shorter work week substantially transformed his attitudes toward government involvement in the economy. As early as 1930 Green suggested that the only viable means of dealing with unemployment was the universal introduction of the five day week and the six hour day to spread work among more people. "We have arrived at the period of the history of our nation and our industrial progress," Green told delegates to the 1930 AFL convention, "when the
institution of the five day week in all industries outside of the service industries should be immediately inaugurated.\textsuperscript{47}

By the time of the 1932 convention, Green's cure-all for unemployment, the thirty hour week, had met with nothing but rejection from industry. A Bureau of Labor Statistics' survey made earlier that year showed that only 5.4 per cent of the nation's employers had adopted a five day week for even a part of their workforce.\textsuperscript{48} It was thus in a mood of desperation that Green picked up the gavel. The convention witnessed a showdown on voluntarism between the Executive Council and the delegates, whose ties were closer to the grass roots. The Council's report urged a six hour day and a five day week but did not call for legislation. Green submitted this report to the Committee on the Shorter Work Day, which refocused the proposal to conclude that since competition made it virtually impossible for individual firms to adopt the thirty hour week, "we instruct our Executive Council to take all necessary steps toward having proper legislation ... presented to the incoming session of Congress for their consideration and adoption."\textsuperscript{49}

Green now faced a momentous decision. He could side either with the Council's initial proposal or the Committee's final report. A ringing endorsement of either option from Green, in all likelihood, would have carried the convention. At the moment of truth, however, he waffled.
Green lacked the will to oppose either the Council or the Committee, which represented the majority sentiment among delegates. Instead, Green abdicated responsibility by hiding behind a flourish of rhetoric and a discussion of technicalities. Shorter hour legislation was the obvious remedy for government employees and "those governed by interstate commerce legislation," Green began. For other workers in the private sector, the situation was "more complex." Green referred to "what seemed to be insurmountable difficulties." Perhaps these "difficulties" had to do with the constitutionality of any proposed legislation, but Green did not elaborate.

Green's mutterings failed to dissuade delegates, who voted in favor of the Committee's report. Nevertheless, there was some confusion as to the type of resolution adopted. On the day following the vote, a delegate from Illinois declared, "I don't believe this Convention has reached a unanimous feeling about the question of legislation. I am quite sure a very large number of delegates are not conscious of the fact that we did adopt a resolution in favor of legislation to regulate hours of labor." Voluntarism was dying "not with a bang but a whimper." Popular sentiment had overcome the Executive Council's inability to adapt to changing economic and political conditions. And delegates had endorsed legislation for shorter hours not because of Green, but in spite of him.
Less than a month after the 1932 convention, on December 21, 1932, Senator Hugo Black of Alabama introduced legislation into the lame duck 72nd Congress that would have outlawed the transportation of goods produced by firms "in which any person was employed or permitted to work more than five days in any week or more than six hours in any day."

Shortly afterward, Representative William Connery introduced similar legislation in the House. The AFL immediately threw its weight behind the legislation. Even the hardline voluntarists on the Executive Council spoke in favor of the measures. The committee hearings in both houses divided along labor-industry lines, with employers opposing the bill on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. The proponents of business self-regulation, however, had lost the initiative. Industry's inability to cope with the depression had given the upper hand to those who proposed shorter hour laws as a means of dealing with underconsumption.

Before the House Labor Committee, Green gave the bill his "personal and official approval," but he balked at the suggestion that a minimum wage provision be included. The convention had instructed him to forgo the voluntarist approach to hours, but he had no authority and no desire to abandon the AFL's traditional opposition to wage legislation, except for women and minors. When a committee
member explained that a minimum wage might prevent the shortening of the work week from leading to a reduction of income, Green told him to "Pass your bill and let us handle the question of wages." 52 Green still adhered to the view that workers could win higher wages through collective bargaining than through minimum wage guidelines.

The lame duck session of Congress failed to vote on the Black-Connery bill, but the special session of the new 73rd Congress moved quickly once convened by President Roosevelt. The new Congress and the new President had a mandate for action, and the only positive legislation under consideration was the shorter week bill. When industry could not present a viable alternative, the Senate passed the bill on April 6, 1933. Hoover had declined to take a stand on the bill, but Roosevelt had to. If the measure passed the House without his support, he would find himself in the unpleasant situation of enforcing a recovery program which he had played no role in formulating. Roosevelt and many of his advisers thought the bill unconstitutional and economically unsound. Secretary of Labor Perkins, however, believed the bill would stimulate recovery if amended to provide greater flexibility. With some reluctance, Roosevelt agreed to back her efforts to alter the bill in the House. 53

The scene was set for a battle between Green and Perkins at the House Labor Committee hearings, which resumed
in April 1933. Perkins agreed with the principle behind the bill, but she considered the thirty hour maximum too rigid, and proposed a flexible scale of between thirty and forty hours with a maximum eight hour day. She also recommended a minimum wage provision. In the unionized sector of industry, tripartite boards with labor representation should fix minimum wages. Green made the first of many concessions to the Roosevelt Administration when he told the Committee that the AFL would accept Perkins' suggestions on the sliding scale for hours. But he admantly refused to budge on the question of minimum wages for male workers. Minimum wages, he explained, would "tend to injure the efforts of the bulk of labor to raise their living standards, to bring about increases in wages." Green expressed interest in the tripartite boards, but insisted they were unworkable unless workers were members of independent trade unions. He therefore suggested an amendment: "Workers ... shall not be denied by their employer the free exercise of the right to belong to a bona fide labor organization and to collectively bargain for their wages through their own chosen representa-tives." This proposed amendment was one of the earliest expressions of a legislative guarantee of the right to organize, a guarantee that would later be embodied in Section 7a of the National Industrial Recovery Act and ultimately in the Wagner Act.
Green won this battle against the Administration but lost the war. Despite the opposition of industry, the House Labor Committee on May 10 voted favorably on the Black-Connery bill and acceded to Green's wishes on almost every particular. The bill even included a provision granting workers the right to organize and bargain collectively. President Roosevelt killed the bill's chances, however, by failing to support it. He was troubled by widespread employer hostility to the measure, for he wanted the cooperation of both labor and industry in any recovery program. When Roosevelt began to push for an Administration substitute, the Black-Connery bill was buried in the House Rules Committee. Shorter hour legislation was never seriously considered after the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, although Green continued to argue its necessity throughout the 1930s.

Roosevelt's failure to support Green's cure-all for economic ills perturbed the AFL chief, but Green had a warm regard for the new President and supported him in the 1932 campaign. Green would have backed almost any Democrat in a presidential contest, but he was particularly impressed with Roosevelt. In August 1930, Green had written Governor Roosevelt of New York, expressing his delight with
Roosevelt's outstanding record of progressive legislation. Even though Green personally rejected Roosevelt's support of unemployment insurance, he had endorsed Roosevelt's campaign for the governorship in the fall of 1930.

Despite the fact that Green personally favored Roosevelt in the 1932 election, the Executive Council, to no one's surprise, maintained its official nonpartisan political policy in the campaign. Many historians have cited this as a sign of dogged adherence to outmoded policies that left the AFL immobilized and unable to jump on the Democratic bandwagon, let alone the Socialist. While there is a great deal of truth in this criticism, there were valid reasons why the AFL did not endorse Roosevelt. First, powerful members of the Executive Council were Republicans and second, the Democratic platform was not enticing enough to warrant a change in policy.

William Hutcheson of the Carpenters, Matthew Woll of the Photo Engravers, and John L. Lewis of the Mine Workers were all ardent Republicans who supported Hoover in 1932. Hutcheson, in fact, served as chairman of the labor committee of the Republican National Convention. These men could not be ignored in AFL circles, and they would have resisted strenuously any attempt to endorse the Democratic candidate. When Daniel Tobin, Teamster president and chairman of the labor division of the Democratic National Convention, wrote Green in October 1932 complaining about
Hoover's horrendous labor record and asking Green to "go a little deeper" before proclaiming AFL neutrality, Hutcheson responded in a letter to Green condemning what he regarded as Tobin's "attempt to use the federation for the dissemination of ... grossly untruthful statements." 61

If the hostility between Hutcheson and Tobin demonstrated the organizational necessity of maintaining a nonpartisan stance, the AFL's dissatisfaction with the Democratic platform's labor planks reinforced the traditional policy of neutrality in presidential elections. Indeed, the Executive Council denounced both the Democratic and Republican platforms. The Democratic convention had refused to declare in favor of either collective bargaining guarantees or the shorter work week. As did Hoover, the Democratic party recognized the political weakness of organized labor and ignored its major demands. On September 8, 1932, while addressing the closing session of the New Jersey State Federation of Labor, Green warned that "when the men and women represented in the federation believe that the interests of the workers can be best served through the organization of an independent political organization, they will adopt such action." 62 That Green, a life-long Democrat, should threaten the formation of a third party was an indication of his disgust with the Democratic platform in 1932.
The AFL and its affiliate unions made very few contributions to Roosevelt's campaign in 1932. Green maintained an official silence throughout the campaign. Thus in his speeches, Roosevelt gave little attention to labor issues and focused instead on currying the favor of farmers and progressive Republicans. And upon his election, Roosevelt did not feel indebted to the labor movement.63 His first action concerning labor would come as a shock to Green, who believed a friend had been elected to the White House.

Soon after the election, construction of the new Department of Labor building began, and Green followed Hoover as speeches were made at the cornerstone setting ceremony. The new building, Green said, would be a symbol of "the importance, genius, dignity and service of organized labor" and a recognition of the vital position of labor in the economic life of the nation.64 At this time Green no doubt believed that, with Hoover's defeat, the AFL stood a good chance of having one of its officials appointed Secretary of Labor.

Green's hopes were well founded. Of the five candidates under consideration, three were AFL men: Daniel Tobin of the Teamsters, A.F. Whitney of the Railroad Trainmen, and George Berry of the Printing Pressmen. On December 19, 1932, Green led a small party of AFL leaders to Albany where they met with Roosevelt and urged him to
appoint Tobin. Green handed the President-elect a petition signed by international officers, representing 98 per cent of the total AFL membership, backing Tobin's bid.\(^65\)

Hoover's selection of Doak had antagonized the Federation, Green told Roosevelt. The AFL hoped to cooperate with the new Administration, and the selection of Tobin would help establish good relations. After the meeting, Green informed Tobin that the meeting had been encouraging. Roosevelt "responded that he had cooperated with the American Federation of Labor for twenty years ...," Green wrote, "and that he was determined to work with and to have the cooperation of the American Federation of Labor for the next four years." Green added that Roosevelt's comments "could be construed as favorable to your appointment."\(^66\)

Thus Green was aghast when Roosevelt, in late February 1933, appointed Frances Perkins, former Industrial Commissioner of New York, to the post. Green immediately responded that labor would "never become reconciled" to her appointment and suggested that labor had been given another slap in the face.\(^67\) He later wrote Tobin a letter of condolence and expressed his rage over the selection of "some college professor who learned about labor from textbooks."\(^68\) A Democrat had at last been elected to the White House, but Roosevelt seemed no friendlier to the AFL than Hoover had been.
Green's hopes were never lower than in March 1933. The new President had rebuffed him. The Federation he revered was crumbling under the weight of depression. Membership continued to decline, union treasuries emptied, and the partial abandonment of voluntarism had yet to yield any tangible returns. Furthermore, Green had realized that Christian cooperation bore scarce resemblance to the reality of capital-labor relations.

Within two months, however, Green was more excited about AFL prospects than ever before. The difference was the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). To Green NIRA was a godsend. By guaranteeing labor's right to organize and by compelling labor and capital to agree on industrial codes, NIRA promised to establish by governmental decree the only basis for true prosperity -- cooperation. For Green and for many others, NIRA rekindled hopes that the relations between employers and workers could be established on a basis of morality and mutual respect.

Roosevelt offered NIRA to Congress on May 17, 1933 as a substitute for the Black-Connery bill. Title I of the proposed legislation would suspend anti-trust laws for two years, allowing employers to draw up industry-wide codes, with the aid of government and labor, to regulate production, wages, and hours. The codes would be submitted to a
proposed National Recovery Administration (NRA), which would have the power to amend, approve or disapprove a code. NRA would also be empowered to license companies, a power designed to force recalcitrant employers to comply with the codes by forbidding them access to interstate commerce. The only required code provision was Section 7a, guaranteeing workers the right to organize and bargain collectively.69

Labor's influence in the drafting of Section 7a has long been a matter of contention. At one time or another, credit has been given to Matthew Woll, John L. Lewis, William Hutcheson, and William Green. In early 1933, Lewis and Phillip Murray of the UMW appealed to the Senate Committees of Finance and the Judiciary to enforce workers' right to organize.70 In April Green wrote an article in support of such legal recognition and in early May, as we have seen, he secured the adoption of an amendment to the thirty hour week bill providing for the enforcement of the right to organize.71 Available evidence does not support the conclusion, however, that Green or any other labor leader played a major role in the actual drafting process. Nevertheless, the AFL's lobbying effort in behalf of the Black-Connery bill showed that the Federation's political power was increasing and could no longer be easily ignored, and the Executive Council had made abundantly clear in a public statement that the AFL would not endorse NIRA without a guarantee of collective bargaining.72
Green did secure amendments to Section 7a once hearings on the bill began. The only AFL representative to appear before the House Ways and Means Committee, Green proposed that after the guarantee of the right to organize, Section 7a should include a provision stating that workers "shall be free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers of labor or their agents, in the designation of such representatives or in self-organization or in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection." Green also pressed for a clause stating that "no employee and no one seeking employment shall be required as a condition of employment to join a company union, or to refrain from joining a labor organization of his own choosing." Green thus hoped not only to clarify the right to organize, but also to strike a blow at the company union and give legal recognition to the closed shop. If the amendments were accepted, Green concluded, "Labor will extend to this proposed legislation its full, complete, and hearty endorsement." Green had little to say about that part of the bill pertaining to the inclusion of minimum wage provisions in the codes, a direct assault upon voluntarism, except to comment that "based upon the stabilized substantial foundation created in industry, standards with respect to hours, wages and conditions of employment can be established and
this in turn will bring a revival of business."\(^75\) Green's approval of the minimum wage provision was the result of a private agreement between the AFL and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber pledged to accept Section 7a if the Federation accepted the minimum wage provision.\(^76\) But the AFL's abandonment of voluntarism on the question of wages was more apparent than real. Green and other AFL leaders gave way on minimum wages only because they were confident that unions would play an important role in the determination of codes.

On May 26, 1933 the House of Representatives passed NIRA, including Green's amendments, by a vote of 325 to 76.\(^77\) The bill faced greater opposition in the Senate, however. The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), which had not been a party to the AFL-Chamber of Commerce agreement, led the employer offensive against Section 7a before the Senate Finance Committee between May 22 and June 1. NAM spokesman James A. Emery charged that Section 7a violated the principle of individual liberty by coercing workers to join unions. Green retorted that while NAM was "willing that its members shall exercise the right to organize ... under the protection of government," it was not willing to accord labor the same right.\(^78\) The vote on Section 7a in the full Senate pitted the friends of organized labor against its enemies and on this occasion, labor emerged victorious by a vote of 46 to 31. The
President signed NIRA on June 16, 1933.  

Green was exhilarated. He heralded the passage of Section 7a as "revolutionary." Not only would the protection of collective bargaining serve to increase wages and working hours, thus lifting the nation out of depression, but it would also establish, under government auspices, a working relationship and mutual understanding between capital and labor. Employers who had refused to act in a Christian manner toward their employees would now be under federal pressure to do so. "The act rests upon the principle," Green wrote in the American Federationist, "that Labor is a partner in industry and has a right to participate in the decisions and duties of industry and that the spirit and practice of cooperation are essential to the best interests of all."  

The President appointed General Hugh S. Johnson, a former member of the World War I War Industries Board, as NRA Administrator. Johnson would receive the aid of three advisory boards, representing labor, industry, and consumers. Secretary Perkins appointed the members of the Labor Advisory Board: Green, John L. Lewis, John P. Frey, Rose Schneiderman of the Women's Trade Union League, Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Father Francis Haas of the Catholic Welfare Council, and Leo Wolman, an economist from Columbia University. Since the NRA had to approve all codes, labor representation on the advisory
board seemed to insure fair codes. Green's high expectations were expressed in an editorial in which characterized the code-making process as a "covenant" between employers and workers. He believed that the codes would institute the thirty hour week and increase wages, thereby solving the problem of unemployment and increasing consumer purchasing power. His high hopes, however, led only to disillusionment.

* * * * * * *

Labor faced problems from the outset in realizing its goals under NIRA. First, the deputy administrators, who had the greatest influence in the formation of the codes, were drawn from the ranks of business and sympathized with industry's outlook. Second, the Labor Advisory Board was just that -- an advisory board. It could condemn codes but not prevent their acceptance. Third, the codes could not be enforced. The only weapon at the disposal of the NRA was the licensing provision, and Johnson, unsure of the act's constitutionality, refused to invoke the penalty. Since Johnson voluntarily abdicated the only power at his command, he was forced to rely on public pressure and moral suasion. Codes drawn up by industries and reviewed by deputy administrators sympathetic business interests were incapable of reflecting labor's demands. In the unionized sector of
industry, most unions were too weak to oppose the will of industry in the formation of codes. According to one historian, unions "had no leverage with which to exert influence upon Roosevelt and an industry-oriented NRA deputy administrator and staff.\textsuperscript{85}

Every one of the codes fell short of Green's expectations. The first code, drafted by the cotton-textile industry, in which unions were virtually absent, increased wages and shortened hours of labor, but not enough to please Green. The industry recommended a minimum wage of $11 per week in the South and $12 per week in the North and proposed a maximum work week of forty hours. Green called for a thirty hour work week and declared that the lowest possible minimum wage should be $16 in the North and $14 in the South. Despite Green's protests that it would not lead to significant reemployment, the forty hour work week was maintained. And only at Green's insistence did employers agree to abolish child labor in the industry and raise the minimum wage to $13 in the North and $12 in the South. The minimum wage remained so low that employers could easily afford to do away with child labor. Green voiced these same objections to every code reviewed. Minimum wages were set too low to bolster mass purchasing power and maximum hours were set too high to combat unemployment. In almost every instance, his protests were ignored.\textsuperscript{86}
The degree to which industry dominated the code-making process was best illustrated in the automobile industry. The National Automobile Chamber of Commerce (NACC), the automobile manufacturers' association, held little interest in the price fixing and production limiting opportunities offered by NIRA. Unlike many industries, the problems of the auto industry in 1933 were not those of overproduction and price cutting, and manufacturers had already standardized trade practices to the degree they believed necessary. Furthermore, auto makers had already implemented a share-the-work plan and paid relatively high wages, so they could argue that an auto code was not necessary to aid in the recovery of their industry. Most galling would be the acceptance of Section 7a, which posed a direct threat to their traditional open shop policy.

The NACC submitted a code that specified an average thirty-five hour work week, although individual employees might work forty-five hours, depending on the location of the plant. Concerning Section 7a, the proposed code perverted the original intent of the law by stating that "the employers in the automobile industry propose to continue the open shop policy heretofore followed and under which unusually satisfactory and harmonious relations with employees have been maintained. The selection, retention and advancement of employees will be on the basis of
individual merit without regard to their affiliation or non-affiliation with any labor or other organization."\textsuperscript{88} NRA Administrator Johnson met with auto industry representatives and assured them that he was "sympathetic with the industry's point of view."\textsuperscript{89}

Green, as Labor Advisory Board representative, opposed almost every aspect of the auto code at the pre-hearing discussions. He argued correctly that the minimum wage level was actually lower than that already being paid and that the maximum hour provision did not improve on the share-the-work formula. He also attacked the open shop clause as a violation of the "spirit" of NIRA.\textsuperscript{90}

At the public hearings in Washington on August 18, 1933, Green led the assault on the auto code in his dual capacity as advisory board representative and AFL president. As he had done at other code hearings, Green not only condemned the proposed code, he also detailed an AFL code proposal as a substitute. And as he had done at all other hearings, he suggested a thirty hour work week for all automobile production workers. A thirty-five hour work week would be permissable, he said, only if workers were paid time-and-a-half for all work over thirty hours. Armed with a mountain of facts, Green further contended that the proposed maximum hour provisions industry offered would not increase employment, which was supposed to be the intended effect of the code. Indeed, the thirty-five hour work week
would actually be higher than the industry's average of 32.7 hours the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. To reestablish the employment level of 1929, even the thirty hour week would not suffice if production remained constant. If production increased 100 per cent, Green argued, "a work week of 29.2 hours would still be required to secure the desired amount of re-employment."  

Green also demonstrated that the wage provisions of the proposed code were inadequate to increase mass purchasing power and thus violated another objective of NIRA. Green suggested a minimum wage for factory hands of 60 cents per hour. According to his calculations, this rate would be only slightly higher than the average hourly wage paid to unskilled labor in the industry between 1928 and 1929, when employees worked longer hours. A high wage rate was essential if workers were to receive an income "sufficient to maintain tolerable standards of living."  

A large part of Green's testimony concerned the qualifying language the NACC had tacked on to Section 7a. His arguments revealed the wide gulf between the AFL's and industry's interpretation of labor's right to organize and bargain collectively. In order to establish "true" collective bargaining in industry, Green argued, employees must be given the right to form an organization self-governing in internal affairs and independent of management. The organization must be industry-wide and should be affiliated with
the AFL. It must then negotiate a contract with representatives of industry that both parties were willing and able to enforce. The auto code itself, Green reasoned, could never be enforced if such an employee organization did not exist. And since the auto manufacturers themselves had prevented the growth of "true" collective bargaining in their industry, the federal government was obligated to promote its establishment.93

Practically every one of Green's proposals was ignored. The NACC made small concessions in regard to wages and hours. And an objection by Donald Richberg, general counsel for NRA and second in command to Johnson, persuaded employers to drop the open shop declaration, although the individual merit clause remained. Green was fully conscious of the dilemma: the AFL's weakness in the industry precluded a strong voice in the code-making process. As he griped in a letter to an AFL organizer in autos, the paucity of organized auto workers had "greatly interfered with a forceful and influential presentation" of labor's demands.94

On August 26, 1933, the day NRA officials handed Roosevelt the auto code for his signature, Labor Advisory Board members, with Wolman absent, met in conference to ponder the individual merit clause. The board agreed to accept the code "with the understanding that no section or sentence contained therein modifies, qualifies or changes Section 7(a)" and that the merit clause did "not establish a
precedent to be followed in the preparation or acceptance of any other code." When other industries inserted individual merit clauses in their code proposals, Green announced that the NRA would "court disaster" by accepting them.

In autos and in almost every industry, employers were not cooperating to the extent Green hoped. Yet Green always attempted to present the codes in a favorable manner to workers. Nothing in the auto code modified Section 7a "in any way," he wrote his organizer in the industry, and discharge of employees for union activity violated code provisions. "Let no one deceive automobile workers by misrepresentation and false statements," Green continued. "Their right to organize has been clearly established." In an American Federationist editorial, he asserted that the minimum wage provisions in the codes would raise living standards for many workers and the maximum hour provisions would help to stabilize employment.

Despite industry domination in the code-making process, Green's expectations of NIRA revealed the extent to which his attitudes toward government intervention in the economy had changed. By mid 1933 Gren appealed to the federal government to meet objectives that only a few years earlier the AFL held to be the exclusive domain of collective bargaining: higher wages, shorter hours, and the organization of the unorganized. Indeed, Green envisioned
a role for NRA that went far beyond the intentions of General Johnson. Johnson had no desire to use NRA to promote the organization of the unorganized or to alter in any significant way the wage and hour policies of powerful employer associations.

* * * * * * *

Since the NRA did not provide machinery to deal with labor disputes or to interpret Section 7a, the Roosevelt Administration had to improvise. On August 5, 1933, Roosevelt created the National Labor Board (NLB) to "consider, adjust, and settle differences that may arise through differing interpretations" of Section 7a. Heading by Senator Wagner, the NLB included three representatives from both industry and labor: Gerald Swope, president of General Electric, Louis Kirstein, general manager of William Filene Sons Company, and Walter C. Teagle, president of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, on the side of industry; Green, John L. Lewis, and Leo Wolman representing labor.

The NLB, however, lacked a specified procedural formula and lacked enforcement power. Its power rested entirely on what Wagner called "public sentiment," and its success depended on the voluntary cooperation of employers and unions. Nevertheless, in its first three months, the
NLB settled 88 per cent of its cases in the field, resorting to decisions in just eight cases. Such success was possible because the NLB had yet to confront formidable open shop companies in basic industries such as steel and automobiles. The NLB also had yet to make an unequivocal interpretation of Section 7a. Once the NLB had to take a stand on the proper interpretation of Section 7a, its principal weaknesses were exposed: employers and labor representatives could not agree on a definition of the right to organize and bargain collectively, and the board could not enforce its decisions.

The honeymoon of the NLB ended in December 1933, when it was called upon to decide on the Weirton Steel and Edward G. Budd Manufacturing cases. On September 7, 1933, 92 per cent of the employees at Budd, which made auto bodies and frames, participated in company-sponsored elections and created a company union. When the company told the approximately one thousand AFL federal labor union members that it "could not recognize the American Federation of Labor inasmuch as Budd has employee representation," about 1500 Budd workers struck. In December the NLB ordered Budd to hold new elections or appear before the board. Budd refused to comply. The NLB then turned the case over to the national compliance director of the NRA in the hope that he would "withdraw the Blue Eagle from Budd and order the cancellation of all his Government contracts." When neither
happened, the deficiencies of the NLB were painfully apparent.\textsuperscript{101}

Ernest Weir was a powerful independent steel magnate, chairman of both Weirton Steel and National Steel, the nation's fourth largest steel firm. Weir defied an NLB order to hold representation elections under procedures specified by the board, and instead held elections under the rules of his employee representation plan. The NLB requested the Justice Department to prepare legal proceedings. Eighteen months later, when the Supreme Court declared NIRA unconstitutional, these proceedings were still unresolved.\textsuperscript{102}

Green was a vocal supporter of the NLB and liked the fact that it rested upon the voluntary cooperation of labor and capital. But the Weirton and Budd cases infuriated him and proved, once again, that Christian cooperation was a far cry from the reality of capital-labor relations. Green admitted later that he wanted to "pillory Mr. Weir as a public enemy" and decried the destruction of "the faith that ... workers have in the Government and in the National Labor Board."\textsuperscript{103} The problem of the NLB, so far as Green was concerned, was that it could not enforce its decisions against such men as Budd and Weir and that it failed to come to grips with the proper interpretation of Section 7a. He charged that "the Board has been consistently forced to straddle the real issue in many cases, and the real issue is
that of union recognition for collective bargaining. ¹⁰⁴

By the end of 1933, Green had all but abandoned his faith that industry would reform itself. He wrote in despair that "The habits and practices of autocratic control are so deeply rooted in many industries" that they would allow their workers the right to organize "grudgingly or only under compulsion." ¹⁰⁵ Green was slowly recognizing that the government-labor-capital partnership in which he placed such faith required the coercive power of government to be effective. Green shunned coercion as a violation of Christian precepts, but employers, through their disregard of the intent of Section 7a, through their unwillingness to allow their workers to organize, had denounced cooperation and proven that they would respond only to the force of law.

Senator Wagner's Labor Disputes bill, introduced in 1934, was an attempt to rectify all the deficiencies of the NLB. It sought to strengthen the right to organize, outlaw the unfair labor practices of employers, and create a new labor board empowered to hold elections and enforce its decisions through the issuance of cease and desist orders. While Communists and employer associations testified against the bill, Green testified on its behalf before the Senate Committee on Labor during hearings in the spring of 1934. Wagner's bill, Green argued, was "essential to the purposes of the National Recovery Act." ¹⁰⁶ In Green's view, the principal aim of NIRA was to increase mass purchasing power
and reduce unemployment. Section 7a was vital to this process, for by organizing into independent trade unions, workers would be in a better position to resist layoffs and secure higher wages. Yet Section 7a could not be effective unless backed by a board with broad enforcement powers. The Labor Disputes bill was thus crucial to the recovery program.  

President Roosevelt did not endorse Wagner's bill, and he killed its chances when he issued an executive order to create the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and terminate the NLB. The executive order gave the new board power to order and hold elections, yet it permitted employers the option of having the board's election orders reviewed in the circuit court of appeals. Further, the executive order did not define unfair labor practices or the right to organize. Green protested bitterly. The Labor Disputes bill must be passed "if the working people of the nation are to be accorded the right to organize and bargain collectively as provided for in Section 7(a). He considered the President's action "a keen disappointment."

The NLRB created by the executive order was a failure. Employers continued to refuse to comply with its decisions. This failure prompted Senator Wagner to reintroduce his Labor Disputes bill in revised form in February 1935. And the new Congress elected in November 1934 proved receptive. Wagner's revised bill replaced the vague
statements of Section 7a with a specific and comprehensive statute outlawing unfair labor practices, such as company unions; provided for a permanent and powerful NLRB; and gave legal sanction to the right of an employee majority to select collective bargaining representatives for the whole group. Green played a leading role in securing passage of the Wagner bill in both houses of Congress. After Roosevelt signed the bill on July 5, 1935, Green declared that he was "confident that it will prove itself the Magna Charta of Labor of the United States" and claimed that it would "make the workers of the nation economically free." Three days after the passage of the Wagner Act, the Supreme Court declared NIRA unconstitutional in the landmark Schechter decision. Green was outraged. Although he often complained about the limits of labor's input into the codes, Green had been one of NIRA's strongest supporters. In his 1933 Labor Day speech at Akron, Green had tried to dispel worker hostility to the wage and hour provisions in the codes by saying that NIRA was still in the "experimental stage." After a September 11, 1933 meeting of the Executive Council, Green declared that his faith in NIRA "amounted to passion." And at the 1933 AFL convention, Green told delegates that "it is clear that the Recovery Act
is sound in principle, that it must succeed, for the reason that its failure means a chaos that the nation cannot stand.\textsuperscript{114}

In an \textit{American Federationist} article published just prior to the Schechter decision, Green summarized the achievements of NIRA. First, the act had "given millions of workers the legal right and the courage to organize for the first time in their lives. It has made them feel like free men for the first time in their lives." Second, although the wage provisions were not all that labor hoped for, "what has already been accomplished in lifting the minimum rates (of pay) out of the depths to which they have been driven in 1932 and 1933 is a real achievement." Third, the NIRA "has established beyond question the soundness of the principle of reduction of hours as a means of bringing about reemployment." Fourth, the NIRA had gone far toward destroying "long established evils" in industry such as child labor, sweatshop conditions, and homework. He concluded:

It would seem to me in all fairness that if there is any group in the industrial life of the nation which might with justification feel that the NRA has been a failure, it would be labor. We have not received all we hoped for; the collective bargaining provisions of the Act have not been enforced; minimum wages established in the codes are too low; the hours fixed in the codes have been too long to re-absorb into industry all the millions of unemployed .. Labor has not been given the place in the determination of code provisions nor in the administration of those provisions which it had every right to expect, and which it did indeed expect.

Nevertheless, Green continued, labor was not "impatient."
The AFL recognized that "social progress is a slow and unending task and that no worthwhile venture should be abandoned until there has been every opportunity for a thorough trial."\textsuperscript{115}

The Supreme Court, however, abruptly ended the experiment. Still, Green refused to abandon the hope that federal legislation would save the AFL. He immediately began to campaign for a thirty hour week bill and social security legislation.\textsuperscript{116} Yet Green now recognized that labor's right to organize into independent trade unions would not be handed to him on a silver platter. The labor-government-capital partnership had revealed serious defects, and Green saw that labor must assert its own economic power to uphold its rights and bring about a return to prosperity. "In the absence of the stabilizing influence of N.R.A.," Green concluded, "workers and industries look for help only through union organization."\textsuperscript{117} Thus it is to Green's efforts as an organizer which we must turn.
NOTES

6. Ibid., p. 337.
11. American Federationist, July 1930, p. 788
14. Ibid., July 15, 1931, p. 3:1
17. AFL, Proceedings, 1932, pp. 4-7.
20. Roosevelt Distinguished Service Medal Presentation, New York City, October 27, 1930, Reel 7, frame 414, WGC OHS.
21. Roosevelt Distinguished Service Medal
Acceptance Speech, New York City, October 27, 1930, Reel 15, frame 310, WGC OHS.


23. Ibid., April 1928, p. 403.


26. Ibid.

27. AFL Weekly News Service, December 6, 1930.

28. Frank Duffy to Green, May 26, 1930, Reel 7, frame 340, WGC OHS; Green to Frank Duffy, June 19, 1930, Reel 7, frame 364, WGC OHS.


30. Green to Hoover, November 24, 1930, Reel 7, frame 382, WGC OHS.


34. Huthmacher, p. 82.

35. Ibid., pp. 71-85.


37. Ibid.

38. AFL, Proceedings, 1931, pp. 397-398.

39. Address to ILGWU Convention, May 1932, Reel 12, frame 457, WGC OHS.

40. American Federationist, July 1930, p. 786.

41. New York Times, June 10, 1931, p. 4:2; Labor Day Address, September 3, 1931, Reel 15, frame 358, WGC OHS.

43. AFL, Proceedings, 1931, p. 79.

44. Bernstein, The Lean Years, p. 351.

45. AFL, Proceedings, 1932, p. 9.


47. AFL, Proceedings, 1930, p. 3.


50. Ibid., 1932, p. 296.

51. Ibid., 1932, p. 317.


53. Ibid., pp. 202-204.

54. Ibid., p. 204.


56. Ibid., p. 27.

57. Ibid., pp. 24-26; Bernard Bellush, The Failure of the NRA (New York, 1975), pp. 7-8; Brandeis, pp. 199-204.


60. See, for example, Sidney Lens, Radicalism in America (New York, 1969), p. 305.

66. Green to Tobin, December 21, 1932, Reel 14, frame 332, WGC OHS.
68. Green to Tobin, March 10, 1933, Reel 14, frame 524, WGC OHS.
70. Morris, p. 141.
74. Brandeis, p. 205.
75. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
80. Green to Presidents of International Unions, May 27, 1933, Reel 8, frame 30, WGC OHS.
82. Bellush, p. 37.
84. Ibid., February 1933, p. 117.
85. Bellush, pp. 12-14, 36-38, 45.


88. Ibid., pp. 53-55.
89. Ibid., p. 55.
90. Ibid., p. 58.
91. Ibid., p. 63.
92. Ibid., p. 64.
93. Ibid., p. 65.

94. Green to William Collins, September 18, 1933, Reel 9, frame 872, WGC OHS.
95. Fine, Automobile, p. 73.

97. Green to William Collins, August 28, 1933, Reel 9, frame 868, WGC OHS.

98. American Federationist, December 1933, p. 1332.
100. Ibid., p. 21.
102. Ibid., pp. 37-39, 73.
103. Ibid., p. 39.
104. Ibid., p. 50.
105. American Federationist, July 1933, p. 678.
106. Ibid., April 1934, p. 356.
108. Gross, p. 73.


113. Ibid., September 5, 1933, p. 1:5.

114. AFL, Proceedings, 1933, pp. 6-11.


"We are witnessing a sight," Green told delegates to the 1933 AFL convention, "that even the old, tried veterans of our movement never saw before. From every city and every town and every hamlet ... the workers are marching, organizing, keeping step, coming with us into the great American Federation of Labor." Workers were joining the AFL "because they realize that there is a new day and a new deal," and there is nothing, Green concluded, that "is going to stop them from coming in."¹

Green's remark was only half true. Workers were exhibiting a desire to join trade unions to a degree unprecedented in American history. The promise of Secion 7a of NIRA, coupled with the despair born of years of depression, fostered a wide spread and militant demand for unionism among unorganized workers across the country. But very few of the workers demanding unions joined and remained in the AFL. Among the most serious impediments to successful organizing by the AFL in the years 1933-1935 were continued
employer resistance to independent unions, the failure of
the federal government to interpret and administer Section
7a as it was originally intended, the opposition of the
craft union majority on the Executive Council to organiza­
tion along industrial union lines, and Green's refusal to
support militant rank-and-file action to secure union
recognition and collective bargaining rights. This latter
factor, heretofore ignored by labor historians, proved to be
one of the greatest obstacles to successful organizing in
the early 1930s and helped give rise to an opposition
movement within the Federation that eventually became the
Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO). Green's
commitment to industrial peace and cooperation between labor
and capital alienated great numbers of mass-production
workers who were willing to join the AFL but who did not
share Green's social gospel outlook.

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With the passage of NIRA imminent, Green dashed off
a letter to the presidents of all affiliated unions. "Labor
must be alert, prepared and ready," he told them, "to take
advantage of every opportunity which presents itself,
through this legislative proposal, to organize, to bargain
collectively, increase wages and reduce the hours of
employment." He called for a meeting of the presidents on June 6, 1933 at AFL headquarters to "plan an organizing campaign, the sort of an organizing campaign which will cover all industries and the workers employed in all lines of industry."²

The meeting took place as scheduled, and the union presidents authorized Green to conduct an organizing campaign, but preparations for the type of massive drive Green envisioned were not made. No large scale, cooperative drives to establish unions in the basic industries, such as the auto and Southern textile drives of the 1920s, resulted from the meeting. The reasons were clear enough. Many, if not most, union heads were struggling to maintain membership in their own organizations, and they were unwilling and, in most cases, unable to commit money and organizers for campaigns in the unorganized sector until prosperity returned. Others, such as John L. Lewis of the UMW and David Dubinsky of the ILGWU, gambled their meager treasuries on organizing drives among workers within their own jurisdictions. If any organizing was to be undertaken in the mass-production industries, the meeting in effect told Green, it would have to be conducted by the AFL president without substantial assistance from the internationals.³

Green understood the inability of affiliates to mount a massive drive, but he also understood the vital role that trade union organization could play in the recovery
program. The Executive Council had declared as early as 1931 that the organization of the unorganized would insure that the benefits of industrial production would be more equitably distributed and thus help avert "periodic breakdowns" in the economy.\(^4\) Green believed that under NIRA organized workers would have greater leverage at code hearings and be in a better position to secure higher wages and shorter hours, thus attacking the root cause of the depression: underconsumption. Green therefore took it upon himself, without substantial support from the affiliates, to organize workers in the basic industries. This was an awesome task to be sure, and much more awesome than Green anticipated.

Much like President Roosevelt, Green expected organizing under NIRA to be peaceful, lawful, and cooperative. He had neither the resources nor the stomach for militant campaigns. Success for the type of campaign Green envisioned depended upon the cooperation of government, industry, organized labor, and the mass of workers. Government would have to implement NIRA fairly and honestly, aiding workers in their quest for organization and punishing recalcitrant employers. Employers would have to succumb to the dictates of federal law and allow the unionization of their workforce. And Green expected the unorganized to be undaunted in their desire for unions yet peaceful in their approach.
Unfortunately, the campaigns were neither cooperative nor successful. First, the federal government often implemented Section 7a in such a way as to hinder organizing work. The early labor boards had little success with recalcitrant employers, and they subverted the original purpose of Section 7a by sanctioning company unions. Second, mass-production industries did not abandon their long standing hostility to unions. Blacklisting of union leaders, industrial espionage, and company unions remained in use. Third, rather than devote its resources to organizing the unorganized, the AFL wasted precious energy on the issue of jurisdictional rights, a question that would subsequently split the Federation. Finally, unorganized workers, growing impatient with the impediments to organization, committed the unpardonable sin (in Green's view) of militant action. The lack of cooperation among contending interests brought Green's campaigns in mass-production industries to a virtual standstill by early 1934, but not until some measure of success had been attained.

Green did not perceive the seriousness of these obstacles. Nor did he consider the lack of adequate finances or the dearth of AFL organizers to be insurmountable difficulties. His optimism had two sources: Section 7a of NIRA and the unprecedented outpouring of union sentiment among the rank-and-file in the basic industries. Armed
with these weapons, Green believed that the organization of the unorganized would ultimately succeed. The lack of finances and organizers meant only that local labor officials would have to assume much of the responsibility for organizing work. The enthusiasm of local officials, not money, would lead to success; their patience, not their concerted economic power, would bring results. "If the whole membership of our local unions were fired with zeal for spreading the gospel of unionism," Green wrote in July 1933, "the organizing problem would largely be taken care of."  

Since the obstacles to organizing were similar in each mass-production industry, a detailed look at one campaign will serve as an illustration of Green's efforts to organize the unorganized in the years 1933-1935. The automobile industry has been selected because Green regarded it as the "battle front" of union recognition and because it received greater attention from the press.  

* * * * * * *

Green selected William Collins to head up the organizing drive in autos. Collins arrived in Detroit on June 21, 1933 with instructions to organize workers directly into federal labor unions (FLUs). Other organizers, who devoted only part of their time to the auto industry, were
sent to South Bend, Indiana, Cleveland, and Wisconsin. In cities where organizers could not afford to be sent, Green left responsibility for organizing to city centrals. Despite the fact that when Collins arrived in Detroit no FLUs existed among auto workers, Green entertained high hopes for the campaign. He expected that by the time public hearings were held on the auto code, workers would be sufficiently organized to send their own representatives. 7

"The door of opportunity to organize is open to the worker for the first time in the history of the country," Collins told auto workers in a campaign circular. 8 A great deal of hullaballoo attended the campaign. Handbills, plant meetings, and rallies spread the union message. Collins even sent a sound truck through the streets of Detroit. Despite the fanfare, the early results were far from impressive. Although Green issued a large number of FLU charters, including six in Detroit alone, Collins glumly wrote AFL headquarters on August 5 that he had collected initiation fees for only about one thousand workers. Collins cited continuing unemployment, fear of association with unions, and the "determined underground opposition" of employers as reasons for the less than spectacular results. 9 So little progress had been made that when code hearings for the industry began on August 18, Green alone spoke for auto workers. Without a significant number of workers organized, auto manufacturers and code authorities could virtually
ignore labor's demands and insert an individual merit clause.

As if continued employer resistance and defeat at the auto code hearings were not enough, the auto campaign met serious resistance from within the AFL. As early as July, Green began receiving complaints from craft union leaders concerning violations of their jurisdictions. The Boilermakers, the Metal Polishers, and the Machinists were only the most vocal among craft unions to insist that Green respect their jurisdictional boundaries. Arthur Wharton, president of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and perhaps the most outspoken of the craft unionists, wrote Green in July complaining that the AFL organizers were trespassing on the IAM's turf by placing machinists in the auto industry in FLU's. "I trust," Wharton wrote Green, "that you will see the importance of getting out a circular letter which will remove this misunderstanding."10

Green understood a basic truth that most of his associates on the Executive Council and most of the international union presidents failed to grasp: workers in mass-production industries, if they were to be organized at all, had to be organized along industrial lines. Not only had technological progress blurred and often erased craft distinctions in the basic industries, but the very nature of the job had made these workers mass minded. Before the start of the 1926 campaign in autos, Green and the Council
had settled on the federal labor union as a compromise between the workers' desire for an industrial union and the jurisdictional rights of craft unions. The FLU, which had been one of Gompers' favorite recruiting devices, placed all workers in a particular plant, regardless of skill, into a single union. Thus, temporarily at least, FLUs were of an industrial character. After the organization of the industry was complete, skilled workers would be placed in their appropriate craft unions. Without instructions to the contrary, Green placed all new recruits in FLUs. As he wrote his old chum Max S. Hayes in July 1933:

You know enough about these mass production plants to know and understand that no success can attend any organizing effort unless these workers are organized into Federal Unions. The craft lines have practically been wiped out because the workers employed specialize and thus the services of the rounded-out skilled machinists and other skilled workers are not required. We can only succeed in organizing these workers . . . by forming Federal Unions, embracing within them all the workers employed in different industries.

FLUs were not the optimal solution to difficulties encountered in organizing. First, Green employed this device in part as an attempt to circumvent the jurisdictional issue, which it did not do. Second, even though the monthly dues for FLU members were significantly lower than dues paid by members of international unions, a much greater percentage of their dues was sent to the AFL. Even so, FLU members were not entitled to strike benefits unless
the union had been in good standing for at least one year. FLU members were painfully aware that they paid more to the Federation and received less in return. Third, an even more serious defect of the FLUs was the lack of coordination between them. Each FLU had a direct relationship with the Federation, but no relationship with other FLUs in the same industry. The difficulty of joint action among FLUs explained in part the strong desire among mass-production workers for international charters as early as 1934.\textsuperscript{12} Despite the deficiencies of the FLU, it was aviable organizing device and was not in itself a significant reason for the failure of the automatic campaign.

As AFL president, Green could not violate the charter rights of any affiliate. A union's charter was akin to a contract made between the union and the Federation. But Green was aware that if craft unions prevented the use of FLUs, organizing work in mass-production industries would severely restricted, if not stalled altogether. He therefore sought to appease Wharton, in a letter to him dated August 2, 1933, stating that FLU members over whom the IAM claimed jurisdiction would be parcelled out at some future date. The Federation had no intention of violating jurisdictional rights of individual unions, Green continued, but in the present campaign it was "for the moment" impossible to respect these rights in every instance.\textsuperscript{13}
Had Green directly confronted Wharton and other craft union officials with the real issue -- that craft unionists were endangering the success of major organizing drives because they laid claim to a handful of men in basic industries who had little or no desire to join their organizations and whom the craft unions expended little or no energy to organize -- it is most unlikely that he could have continued as AFL president. Green could not order craft unions to forsake their jurisdictional claims over these workers, for he understood that a man could serve as AFL president only if he recognized that he had "no power to compel any union or person to do anything." To act otherwise would invoke the wrath of the Executive Council, from which his powers were derived. Lacking the power to dictate policy, Green was essentially involved in a juggling act. It was his role to balance all interests and keep everyone relatively satisfied. Green had little sympathy with the complaints of craft unionists in this instance, but he had to soothe their rage with assurances that their rights would not be violated while at the same time pursuing the only workable strategy: placing all workers in FLUs.

The issue of initiation fees and monthly dues compounded the dilemma of jurisdiction. The IAM charged between $5 and $20 for initiation and $1.75 in monthly dues. FLUs levied only a $2 initiation and $1 per month in dues.
Auto workers willing to join the AFL found FLUs attractive not only because their structure was that of an industrial union, but because they were far less expensive than international unions. The economy of the FLUs was another point of friction between craft leaders and Green at this time. Wharton wrote Green on August 8, 1933 and all but demanded that he issue a circular letter to all state federations, city centrals, and AFL organizers instructing them not to organize machinists into FLUs. Wharton was convinced that Green did not appreciate "just what we are facing when we go into a mass meeting outlining our program and then have a representative of the A. F. of L. get up and tell the mass meeting that they can all join the Federal Labor Union for $2.00."  

Much to his credit, Green did not bother to respond to Wharton's whining over the issue of fees and dues. He recognized that the IAM was not conducting a drive of its own in the auto industry, that sentiment among machinists in the industry strongly favored industrial unionism, and that the FLU was the closest approximation of an industrial union acceptable to the Executive Council. Wharton brought his case before the Council, which met in session between September 6 and September 15. Wharton wailed that workers organized by the AFL interpret FLUs as industrial unions, and again demanded that Green issue a circular to insure
that no toolmakers, die-sinkers, maintenance men or machinists were placed in FLUs. Green, forever on his best behavior before the Council, did not protest. "The jurisdictions of the national organizations will be protected," he promised. But as other craft union heads came forward to demand that their charter rights over workers in the auto, steel, rubber, aluminum and other basic industries be safeguarded, Green momentarily lost his composure and gave vent to his own views. He fumed that those outside the labor movement "charge us with being dead, preventing the workers from getting in when they are breaking down the doors." Critics were also emerging within the labor movement who were "hammering the life out of us because we do not do more." He claimed that at the steel code hearings "we were denounced because we failed to organize the workers in the steel industry. We are charged as though we are doing all we can to keep them out." With a great deal of passion, he concluded that the situation was "most trying." Green believed that the bickering over jurisdiction had to be set aside if the AFL were to take advantage of the opportunities presented by Section 7a.

Jurisdictional jealousies, coupled with employer intransigence, led to the collapse of the auto drive in early 1934. Collins ruefully reported to the Executive Council on January 31, 1934 that the drive had stalled. Few
if any workers attended FLU meetings in Detroit, Lansing, Pontiac, and Flint, the principal auto centers in Michigan. Employers usually fired those who did show up. The incipient union of auto workers, Collins was forced to admit, had been "destroyed."¹⁸

To say the least, organizing auto workers under NIRA was not proceeding as smoothly as Green had hoped. Employer resistance remained as determined as ever, and the government, by accepting an industry dictated auto code, had undermined Green's plan for a cooperative drive. Fortunately, the obnoxious auto code was to expire on December 31, 1933, which again raised Green's hopes. This seemed a golden opportunity to establish a fair code and resuscitate the drive. He promised FLU members in autos that he would meet the situation "as forcefully as circumstances will permit."¹⁹ Green hoped to establish labor representation on the NRA code authority, create a joint labor-industry board, and above all, effect the removal of the individual merit clause.

The auto manufacturers, however, maintained the upper hand in bargaining strength. As mentioned in the last chapter, the auto companies needed the NRA less than the Administration needed the cooperation of the auto industry in the recovery program. This was the deciding factor in the NRA's acceptance of the National Automobile Chamber of
Commerce's proposal to extend the code without modification until September 4, 1934. Green protested vehemently. In response, NRA Administrator Johnson told Green that the code had not been in effect long enough to "constitute a real test" and that the merit clause was a "purely academic issue." Again Green's hopes for true cooperation and assistance on the part of the federal government had come to naught. Quite correctly, Green drew a lesson from the decision to extend the code without modification. In a letter to auto workers he declared that "it is not alone the law which is going to help us. We must depend very largely upon our own efforts."  

In private, however, Green expressed grave doubts as to whether auto workers could achieve union recognition and collective bargaining rights through their own efforts. FLU membership in autos was simply too small to wage a strike or even threaten one. "We are in no position yet," he admitted in January 1934, "to demand collective bargaining." Green's prescription for success was to have the FLUs "prepare the way by frequent conferences with employers, by strengthening our position in every possible way, (and) by keeping the union as much before the employer as possible." Yet when unionists began to assert themselves in a more militant manner, Green would denounce their actions and again look to government for assistance.
The FLU rank-and-file, new to unionism and beginning to express dissatisfaction with the cautious policies of the AFL president, were not as convinced as Green that they could not secure their demands. At least they were willing to try. Many believed that the choice lay between militant action or death of their FLUs by attrition. Talk of a strike could be heard among workers in Michigan. AFL strength in the industry, limited though it was, was centered at the Buick and two Fisher Body plants in Flint and the Hudson local in Detroit. At these plants union members were under constant fire from employers. Not only did the companies refuse to deal with the FLUs in any capacity, they actively suppressed unions by discharging leaders and spying on their meetings. In response, these four FLUs informed General Motors and Hudson on March 4, 1934, that unless the companies granted union recognition, reinstating those fired for union activity, and raised wages twenty per cent, they would call a strike.23

The threat of a strike created fear in Green's heart. Not only did he believe that the auto FLUs were too weak to win a strike against corporate giants such as GM, but by temperament, Green much preferred a negotiated peace, one that would involve the government, and one that might
lead to concessions from industry. In this instance Green under estimated the strikers' chance of success, but he had no stomach for a militant struggle. He retained his hope for the peaceful and cooperative organization of industry.

At the insistence of President Roosevelt, the National Labor Board, a body established under NIRA, promised the disgruntled unionists a hearing of their grievances, and the strike was postponed. GM and Hudson, however, refused to meet with union representatives or hold an election. Fearing that a labor-management confrontation in autos might retard recovery, Roosevelt stepped in and negotiated a settlement between March 21 and 25. Green attempted to sway the President's sympathies by issuing a public statement four days before the negotiations began. "We shall do all we can to avert the strike," Green declared, "because we do not wish to see the President's recovery program hindered or halted by an industrial disturbance of such far-reaching proportions."  

Green's assurance of the AFL's commitment to the recovery program counted for little against the influence of the auto industry, and Roosevelt's settlement proved to be a severe blow to labor. Announced on March 25, 1934, the settlement provided for a tripartite Automobile Labor Board (ALB), composed of one industry, one labor, and one "neutral" representative, and authorized to review cases of
discrimination against union members. Although the ALB would be part of the NRA machinery, it would be divorced from the NLB and be responsible to the President alone. The settlement fully endorsed the industry's position on Section 7a. On the crucial issue of collective bargaining, the President in effect defied the NLB by rejecting majority rule and exclusive representation and endorsing proportional representation. Contrary to the position of the NLB, the settlement stated that employers were obligated to "bargain collectively with the freely chosen representatives of groups," and if a plant had more than one "group," each one would have "total membership pro rata to the number of men each group represents." 26

Since proportional representation denied exclusive bargaining rights to the majority union and permitted legal recognition of company unions on the basis of proportional strength, employers were thrilled with the settlement. Somewhat surprisingly, Green also defended the settlement -- at first. Green could have used the threat of a strike, which had the potential of paralyzing the industry at the peak of the busy spring season, as a powerful weapon in negotiations with the industry. Instead, his opposition to strikes except as a last resort and the flattery of being involved in a White House settlement led him to endorse the President's actions and thus undermine the rank-and-file
efforts to improve conditions in the industry. Green's willingness to squelch rank-and-file unrest is not surprising if one keeps in mind the lengths he would go to avoid strikes. Above all, Green was relieved that the strike had been averted. As he told the Executive Council two days after the settlement was announced, if FLUs in the auto industry could secure a settlement which provided for recognition of the right to collective bargaining and for a settlement of the grievances of the auto workers, it would be far better to accept such a settlement than to run the risk of a strike in the automobile industry at the present time. We did not secure an ideal agreement or one that represents the full hopes and aspirations of the workers. The President intervened, urged acceptance of the settlement, and in order to avoid the conflict, the agreement proposed was accepted.

Rank-and-file response both to the creation of the ALB and Green's role in the settlement was immediate and hostile. "Everybody said we got sold down the river," an auto FLU member recalled. According to the president of the A.C. Spark Plug FLU, the settlement broke the morale of the unionists "and where there was hope there is now only fear and despair." The March 25 settlement and its failure to improve working conditions in autos discouraged workers who had rallied to the banner of the AFL when the likelihood of a strike promised dramatic changes in their status.
Not only had Green failed to secure a satisfactory settlement, not only had he been totally unable to obtain any sort of cooperation from industry, but it was also becoming painfully apparent that Green was losing the confidence of the rank-and-file. FLU membership declined dramatically after the settlement. In March the auto FLUs held 32,501 paid-up members, but by June the figure had dropped to a dismal 18,244. More important, according to historian Sidney Fine, those who remained "increasingly came to believe that they had made an almost fatal mistake in failing to strike and in agreeing to the settlement and the establishment of the A. L. B." Green, always ambivalent about the use of economic force, was losing touch with rank-and-file sentiment, and he would become increasingly alienated as the tide of worker militancy mounted in the summer of 1934. In the early New Deal days, Green had applauded and even encouraged the militancy of unorganized workers, but he quickly became concerned over the number of strikes and the willingness to resort to force to achieve labor's goals. What pleased Green about labor activity in the New Deal was the widespread urge to take advantage of Section 7a and join the AFL; what troubled him was workers' impatience when government and industry resisted their efforts. "I freely admit that I glory in the fighting spirit of the working people," Green admitted in September 1933, "but it seems opportune to
counsel conservation of effort and wisdom in all our actions."

Green's ambivalence toward labor unrest was rooted in his boundless hopes for NIRA and his deep-seated social gospel convictions. NIRA, Green believed, made it possible for workers not only to join unions under government sanction, but it also made possible, theoretically at least, the resolution of all disputes between labor and capital at the conference table rather than on the strike field, a goal which Green pursued since his early days in the UMW. "Through the administration of the NRA instrumentalities have been created for the adjustment of industrial differences," Green declared in a public statement issued on September 30, 1933. "The new machinery, of which the National Labor Board is foremost . . . contemplates the fair settlement of labor controversies without necessity for resort to strikes."³³

For Green, therefore, NIRA represented the highest ideal in capital-labor relations: the transcendence of force. The significance of this promise cannot be overestimated. Green dedicated his life to securing for American workers a middle-class lifestyle and middle-class respectability, and he firmly believed that this goal could not be achieved through labor militancy. Workers, banded together in unions, could achieve their goals only if industry accepted them as partners, at least junior
partners, in the production process. Militancy might secure economic gains, but respectability and acceptance were privileges that rested on a moral relationship between labor and industry. Militancy meant the failure of morality. Time and again Green lectured that "The use of force in industrial relations is always a confession of failure." 34

The essence of Green's failure to organize mass-production industries between 1933 and 1935 was not that he attempted to organize workers in accordance with his social gospel ideals, but that he refused to abandon his moralistic approach even after it had proven itself bankrupt. He had doubts about the course he was taking at times. And he huffed and puffed when industry refused to cooperate, but he never endorsed strike action when there existed a possibility of successful mediation. Green's ambivalence toward rank-and-file militancy placed him in a curious position. On the one hand, he was highest ranking elected official in the largest, most established labor organization in the U.S. at a time when millions of workers sought the benefits of trade unionism. On the other hand, he became increasingly alienated from rank-and-file sentiment. More and more he found himself acting not as a labor leader, but as a mediator between labor and capital. He tried to secure for workers the most favorable legislation from Congress; he reasoned with employers in the hope that they would moderate
their anti-union position; and he devoted himself to restraining a restive working class. He placed himself between labor and capital, endeavoring to prevent class warfare.

His role as mediator proved untenable. It was based on the false premise that the interests of labor and capital were identical and that employers were susceptible to moral suasion. It could only be maintained by sacrificing the interests of workers, by failing to unionize mass-production workers, and ultimately by splitting the AFL itself. Green was a decent and moral man, but he did not address realistically the issues confronting organized labor in the 1930s.

The Toledo Auto-Lite strike of April-May 1934 best illustrated how Green found it necessary to oppose workers' interests in the name of industrial peace. The Toledo FLU, No. 18384, was organized in somewhat different fashion than most others. For no apparent reason, the local accepted workers in all the city's auto plants, including the three parts plants—Electric Auto-Lite, Bingham Stamping and Tool Company, and Logan Gear Company. On February 23, 1934, FLU members staged a walkout after management refused to grant their demands for union recognition and a ten per cent wage increase. Five days later, the strike ended when workers agreed to a vague management commitment to negotiate a new
contract. In early April, however, Auto-Lite declared itself unwilling to negotiate with the FLU and ordered the business agent off the premises. The union thereupon issued a strike call for April 12. Unlike the February walkout, only a minority of the workers responded, allowing Auto-Lite to maintain operations by hiring strikebreakers.35

Green, of course, opposed the strike call. He offered no support to the strikers and later chastised the secretary of the Toledo Central Labor Union, Otto Branch, for "failure to prevent strike action when conditions were unfavorable."36 Unable to obtain assistance from the AFL, the FLU turned to A.J. Muste's leftist American Workers' Party, which proceeded to organize mass picketing and rally public support behind the strikers. By the middle of May, public sympathy was fully behind the strikers and Green was worried about the possibility of a general strike in Toledo. In a letter to the Central Labor Union, he expressed his fears that labor unrest would cause "great injury" to the labor movement and cautioned that a general strike was a "serious matter and should not be ordered . . ."37

In spite of Green's desire to contain the strike, public sympathy grew and the strike dragged on. Less than a week after Green mailed his letter, ten thousand people gathered in the streets of Toledo in a parade of solidarity. Police tried to maintain order, but when a deputy beat
an unarmed elderly man in full view of the crowd, a pitched battle ensued. For three days the "Battle of Toledo" raged, pitting police and their tear gas and shotguns against strikers and their supporters. While naked, violent class conflict consumed Toledo, Green remained in Washington, silent and disapproving. In an emotional letter to one of his organizers dated May 25, Green confessed that events in Toledo were beyond his control and "I hardly know what to do in this situation at the present moment."  

Green's position was both ludicrous and pathetic. By not supporting the strikers, he had shown himself to be completely out of step with rank-and-file sentiment in unions directly under his control. In setting himself up as a mediator between labor and capital, Green had in effect deserted the strikers, who nevertheless won. Although not all of the strikers' demands were met, the FLU negotiated a contract that recognized its status as a collective bargaining unit at the three parts plants. For many FLU members and workers across the country, the Toledo Auto-Lite strike was yet another example of Green and the AFL "selling them down the river." 

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There were numerous and sound reasons why unionists chafed under Green's leadership. First, AFL policy was too
cautious concerning the use of economic muscle. Green appeared far too conservative at a time when workers were becoming increasingly defiant. Second, many unionists balked at the tight control Green exercised over the FLUs, dictating policy and squelching rank-and-file input. Third, many resented the organizers Green appointed and believed organizers should be chosen from the ranks of auto workers. These grievances were bound together in a rising sentiment for an autonomous union of auto workers. By the spring of 1934, this sentiment was too strong to ignore.

Green finally succumbed to pressure by proposing a national conference of auto workers to discuss "a specific constructive program." Green had no intention of chartering an industrial union at this time. Not only would craft unions block the issuance of an industrial charter, but Green believed that no charter should be issued at all until auto workers demonstrated the capacity to erect a self-sustaining organization that could act as an autonomous union. Indeed, Green set up the conference in part as an effort to convince auto workers that they were not as yet prepared to establish an international union.

Green instructed Collins to plan the conference in order to set up a national council that would act as an advisory agency to the AFL's chief organizer in the industry. Collins worked out the details of Green's plan. Eleven members would serve on the council, which would convene only
when desired by the chief organizer. The council would advise the organizer on matters of strategy and would also serve as an information gathering agency.\textsuperscript{42} Certainly a far cry from an international union, the proposed council would at least be a step forward in the coordination and unification of the FLUs.

On June 23 and 24, 1934, 127 delegates representing 77 locals met in Detroit. The procedure was hardly a model of democracy, for Collins handpicked committee members, including members of the important resolutions committee, to insure that his proposal received favorable consideration. Several resolutions were offered calling for an international union, but no one should have been surprised when Collins' proposal emerged as the majority report of the resolutions committee. Green himself attended the conference and chose the time just before the vote on Collins' proposal to speak to the delegates. He expressed sympathy for their desire to form an international union and said that he, too, wanted to establish one "at the earliest possible moment." But that moment would not arrive until auto workers proved capable of establishing "a permanent self-sustaining organization." And since FLUs in the auto industry contained no more than 18,000 paid-up members, "a slower approach" might be more fruitful.\textsuperscript{43} Partly because of Green's speech, or perhaps in spite of it, Collins' proposal passed by a vote of 77 to 50.\textsuperscript{44}
The June conference may have placated some, but for many rank-and-file auto unionists it served only to increase their alienation from Green and the AFL. According to Wyndham Mortimer, president of a Cleveland FLU, a Communist, and later to be a leading figure in the United Automobile Workers, half of the conference was little more than "a mutual admiration orgy, in which Bill Green and the Executive Council were depicted as being only slightly lower than the Deity Himself. It was necessary," Mortimer continued, "to sell the Executive Council to the delegates, and to convince us that our only salvation rested with this self-perpetuating, craft-minded group of bureaucrats, who were planning to steer us up a long blind alley. They were offering us the shadow but not the substance of an international union." 45

Upon the rejection of proposals to form an independent union, twenty-five delegates bolted the meeting. Three locals, including Detroit's powerful Hudson local, left the AFL altogether within three weeks after the conference and established an independent federation, the Associated Automobile Workers of America (AAWA). An even more important group of disgruntled unionists proved to be those in the Cleveland FLUs, who chose to remain in the AFL. Shortly after the June conference, auto unionists in this city set up, without AFL authorization, a Cleveland District Auto Council to push for the creation of an international
union along industrial lines that would be controlled directly by the rank-and-file. Mortimer was the guiding spirit behind the formation of the Cleveland council. At their first major conference, held in September 1934, over forty delegates unanimously approved Mortimer's resolution to work toward the creation of an industrial, international union. Delegates took the opportunity to assail Green and AFL leadership in general, labelling Green's efforts to avoid strike action "sabotaging efforts."

Green instinctively recognized the threat posed to his leadership by the Cleveland Auto Council. Movements toward the formation of an international union without his consent and in defiance of the June conference could not be tolerated. Green, the Executive Council, and the Metal Trades Department all issued orders calling for the Cleveland council to disband. In response, Mortimer wrote Green: "... please be informed that your protest and order to disband is hereby rejected."

Green remained convinced that auto unionists were as yet unprepared for an international charter, and he refused to side with the growing rank-and-file movement. Time and patience, he still believed, would allow the inexperienced FLU members to cultivate effective leadership and establish a "self-sustaining" organization. Further, he could not see how the creation of an international union would solve the difficulties of attracting auto workers to the AFL or of
securing collective bargaining agreements with auto manufacturers. In a letter of November 26, 1934 to an FLU president, Green wrote:

You seem to think that the establishment of a national or international union . . . would solve all your difficulties and bring about a perfect, ideal state. Please accept this prediction from one who has had training in a wide field of organizing work. When a . . . union of automobile workers is formed, you will still find that an ideal state has not been reached; that condemnation will be indulged in by impetuous members, that serious internal problems will be presented, and fights of the most bitter kind will take place between those who seek to secure and exercise control over the international union.

Looking back on the tumultuous history of the United Automobile Workers, Green's remonstrance was right on the mark, but at the time it did nothing to dissuade auto unionists. His plea for patience meant little to the growing number of FLU members who, in a call for another Cleveland District Auto Council conference, opposed "the false policies pursued by the top officialdom of the A. F. of L.," particularly its condemnation of strike action and its reliance on "strike-breaking boards."50

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By late 1934 Green's drive in autos was a shambles. His early hopes for a peaceful campaign with the cooperation of industry, government, and the unorganized seemed little more than a bad joke. Cooperation was not working, and a new approach was needed. Green began receiving telegrams and letters from organizers telling him that there was "no
hope" of inducing General Motors to bargain "honestly" and that it would require "swarms of men" or a strike to bring Ford to terms. On November 13, 1934, Francis Dillon, who had replaced Collins as the AFL's chief organizer in the industry, wrote Green urging a new and "intensive organizing campaign" that would include the flexing of union economic muscle. Green apparently agreed. After weeks of foot-dragging, Dillon told reporters at the end of January 1935 that Green would make a grand speaking tour of auto manufacturing centers between February 17 and 24. The day before his departure, Green hinted that his excursion was an attempt to gauge the sentiment among auto workers for a general strike. On the surface, it appeared that Green was abandoning cooperation and donning the garb of class warrior. He hailed his trip as "a grand drive for the complete organization of auto workers." Green's first stop was the Cleveland Metal Trades Temple on the afternoon of Sunday, February 17, where he addressed 6000 workers. Dillon, who accompanied Green, fed rumors of militant action when he told delegates that "we are here to see if you are prepared to move out and stay out when the order comes." Green and Dillon made similar speeches in Toledo, St. Louis, South Bend, and finally Detroit, where Green's address was broadcast on national radio. During his speech in Detroit, Green received wild applause when he suggested that if auto workers wanted a
strike, and their grievances could be settled in no other way, the AFL would support them.\textsuperscript{56}

As a result of the trip, the National Council conducted a strike vote among FLUs asking workers whether they would authorize the AFL president to call a strike if the auto manufacturers refused to accede to union demands for union recognition and collective bargaining rights. The National Council stressed that Green alone would be authorized to call a strike.\textsuperscript{57} While the vote was being taken, Green wrote the Automobile Manufacturers' Association and each major auto company requesting conferences between management and the AFL. In every instance, Green's request was politely turned down. Alfred Reeves, vice-president of the AMA, argued that since the AFL represented only "a small minority" of workers in the industry, the AFL had "no just claim to be the spokesman for the auto workers generally."\textsuperscript{58} Green could hardly quarrel with this judgment, since in his estimation the auto FLUs at this time contained only 20,000 dues-paying members and an equal number of unemployed members who did not pay dues. Nevertheless, he responded to Reeves by threatening that if the AMA and auto manufacturers refused to discuss a settlement, the Federation would be forced to stand behind any action the FLUs might decide to take.\textsuperscript{59}

On April 9, 1935, Dillon announced the results of the strike vote: almost every one of the 176 FLUs in the
industry voted to empower Green to call a strike whenever he deemed one necessary. The industry, the workers, and the public were all waiting for Green to issue the strike call. Green's speaking tour, his press releases, and the strike vote had all set the stage. But the strike call never came. Green never issued the call for a militant showdown between workers and the industry. In fact, he never intended to issue the call. A close examination of his statements revealed that all Green's intimations of a general strike were intended only to strengthen the AFL's hand in bargaining with employers. In the words of one astute auto executive, all the militant talk was part of an "A. F. of L. sales promotion campaign."  

As early as February 7, 1935, Green informed an FLU president that a general strike in autos was not being seriously considered. During his address at Toledo on February 17, Green bluntly told the workers of his real hopes. "We must follow constructive lines in our organizational work. We want to establish cooperation in industry." In Detroit on the 23d, he told the press that "We are thinking and working in terms of peace . . . " And he later explained to the Executive Council that the auto workers wanted "to engage in a general strike but I stopped that. I said, you are in no position to engage in a strike."
Whether or not Green actually uttered those words to a group of workers, his statement to the Executive Council revealed his sincere opinion. Green believed that FLU membership in autos was simply too small for the AFL to engage in a successful strike. Thus historian Sidney Fine does not find it "surprising" that Green believed a general strike "would be a disaster" for the FLUs. Fine chides Green, however, for not recognizing "the potentiality of the strike as an organizational device." According to Fine, even had the strike failed, the aggressiveness shown by the AFL would have attracted new members. From Green's perspective, of course, militant action could not be employed as a mere "organizational device." Engaging in class warfare, and thus throwing morality out the window, was to be avoided if at all possible. Perhaps Green may have abandoned his moral precepts temporarily had he believed the AFL had a chance of defeating General Motors, Chrysler, or Ford, but considering Green's commitment to industrial peace, it was hardly surprising that Green did not look upon a general strike as a tool to recruit new members.

Green's trump card -- the strike threat -- had been played without reaction from employers or the federal government. His bluff had been called. Fortunately, the workers responded. On April 23, 1935, without Green's authorization, workers at the Toledo Chevrolet plant walked out. Perhaps sensing that the possibilities for a
cooperative campaign, for the time being at least, had been exhausted, Green was willing to back the strikers. Unlike the Toledo Auto-Lite strike one year earlier, Green immediately endorsed the strike.67

The crux of the difficulties at Toledo sprang from the FLU's demands for a signed contract and exclusive bargaining representation status, a demand almost impossible to attain under the Automobile Labor Board's proportional representation formula. The Toledo Chevrolet plant was the sole manufacturer of transmissions for both Chevrolet and Pontiac, and a successful strike at Toledo could paralyze Chevrolet operations. The vulnerability of Chevrolet led General Motors Executive Vice-President William S. Knudsen and Chevrolet President Marvin E. Coyle to meet personally with FLU leadership at Toledo on April 22. After only one day of negotiations, when GM refused to give exclusive bargaining status to the AFL, the strike began. Unlike the Auto-Lite strike, the Chevrolet strike was virtually free of violence and free from the influence of Musteites and other radicals, although several members of the strike committee were themselves leftists.68

Dillon rushed to Toledo and immediately took command of the strike. His actions offended many and endeared no one to the AFL cause. Although an April 29 union mass meeting resolved that all GM locals should go out on strike until signed contracts were secured, Dillon, believing that
few locals possessed enough strength to challenge GM, sought
to localize the conflict. Some locals in other cities did
walk out in sympathy with the Toledo strikers, but most
deprecated to do so without Dillon's consent.69

Dillon also angered unionists by supporting a compromise that would have allowed the Labor Department to conduct a poll among strikers to determine whether they were willing to accept a company proposal, made on the first day of the strike, and return to work. The proposal dealt with wages and other grievances but did not budge on the central issue of exclusive representation and a signed contract. Even Green wrote Dillon of his "apprehension" concerning the poll, but he refused to intervene.70 Strikers voted down the proposal by more than two to one.71

Negotiations between GM and the strikers resumed on May 11. The company improved its offer in regard to seniority and wages, but refused to accede to the principal demands. Strike leaders opposed the new offer, but Dillon threw his weight behind it and called a union meeting for May 13 to vote on it. Before the vote was taken, however, a resolution from the floor was introduced and carried that permitted only strike committee members to address the audience, a move that specifically excluded Dillon. Dillon angrily countered this move by declaring that the union was no longer part of the AFL. Faced with this threat, the strikers withdrew the resolution. When the business agent
of the FLU, Fred Schwake, told strikers of the gains embodied in the company's proposal, the strikers moved to accept the agreement and return to work by a vote of 732 to 385.  

Green and Dillon regarded the settlement as the best possible under the circumstances. "For the first time in history," Green wrote in the American Federationist, "one of the major automobile manufacturing concerns has agreed to recognize and meet with a spokesman for its employees." Militant auto unionists, however, saw in the agreement a further example of AFL conservatism squandering another golden opportunity. As FLU member Joseph Wood declared, "a wonderful opportunity was muffed at Toledo."

The Toledo Chevrolet strike of 1935 had numerous and significant consequences for the AFL's campaign in autos. First and foremost, it further undermined the AFL's tenuous hold over organized auto workers and increased the prestige of rank-and-file militants who demanded an industrial union. Even though Green did not play an active role in the strike, he still bears partial responsibility for the continued erosion of rank-and-file confidence. Despite numerous complaints about Dillon's conduct of the strike, Green left his chief organizer in full command. Soon after the settlement, the Toledo FLU passed a resolution condemning Dillon's performance and urging Green to remove him. Green found the charges against Dillon "false and
without foundation," and refused to take action against him.  

Opposition to Dillon mounted in Toledo and other auto centers to the point where it became a serious point of contention when the AFL finally staged a convention to form a national automobile workers union.

Second, the strike crippled the ALB. The board's proportional representation formula had been a major cause of the strike, and neither strikers nor employers looked to the board for satisfaction during the course of the conflict. The ALB, along with the rest of the NRA machinery, would be declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on May 17, yet at least according to one historian, "It is doubtful whether the A.L.B. could have long survived the Toledo strike even if NIRA had not been declared unconstitutional, since even the employers now had some doubts as to its effectiveness."

Third, the strike compelled Green to call a constitutional convention to form an international auto workers' union. The debate over the issuance of a charter to auto workers had come to head in early 1935. The 1934 AFL convention directed the Executive Council to issue charters for unions in mass-production industries and to manage their operations for a provisional period. On February 1, 1935, representatives of the National Council for autos brought the issue of an international union before the Executive Council. The overriding issue concerned the jurisdictional
boundaries to be accorded the auto union. To no one's surprise, the craft union presidents immediately declared their opposition to an industrial charter. The Machinists, the Electrical Workers, the Plumbers, and the Bricklayers each laid claim to a portion of the workforce, and William Hutcheson of the Carpenters backed them by declaring, "I do not believe that we should give them (auto workers) a charter so broad that they could go out and claim any employee that might be employed by these automobile manufacturers."  

Green countered the arguments of the craft unionists with a sensitive description of the need for an industrial charter. Even though his conservative tactics had alienated him from rank-and-file auto workers, Green understood their desires and the necessities of organization far better than the majority of men serving on the Council. "The automobile industry," Green began, "presents the most perfect and highest development in mass production ... The workers are brought into this industry in large numbers en masse, they are employed en masse, they work together as cogs in a great machine ... Is it not reasonable to conclude that as a matter of fact men who are not regarded as skilled workers, men who are not required to exercise skill, but are required to perform a repetitive operation day in and day out would begin to think in mass terms? They become mass minded ... I must confess that I have come, you will come, and all of us
will come face to face with the fact ... that if organiza-
tion is to be established in the automobile industry it will
be upon a basis that the workers employed in the mass
production industry must join an organization en masse. We
cannot separate them.\textsuperscript{79}

John L. Lewis, recently elected to an expanded
Executive Council, was in complete agreement with Green
concerning the jurisdictional question, but rather than
attempt to reason with the narrow minded craft union heads
about the necessity of an industrial union charter, Lewis
wanted to postpone all chatter about jurisdictional rights
until the industry was fully organized. He recommended that
a charter be issued "at once" and the referral to the
Executive Council of "questions involving overlapping juris-
diction."\textsuperscript{80} Craft unionists, of course, rejected Lewis's
motion. They were unwilling to leave the all-consuming
question of jurisdiction to some future date.

The impasse in the Council was overcome when George
Harrison, president of the Railway Clerks, proposed an
amendment to Lewis's motion. Harrison suggested that the
charter include "all employees directly engaged in the
manufacture of parts (not including tools, dies, and
machinery) and assembling of those parts into completed
automobiles but not including job or contract shops manu-
facturing parts or any other employee engaged in said
automobile production plants."\textsuperscript{81} Lewis opposed the
amendment and declared that any jurisdictional restrictions at this point would hamper organization of the auto workers. Green agreed with Lewis, but in a particularly revealing statement declared that, even though he was committed to industrial unionism and believed that any other approach would lead to failure and embarrassment, he would follow the policy agreed upon by the majority of Council members. "Whatever you do I will try to carry out but I will be the target of criticism and I know we will fail." After all the wrangling, Harrison's amendment passed by a vote of 12 to 2, with Lewis and David Dubinsky of the ILGWU opposed and Green, as chair, abstaining.

Green had finally been authorized by the Council to establish an international union in autos. Because of declining enrollments in FLUs, Green hesitated to fulfill his instructions, but the partial success of the Toledo strike helped convince him that auto workers were capable of managing their own affairs. Two days after meeting with Dillon on June 17, 1935, Green polled FLU members on their attitudes toward the creation of an international. He then issued a call for a constitutional convention to begin August 26 at Detroit.

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Green had just cause for apprehension over the upcoming convention. The two key issues -- leadership and jurisdiction -- had been decided for him by the Executive Council. By maintaining a semblance of centralized control over the proposed auto union through the appointment of its officers, the Council hoped to discourage the rank-and-file unrest that proved so embarrassing to the AFL's conservative approach. Council members had also safeguarded their interests by excluding skilled workers from membership in the proposed union. Green was willing to execute the Council's instructions, yet he realized that the mass minded auto workers would not be satisfied with the charter. In the weeks prior to the convention, Machinists' President Wharton constantly reminded Green of his obligation to respect the decision of the Council. This type of pressure made Green uneasy, and he worried about the problems "I know I am going to be confronted with" at Detroit, but he nevertheless assured Wharton on August 25 that "I will endeavor ... to protect and preserve the interests of your International Union."85

Delegates from 65 of the 148 auto FLUs gathered in Detroit to establish the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America, the AFL's first international chartered in the mass-production sector of the economy. Dillon presided. One of his first acts was to select
a committee "with the honor and responsibility of proceeding to Suite 1863 of the Fort Shelby Hotel and there conveying to the president of the American Federation of Labor your desire to usher him to this convention hall." As the committee escorted Green into the hall, a chorus sang "How Do You Do, Mr. Green?" Dillon then extolled Green's leadership abilities and his achievements as a labor leader.⁸⁶

After spending several minutes basking in the warmth of this praise, Green, as diplomatically as possible, told the delegates of their restricted charter and that he would select their officers. He attempted to soften their reaction by concluding with a platitude that could well describe his life's work. Life demands "adjustments," he told the delegates, and "we must find a basis of accommodation."⁸⁷ George Lehman, chairman of the committee on constitution and laws and an ardent AFL supporter, immediately moved to accept the charter as presented by Green. A number of delegates protested and called for a charter to organize all workers "in and around automobile or parts plants." Wyndham Mortimer probably was unaware that he was expressing Green's true convictions when he rose to tell the delegates that "the craft form of organization fits into the automobile industry like a square peg in a round hole."⁸⁸

Before the vote was taken on the charter, delegates unanimously voted to accept a resolution stating that, if the charter under consideration was adopted, the
jurisdictional claims of craft unions would lead to the "gradual disintegration" of the UAW. This resolution did not call for the rejection of the charter, however, and according to the convention proceedings, the charter, with all its defects, was accepted "with but few dissenting votes." The other issue, that of leadership, gave rise to even greater acrimony than the question of jurisdiction. The Executive Council had stipulated that the AFL president would designate the officers of the new union for a temporary period. Green had apparently come to believe that this instruction would not create much opposition, since in the weeks prior to the convention, conservative members of the National Council had written him, indicating their desire to see Dillon installed as UAW president. And on the first day of the convention, the resolutions committee moved that Green appoint Dillon president. The committee also moved, however, that all other officers be elected by the convention. At this point the president of the South Bend FLU, Carl Shipley, moved that all officers be elected by the delegates and that all candidates be members of the UAW, which would have excluded Dillon. Green then picked up the gavel and, addressing the delegates as "my dear boys," tried to persuade them that Dillon was the best choice for the presidential slot. "Where can you find a man more capable, more trained ... wholehearted and sincere, than
honest Frank Dillon?" Green then ruled Shipley's motion out of order and called for a vote on Dillon's candidacy. Despite Green's backing, the convention voted 164.2 to 112.8 against Dillon.91

Three days of behind-the-scenes negotiations convinced Green that compromise was necessary if the delegates were to accept Dillon. Only the fierce opposition of the Toledo FLU, which could not forgive Dillon for his conduct of the Chevrolet strike, prevented acceptance of the original motion of the resolutions committee. Militants would later charge that Green at one point offered to allow delegates to elect all their officials if Dillon was kept on as an advisor. Green denied that he ever made such an offer.92

Despairing of compromise, Green used his authority from the Executive Council to impose leadership on the UAW on August 29. Dillon will be president, Homer Martin of the Kansas City FLU will be vice-president, and Ed Hall of the Seaman Body plant in Milwaukee will be secretary-treasurer, Green declared. No longer was Green willing to compromise with the contentious delegates. "There is no necessity of any vote of approval or disapproval," Green informed the stunned delegates. "It is the declaration of the Executive Council ... You can't bargain with the Executive Council because that is the higher tribunal."93
After Green had finished, voices of protest rose from the floor, particularly from the Toledo delegation. Green told the delegates that all protests should be taken up with the Executive Council, and then pronounced that the newly formed UAW was a "happy family." Under instructions from the Executive Council to appoint leaders, and believing that Dillon was the best man for the job, Green had no choice but to run roughshod over the majority sentiment of the convention. Thus even as Green responded to rank-and-file pressure for a union charter, he succeeded in further alienating auto unionists from the AFL cause.

More than two years of organizational work had finally resulted in the creation of an auto workers' union. Yet despite the hoopla at AFL headquarters, the Federation's campaign in the auto industry must be considered a dismal failure. On the eve of the constitutional convention, the total dues paying membership of the auto FLUs was 22,687. This estimate may have been somewhat conservative, and it did not include the approximately 20,000 members who did not pay dues. Nevertheless, after more than two years of effort, the AFL had enrolled no more than 5.4 per cent of the 421,000 wage earners employed in auto manufacturing and parts plants as of June 1935. The failure of the AFL's campaign was even more glaring if one considers that in Detroit, the heart of the industry, the AFL had organized just 2197 workers. At the gigantic Ford plant at River
Rouge, only 19 workers were AFL members. Equally important, auto workers had been able to secure only sixteen signed contracts, eight of which had been negotiated by the rebellious Toledo FLU. Yet another indication of failure was the fact that most of the workers affiliated with the AFL had little respect for the policies and leadership of the parent body. By any measure, the AFL had blown a marvelous opportunity to organize auto workers in the early years of the New Deal.

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A similar opportunity slipped through Green's hands in the rubber industry. To a much greater extent than even the auto workers, rubber workers flocked to the banner of unionism with the passage of NIRA Section 7a. Thousands of rubber workers in Akron, Ohio, where three of the four largest rubber companies were located, had joined AFL FLUs even before August 2, 1933, when Green's chosen organizer for the industry, Coleman Claherty, arrived in the city. Green's choice of the conservative Claherty, similar to his selection of Collins and Dillon, created a great deal of friction when Claherty attempted to organize workers suffused with militancy. Rubber workers soon became disillusioned with Claherty and at least one writer who followed developments in Akron, Louis Adamic, believed that
the initial surge of unionism declined largely because Claherty preached "patience and faith" while "Rubber Barons" founded company unions and refused to negotiate with independent FLUs. "The new union members demanded action from the AFL, Adamic wrote. "Action to stop speed-up. Action to get wage-cuts back. Action to protect union members from discrimination." Claherty, however, "stalled and talked and called meetings and made promises ..."96 Indeed, Claherty's favorite expression was that "Rome was not built in a day, which reflected a temperament greatly at odds with the rank-and-file's sense of urgency.97

The Executive Council's requirement of September 1933 that skilled craftsmen be parcelled out among the sixteen internationals claiming jurisdiction in the rubber industry also hindered the AFL's drive. Untutored in the politics of jurisdiction that craft organizations practiced, rubber workers showed little respect for craft union boundaries. Even after they had been parcelled out, skilled workers continued to show up at FLU meetings. FLU membership may have reached a peak of 40,000 or even 50,000, but then, as Sidney Hillman bemoaned, the AFL "started to divide those workers among the different unions claiming jurisdiction over them. As a result of that procedure, the membership of the rubber workers union fell as low as 3,000."98

At the Executive Council meeting of May 1935, which was to implement the 1934 AFL convention's instruction to
create an international union in rubber, only Green, John L. Lewis, and David Dubinsky spoke in favor of an industrial form of organization. "I think," Green told the Council, "we should deal with this in a big broad way ... If we are to organize them it will call for the yeilding on the part of some of the organizations ... for the common good."99 The craft dominated Council, however, resolved to issue a charter to rubber workers that excluded skilled workers. Although he opposed the decision, Green promised to fulfill his instructions.100

A pitiful twenty-six locals, with a total membership not much greater than 3000 workers, were affiliated with the AFL at the time of the constitutional convention, which was held in Akron on September 12, 1935. Green himself attended the convention to issue the charter. Hoping to avoid the difficulties he encountered at the UAW convention, Green began the proceedings with a lengthy lecture in which he explained why the Federation would have to retain a certain amount of control over the new organization. ":(T)he American Federation of Labor must be convinced beyond preadventure of a doubt that when a new International Union is launched that it is soundly and permanently established, that it will live to serve the workers in the industry over which the International Union has jurisdiction, that it will not fail, that it will not pass out of existence ..." He
then explained that the union's charter excluded skilled workers and warned that the new union would have to respect the jurisdictional boundaries of other AFL unions.\textsuperscript{101}

As soon as Green finished, Salvatore Camelio, who was to assume a leading role in the new union, asked "... if we the delegates assembled accept this charter, does this give the President (Green) the right to appoint its officers?" Sensing a replay of the UAW convention, Green responded forcefully that "The parent body is creating a new International Union and it cannot barter with the Union that it is creating ... This confers upon me the right to designate or appoint your officers for a probationary period providing I think, and in my judgement it seems necessary, to do that to protect your International Union."\textsuperscript{102}

The next day delegates voted on a resolution that would have permitted Green to appoint Claherty as president and provide financial assistance until the union became more firmly established. Delegates rejected the resolution by a vote of 45 5/6 to 9 1/6. Unlike the auto convention, Green made no major effort to secure support for Claherty by meeting with delegates informally. Rather, he accepted this defeat as final and told the convention:

\begin{quote}
you have decided to refuse to request me an the Executive Council to establish and finance your International headquarters ... So I accept your word as final ... Now the convention is turned over to you. You may elect your officers now from top to bottom and you may arrange to finance your convention and your organization work and carry on.
\end{quote}
Thus the establishment of an international union in the rubber industry followed a path similar to that in autos. Workers, bristling with militancy, demonstrated a strong desire to form a union. Hoping to temper their militancy but not their desire to unionize, Green assigned a conservative organizer who failed either to win worker confidence or cool workers down, but served only to create friction between the AFL and the rank-and-file. And against his better judgment, Green executed Executive Council policy by prohibiting organization of skilled workers into FLUs, which further discouraged workers from joining the AFL. Finally, Green aggravated an already tense relationship by attempting to foist an unwanted leadership on the new unions at their founding conventions.

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Since an international union with an undefined jurisdiction already existed in the steel industry, Green and the AFL front office did not play a leading role in the organization of steel workers in the early years of the New Deal. The Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers (AA), however, was extremely weak, holding fewer than 5000 members and less than $30,000 in its treasury as of June 1933. The union's president, Michael Tighe, was referred to as "Grandmother" because of his advanced age and
timidity in dealing with employers. The AA's membership was composed primarily of skilled craftsmen, and even after the passage of NIRA Section 7a, Tighe and his executive board showed no interest in organizing the great majority of the industry's workforce, which was unskilled and semi-skilled. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that by the spring of 1934 a powerful opposition group, known as the rank-and-file movement, had emerged within the union and declared itself in favor of reorganizing the industry along industrial lines and prepared to force employer recognition by strikes if necessary. 104

By the time of the AA convention in April-May 1934, the rank-and-file movement was strong enough to secure passage of a resolution calling for an industry-wide strike on June 16 unless all major steel producers entered into agreements with the union. As expected, the steel firms ignored the threat, and both sides geared up for an industrial war. Two days before the strike date, Green conferred with President Roosevelt at the White House and discussed with him legislation then being formulated which would enable the President to create a steel labor board. Even though Green at this time was lobbying for the Wagner bill, he agreed not to condemn Public Resolution No. 44 in public, for Green, like Roosevelt, hoped to avoid a strike if at all possible, especially one he believed the AFL had little chance of winning. The next day, at a special AA
convention, Green, assuming what many delegates regarded as a "dictatorial manner," convinced a majority of delegates to abandon the strike in return for a promise that Roosevelt would create a government board to investigate and adjust complaints, conduct elections, and hear cases of discrimination against union members.105

The 1934 AFL convention authorized the Executive Council to conduct an organizing drive in steel, and the Council met in January 1935 to discuss the venture. As might have been expected, Green, Lewis, and Dubinsky were the only ones who supported the organization of steel workers into FLUs until a new international union in the industry could be chartered. But craft leaders expressed concern about violating the charter rights of the AA, and Tighe had let it be known that he would refuse to stand quietly by and allow the creation of a new international union in the steel industry.106

In an unusual show of firmness, Green then urged a campaign in steel conducted along industrial lines, regardless of the AA's jurisdiction. "I am satisfied in my own mind that the officers of the Amalgamated can not organize those workers with their own resources or with the set-up as it is, with the National organization based upon the philosophy upon which rests or upon pursuing the policy which it is pursuing."

Green gave vent to his personal views in this instance probably because he realized, as Lewis
certainly did, that an unorganized steel industry posed a serious threat to the UMW's position in the captive mines. Nevertheless, the craft union view prevailed and the Executive Council instructed Green to initiate a joint campaign of all unions with an interest in the steel industry. ¹⁰⁸

Having already expressed his belief that a campaign such as the one he was instructed to undertake was doomed to failure, Green did not relish the task before him. As did many others in the labor movement, Green probably recognized that the aborted 1919 steel drive proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the joint organizing strategy could not succeed. Thus, despite the crucial need to organize steel workers, Green did almost nothing to organize them. When the staff of the AA journal wrote Green in August 1935 for a detailed description of his organizing plans, he responded brusquely that he had none. ¹⁰⁹ In the final analysis, responsibility for the failure to organize steelworkers before 1936 rested not so much on Green, but on the moribund AA and the craft union officials' unbending opposition to an industrial union drive.

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In autos, rubber, steel, and other mass-production industries, the AFL under Green had muffed an apparently
marvelous opportunity to organize workers in the first three years of the New Deal. NIRA Section 7a seemed to hold such promise and the outpouring of union sentiment among mass-production workers was enough to shock even the "old, tried veterans" of the labor movement, but the AFL failed to establish itself as a major force in any of the massproduction industries. To be sure, some gains had been made. Between 1933 and 1935, Green issued 1804 FLU charters, most of which went to auto, rubber, and lumber workers. Numerous FLUs were also set up for gasoline filling station, aluminum, and radio workers. As of 1935, 111,500 workers were enrolled in FLUs, the highest FLU membership figure ever, but still only a tiny portion of the millions of employees in the mass-production sector. Further, the AFL had been unable to win a signed contract with a major employer in steel, autos, or rubber. AFL efforts, then, must be considered a failure.

Some of the reasons for this failure were obvious. First, employers in these industries were the most resourceful, sophisticated, and ruthless opponents of trade unionism, and they were unwilling to open their doors to the AFL simply because the federal government passed a single piece of fuzzily-phrased legislation. Second, the federal government did not attempt to use its coercive powers to force these employers to abide by the law. On the contrary, as we have seen, the government often sided with industry's interpretation of Section 7a. Third, within the AFL, the
selfish practices of craft unionists who dominated the Executive Council hampered the organization of the unorganized. A fourth reason, equally important yet not so obvious, was the outmoded morality of the AFL president, who was personally responsible for conducting the drives of these years.

Throughout his career in the trade union movement, Green was a conservative accommodationist; he sought the traditional goals of trade unions -- higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions -- not through strikes or work stoppages, but through appeals based on the economic benefits of unions, moral suasion, and negotiation. His approach rested on the ability to convince employers to allow the unionization of their workforce, rather than the ability to motivate workers to unionize. He sought union gains by appealing to the reason and morality of employers, not the class consciousness of workers. This approach was nurtured during his early years in the UMW and reinforced by his commitment to the social gospel.

Green never abandoned this conservative approach. Years of constant failure not induce him to discard attitudes toward the labor movement that had been ingrained for decades. Even his experiences during the depression years, when employers proved unable to keep the economy on a sound footing and continued to resist labor's right to organize even after the passage of federal legislation
guaranteeing this right, could not dislodge these convictions. Appeals to employers based on reason and justice still held tremendous promise, Green conjectured in 1935, because the vast majority of employers were decent and fair-minded people. "The majority of employers sincerely and honestly wish to maintain decent wage standards and humane conditions of employment. They seek neither the exploitation of Labor nor the exploitation of the consuming public. They are inspired by a keen sense of justice and are influenced in all their business dealings by a spirit of fair-dealing and fair-play." The majority of employers also recognized that unions could play a key role in the economy by insuring high wages, fostering consumerism, and maintaining a proper balance between production and consumption.\(^\text{111}\)

In Green's view, the growth of trade unionism was impeded not because employers were determined to protect their class interests, but because a minority of employers "engage in unfair trade practices, sell goods below cost, cut and slash prices, including wages, and increase hours of employment for the selfish purpose of gaining an unfair advantage over some competitor."\(^\text{112}\) Because of their immorality, their selfishness, fair-dealing employers were forced to respond in kind if they wanted to stay in business. The actions of a few unscrupulous employers, therefore, made the organization of the unorganized a difficult proposition.
The AFL's fight to secure legal recognition of the right to organize, according to Green, was as admission that moral suasion could not induce every employer to pay decent wages and maintain reasonable hours of employment. These few had to be compelled to do what most employers were willing to do.

The passage of Section 7a seemed to insure that recalcitrant employers would tow the line in the best interests of society as a whole. Section 7a did not mean that workers could now band together under government sanction and wrest concessions from capitalists. Quite the contrary, Section 7a meant that cooperation was now an even greater possibility, that a moral relationship could be established between workers and management. This was the perspective from which Green approached the organizing drives of the early 1930s.

Green's belief that the majority of employers would allow the organization of their workforce in the name of decency and for the betterment of society as a whole was hopelessly naive and would be hilarious were it not so tragic. Employer efforts in these years to frustrate labor organization were legion. The simplest and the favorite anti-union device of employers was the company union. Soon after the passage of NIRA, the National Association of Manufacturers printed model constitutions for company unions and distributed them to employers across the country.
Between June and November 1933, the number of company unions more than doubled. Few plants in steel, autos, or rubber were without a management-run employee representation plan by the end of 1933. And according to a Bureau of Labor Statistics' survey, 81 of 96 companies interviewed indicated that their company unions were formed either in response to Section 7a or the threat of trade union inroads.113

Much more ominous were the anti-union practices later uncovered by the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee, a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, which, between 1936 and 1940, investigated employer interference with labor's right to organize and bargain collectively. The LaFollette Committee examined only four of the most pernicious anti-union devices favored by mass-production industries: espionage, stockpiling of munitions, strikebreaking, and intimidation by armed police. The conclusion of the Committee was that management was and had been for years conducting "a colossal, daily drive in every part of the country to frustrate enunciated labor policy ..."114 The number of firms employing labor spies astounded Committee members, who found espionage so pervasive they did not believe collective bargaining could be successful as long as the practice continued. To cite only one example, in the FLU for GM workers at Flint at least three of the thirteen members of the executive board were spies,
including the chairman of the organizing committee.
LaFollette Committee members believed that espionage was the
major reason why membership of the FLU, which reached a
height of 26,000 in 1934, fell to 120 by 1936.\textsuperscript{115} If spies
failed to dispel the lure of unionism, employers had stock­
piles of tear gas, machine guns, gas bombs, clubs, and other
weapons to deal with a troublesome workforce. Between 1933
and 1937, four steel companies -- U.S. Steel, Republic
Steel, Bethlehem Steel, and Youngstown Sheet and Tube --
each procured more tear and nauseating gas than did any law
enforcement agency in the U.S.\textsuperscript{116} The LaFollette Committee
showed the extremes to which employers in mass-production
industries were willing to go to meet the challenge of
unionism. These were Green's "fair-dealing" employers, the
ones with whom he wanted to cooperate, the ones who would
accept unions after he described their economic benefits,
the ones susceptible to moral suasion.

To forgo voluntarily the only weapons at the
disposal of unions, strikes and work stoppages, and to rely
solely on moral suasion and economic arguments was nothing
short of madness in the 1930s. Recalcitrant employers, who
found nothing funny about independent trade unions, surely
must have laughed when Green begged, as he did in October
1933: "Masters, render unto your servants that which is just
and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven."
Appeals such as this made to class conscious, powerful
employers had no effect. "If we are to go forward to a better world without a transition marked by class hatred, violence and bloodshed, progress must come through ... the voluntary relinquishment of privilege and power by our privileged classes ..." The mere asking of GM, Ford, Republic Steel, and other mass-production firms to relinquish voluntarily unilateral power revealed just how removed Green was from the realities of the 1930s.

The rank-and-file in the mass-production industries knew better than Green that employers responded only to the language of economic power. Green's attempt to maintain his fruitless, conservative strategy alienated large elements of the rank-and-file who responded to trade union appeals in 1933 and 1934. Green's opposition to strikes proved so discouraging to workers that most of those who joined FLUs departed by 1935. Why would a worker in autos or rubber join the AFL at the risk of losing his job for union activity if in return Green would denounce their militancy and beg on bended knee to employers in their behalf?

From Green's perspective, the militancy workers exhibited was a sign of their trade union inexperience. To a large degree paternalism characterized Green's relations with the rank-and-file. His reference to delegates at the founding convention of the UAW as "my dear boys" revealed that Green, who was sixty-five years old in 1935, regarded the new unionists as youngsters who lacked education in
trade union practices. When Daniel Tobin of the Teamsters asked Green at an Executive Council meeting in February 1935 to characterize the rank-and-file movement in steel, Green told him that "They are a lot of poor fellows, untrained and uneducated." An experienced union member, in Green's estimation, was one who shunned class conflict, resorted to strikes only as a last resort, and always remained willing to negotiate a quick settlement of grievances. Those thousands of workers who flocked into FLUs had to be educated. In almost every instance between 1933 and 1935, Green counseled them against strike action.

From the perspective of the rank-and-file, education in trade union practices along the lines Green advocated meant being "sold out." Since Green was always ready to negotiate a quick settlement to prevent a strike, no matter how limited the gains, his policies were identified closely with those of management. Workers saw in Green's desire to maintain harmonious relations between capital and labor not an admirable commitment to Christian principles, but weakness and fear of corporate power. At a time when workers themselves were losing their fear of employer coercion, Green's call to settle all industrial disputes at the conference table fell on deaf ears. The young militants of the 1930s had not been reared on social gospel principles. They saw nothing moral about a willingness to compromise with employers who laid them off or reduced their wages at
will and who refused to respect their right to organize.

The gulf between Green and the rank-and-file was not a matter of trade union objectives. Both Green and the majority of workers in the 1930s fought primarily to improve working conditions and, above all, to increase job security. Green and the rank-and-file split over strategy and tactics. The rank-and-file proved willing to employ almost any tactic to secure their objectives, while Green, with his social gospel predilections, could not countenance militancy and the breakdown of industrial peace.

Green's failure to sanction worker militancy left the door wide open to radicals to win the confidence of the workers. In the great strikes of 1934, workers followed radical leaders not because of a shared hostility to capitalism, but because radicals educated them in the use of militant tactics and gave them confidence in the power of collective economic action. The Toledo Auto-Lite strikers were certainly not all Musteites, but they welcomed the support of the American Workers' Party because this group showed them how to organize mass pickets and how to use the unemployed to help the employed. Wyndham Mortimer appealed to auto workers not because he was a Communist, but because he understood their needs and respected their militant spirit. William Green did not have this confidence in the rank-and-file. He placed his faith in religious principles.
NOTES


2. Green to Presidents of International Unions, May 27, 1933, Reel 8, frames 30-32, WGC OHS.


9. Collins to Green, August 5, 1933, Reel 18, frame 447, WGC OHS.

10. Wharton to Green, July 29, 1933, National Union File 6 (Machinists), AFL-CIO Archives.

11. Green to Hayes, July 28, 1933, Reel 17, frame 866, WGC OHS.

12. Fine, Automobile, pp. 142-143.

13. Green to Wharton, August 2, 1933, National Union File 6 (Machinists), AFL-CIO Archives.


15. Wharton to Green, August 8, 1933, National Union File 6 (Machinists), AFL-CIO Archives.


17. Ibid., p. 94.

18. Ibid., p. 96.
19. Green to United Automobile Workers, December 1, 1933, Reel 19, frame 226, WGC OHS.


21. Green to United Automobile Workers, December 23, 1933, Reel 19, frame 466, WGC OHS.

22. Green to United Automobile Workers, January 8, 1934, Reel 19, frame 772, WGC OHS.


29. Ibid., pp. 291-292.

30. Ibid., p. 291.

31. Ibid.


33. Ibid.

34. American Federationist, November 1933, p. 1178.


37. Ibid.

38. Green to Coleman Claherty, May 25, 1934, AFL Strike File, Local 18384, AFL-CIO Archives; Fine, Automobile, p. 279; Bernstein, Turbulent Years, p. 224.

40. Green to Collins, May 26, 1934, Reel 19, frame 887, WGC OHS.

41. Fine, Automobile, p. 296.

42. Ibid.


45. Wyndham Mortimer, Organize!: My Life as a Union Man (Boston, 1971), p. 77.

46. Fine, Automobile, pp. 299-300, 304.

47. Mortimer, p. 77.

48. Ibid.

49. Green to Shipley, November 26, 1934, Reel 20, frames 466-467, WGC OHS.


51. Ibid., pp. 381-2.

52. Dillon to Green, November 13, 1934, Reel 20, frame 285, WGC OHS.


57. Fine, Automobile, p. 383.

58. Ibid.

59. Green to Reeves, March 18, 1935, Reel 21, frame 544, WGC OHS.


62. Green to Shipley, February 7, 1935, Reel 21, frame 279, WGC OHS.

63. Address to Toledo Central Labor Union, February 17, 1935, Reel 17, frame 52, WGC OHS.


66. Ibid., p. 366.


69. Ibid., p. 337.

70. Ibid., p. 345; Green to Dillon, May 9, 1935, AFL Strike File, Local 18384, AFL-CIO Archives.


72. Ibid., pp. 347-348.


77. Fine, Automobile, p. 401.


81. Ibid., p. 125.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
85. Green to Wharton, August 25, 1935, Reel 22, frame 447, WGC OHS.
87. Ibid., p. 378.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid., p. 418.
93. Ibid., p. 379.
94. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
102. Ibid., pp. 267-268.
103. Ibid., p. 268.
105. Ibid., pp. 198-203.

106. Galenson, p. 76.

107. Ibid.

108. Ibid., 76-77.

109. Green to Amalgamated Journal, August 15, 1935, Reel 9, frame 616, WGC OHS.

110. Morris, pp. 158-159.

111. Green, "Speech," June 7, 1935, Reel 15, frames 589-590, WGC OHS.

112. Ibid.


115. Ibid., p. 99.


CHAPTER V

A CONFLICT OF STYLES AND PRINCIPLES: 1932-1935

It would be difficult to imagine two more distinct styles of union leadership than those of William Green and John L. Lewis in the 1930s. Even their physical appearance in these years was a study in contrast. The troubles that beset the Federation in the early New Deal years apparently did not diminish in any way Green's complacent demeanor. He simply did not look as though he was experiencing the most serious crisis of his professional career. Sixty-five years old in 1935, Green had the solemn appearance of well-fed, rosy-cheeked, financially secure Baptist preacher. He was short, balding, and overweight. His face was that of a cherub: fatty tissue bulged his cheeks so that his face formed an almost perfect circle; his soft blue eyes partially hidden behind pince-nez had a sincere yet apologetic look; and his small, thin-lipped mouth seemed always ready to smile. His conservative, well-tailored suits, his sparse but neatly combed hair, and the gold watch chain he invariably wore across his ample midsection all exuded...
respectability. Indeed, the only reminder of his twenty years in the coal mines of Coshocton was a number of vague blue spots deep beneath the surface of his facial skin.¹

Green's public posture also befitted a minister: unassuming yet dignified. One journalist observed that his bearing was "as plain, as plodding, and as undramatic as his name."² His speaking voice was rhythmical, stentorian in volume, and accompanied by few gestures except for occasional waves of the hand to emphasize key points. His voice had the effect of lulling his audiences rather than stirring them to action and, according to one labor correspondent, his speeches "kept things going through dull spots of an AFL convention, when the boys wanted time for a drink, a caucus, a poker game."³ His ideas were invariably presented in time-worn platitudes and Biblical injunctions, leading Westbrook Pegler to brand him as the "All-American mush-mouth."⁴ Len DeCaux, the publicity director of the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), who had a great deal more sympathy for Green than most CIO officials, commented incisively that "He was above all a respectable person; a happier fate might have made him a reverend one."⁵

By contrast, John L. Lewis was an imposing figure. Although slightly less than six feet tall, Lewis had a huge frame that made him appear much larger. He was fifty-five years old in 1935 and tipped the scales at 230 pounds. And
while Green's face seemed to apologize, Lewis's face seemed to threaten. His forest-like eyebrows, his deep set eyes, and the ever-present scowl gave Lewis an ominous guise. Lewis consciously adopted his famous angry frown for he believed it suited the leader of the coal miners. As he told Frances Perkins, "Madame Secretary, that scowl is worth a million dollars." Dubofsky and Van Tine have suggested that Lewis was keenly aware of his public posture and "cultivated an image of size, strength and anger." In public, Lewis swaggered and always sought to dominate. And he usually did. His oratorical skills were perhaps no greater than Green's, but he used these skills for different ends. While Green sought to soothe, Lewis pummeled his audiences. As Irving Bernstein notes, "His words were weapons of warfare, not tools of analysis or communication. As weapons they were supremely adapted to the attack -- the epithet, the insult, the defamatory adjective."

Beneath the comparatively superficial qualities of appearance and bearing lay worldviews remarkably similar and yet ultimately at odds with one another. Both Lewis and Green were committed to the capitalist system and yet both opposed laissez-faire, "dog-eat-dog" capitalism or the irresponsible, anti-social, anti-union variety of capitalism represented by the giant mass-production industries. Both Lewis and Green were committed to the improvement of labor's
position within the existing economic structure. Both also believed that the success of capitalism in America was founded upon technological innovation, which provided the source of all wage increases, and a strong labor movement, which guaranteed a more equitable distribution of income. Yet while they agreed that a strong labor movement was essential for the maintenance of prosperity, Lewis and Green held radically different views as to what a strong labor movement was and how it should be used.

Lewis's overriding concern was the acquisition and use of power. He was in fact obsessed with power. In order to subdue irresponsible capital, Lewis believed that labor must be tightly and completely organized and willing to engage in warfare on the economic and political fronts. Even though he shunned the use of the term "class conflict," Lewis often referred to labor's struggle with military allusions. He was an opportunist who was willing to use any means at his disposal, any tactic, to wrest power from the White House, Congress, and industry. Declining to ponder the distant future, Lewis focused solely on present-day demands and the means necessary to achieve them. As his biographers note, Lewis was "the complete chameleon, always ready to change colors to suit a new milieu ... Life was a contest to Lewis in which success went not to the best sportsman or the man who followed the rules but to the man
who made his own rules and played the game according to present needs, not past rituals."

Green, on the other hand, had a severely limited understanding of power. His desire to improve the lot of America's working men and women was every bit as, and perhaps even more, sincere than Lewis's, but Green was very selective in his choice of weapons. Indeed, he relied almost exclusively on the power of moral persuasion. In Green's view, union gains would be secured not by the organized might of the workers themselves, but by a change of heart among employers and government leaders. The labor movement must secure the backing of public opinion and induce employers to live up to the Golden Rule. He recognized that placing capitalism upon a moral footing implied "a revolution in thinking for most of those in responsible economic and political positions" but believed it was the only strategy that could achieve permanent results. Unlike Lewis, Green did not calculate strategy based upon existing power relationships. Green's strategy was constant and was based upon what could and should be, not upon what was. Much more than Lewis, Green focused on ultimate ends, believing that labor and society in general must progress toward a Christian cooperative ideal. The strategies of class warfare, therefore, did not represent progress but rather the continuance of the rule of force and immorality.
Green was a reformer and an idealist. While Lewis appreciated the first he had little patience with the second. Lewis was convinced that every person had a price and could be bought or bullied into submission. One need only to read his book, *The Miner's Fight for American Standards* (1925), to recognize that for Lewis, idealism was a sham that hid more base motives. One historian has concluded that since Lewis had no understanding of ideals, he "mis-understood men like Powers Hapgood and John Brophy; when they fought him (in the 1920s) because they believed him morally wrong he thought they were feathering their own nests." Lewis's reaction would be the same when Green attacked him for destroying the unity of the labor movement.

Friction was bound to develop between men of such divergent temperaments and attitudes if forced to work together. And as we have seen, the working relationship between the two men while Green was secretary-treasurer and Lewis president of the UMW was hardly ideal. But even Lewis's actions in the 1920s, when he twisted Green's arm to fix the union's books, could not dispel the loyalty Green felt for the UMW. Despite their personal differences, Green was loathe to leave the union that had been his home for the first thirty-four years of his professional life. Moreover, Green undoubtedly appreciated the fact that Lewis was the first UMW president to give the union stability, continuity, and a diminution of factionalism. By his own admission
Green consented to be kicked upstairs to the post of AFL president only at the insistence of Lewis and the UMW executive board.  

During his January 1925 farewell address to the UMW, Green assured the miners that "At all times (as AFL president) I will be inspired by the fact that I can count upon your sympathy, co-operation and support." But it was to be Green who came to the aid of Lewis and the UMW, using the power and prestige of his office numerous times in their behalf in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Green was the chief fundraiser during the anthracite and bituminous strikes between 1925 and 1927. Green was able to report to the 1928 AFL convention that the Federation had raised hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of food, clothing, and supplies, in addition to almost $700,000 in cash.  

Green again came to Lewis's aid in 1929 when union financial difficulties forced Lewis to petition the Executive Council for exoneration of part of the UMW's per capita assessment. Although the Council granted the request, the Carpenters' union strongly opposed the decision. Green then went to bat for Lewis before the Council, explaining the situation in terms the Carpenters could accept, and thus making it possible for the UMW to stay in the black.  

One year later, Green supported Lewis's bid for the Secretary of Labor post, calling on President Hoover numerous times and
expressing sincere displeasure when Lewis did not get the nod. 16

Green's most notable service to Lewis in these years was his role in squashing a powerful insurgent movement — led by such figures as Frank Farrington, Alex Howat, John Walker, John Brophy, and Adolph Germer — that mounted a serious challenge to Lewis's control of the UMW. The center of the opposition movement was Illinois District 12, Lewis's home district and the only district in which bituminous miners were well organized during labor's "lean years." When Lewis revoked the charter of this rebellious district in October 1929, the officers of District 12 and other opposition leaders pointed to a technicality and declared that the UMW constitution was void and called for a constitutional convention at Springfield, Illinois on March 10, 1930 to reestablish the union. Lewis responded by calling for a UMW convention the same day at Indianapolis. 17

The assemblage at Springfield, which became known as the Reorganized United Mine Workers (RUMW), resolved to ask Green's assistance in working out a formula for unity that would place William B. Wilson and Green temporarily in charge of the miners' union. But at the time the resolution at Springfield was being passed, Green was addressing the Indianapolis convention, throwing the prestige of the AFL behind Lewis, and denouncing the insurgents for the crime of dual unionism. "When a charter of affiliation is granted to
an organization by the A. F. of L. . . . ," Green explained to the cheering delegates, "the A. F. of L. enters into a solemn covenant with that organization to which the charter is granted. It gives it jurisdiction; it recognizes its authority; it clothes it with the power of absolute autonomy. And having granted these rights . . . the A. F. of L. is under obligation to support that organization in the exercise of its jurisdictional and autonomous rights."18

Green was Lewis's trump card at Indianapolis. While Green's actions alone did not account for the demise of the RUMW, his efforts were significant in allowing Lewis to retain control of the union.19 And his behavior -- this time on Lewis's behalf -- was based upon principles he would uphold against Lewis after 1935.

One aspect of Green's role in squashing the insurgents, for instance, revealed his unflagging commitment to labor unity. John H. Walker, Green's longtime friend and president of the Illinois Federation of Labor, was deeply involved in the RUMW from the beginning. When UMW officials pressured Green to remove him from office because of his complicity in setting up the Springfield convention, Green wrote Walker on March 6, 1930 demanding an explanation. Walker replied with a long letter attacking Lewis and his conduct of union affairs. Green refused to accept this explanation for, as he wrote Walker, "the merits of the controversy" between Lewis and the insurgents was not at
issue. The only issue in question was union autonomy and Walker had violated this principle by arranging the convention of a dual union. On March 20 Green demanded the resignation of his friend. Perhaps Lewis never fully appreciated the tenacity with which Green attacked even old chums guilty of undermining union solidarity.

As a result of Green's various efforts in behalf of the UMW, Lewis seemed quite satisfied with Green's leadership of the Federation. As late as October 1931, Lewis called the AFL president "capable and aggressive." Two years later, however, it was apparent that Lewis had grown dissatisfied with Green's conduct of affairs and even began to regret that he had boosted Green into the AFL presidency. By the spring of 1935 Green and Lewis were embroiled in a bitter feud. Between the years 1932 and 1935 the divergent outlooks of the two men had once again come to the fore and this time there would be no compromise.

The passage of NIRA Section 7a in June 1933 was the event which created the head-on collision between the leadership styles of Lewis and Green. Both men had lobbied energetically for the insertion of a guarantee of labor's right to organize and yet Green and Lewis held diametrically opposed views as to how Section 7a could be used to benefit organized labor. As we have seen, Green heralded the passage of Section 7a as the dawning of a new era in industrial relations, a promise that government was
committed to cooperation between labor and capital. The act revived his hopes that the relations between employers and employees could be established on a basis of morality and mutual respect.

Lewis saw Section 7a differently. To be sure, Lewis frequently resorted to the state in an effort to revitalize the UMW. But unlike Green, who waited for employers and the state to permit the establishment of unions, Lewis recognized that workers had to rely on their collective strength and militancy, not on the Christian spirit of employers and government officials. Only after workers were fully unionized would labor gain real political influence. The "favorable attention" labor leaders received from government and industry, Lewis was fond of explaining, "comes as a result that back of us is organization." Rather than wait for a change of heart among employers and state officials, Lewis put his faith in the economic power of workers themselves.

Green feared the militancy that erupted among rank-and-file mass-production workers with the passage of Section 7a. He believed it would create adverse public opinion and destroy the chances for peaceful cooperation between industry and labor under government supervision. He regarded militancy as a reversion to the barbaric days of industrial relations and believed it could lead only to the moral and economic bankruptcy of the labor movement. Lewis
harbored no such moralistic qualms. Indeed, Lewis recognized that worker militancy was his most potent weapon in negotiations with employers and government. He understood that militancy in and of itself could not guarantee success, for an inopportune strike could spell disaster. But he realized that without a militant rank-and-file, a union leader was essentially powerless. Thus Lewis welcomed the upsurge of militancy among coal miners in 1933, and he made frequent use of the strike threat to wring concessions from coal operators and the government. Conversely, Lewis used his ability to restrain the rank-and-file to maintain harmonious relations with President Roosevelt.25

John L. Lewis would not allow the obstacles that overcame Green -- overcautiousness, moral opposition to militancy, and respect for outmoded jurisdictional boundaries -- to prevent him from seizing the opportunity presented by Section 7a and the upsurge of union sentiment among the unorganized. By the summer of 1934, Lewis had resurrected the UMW and was committed to the organization of all mass-production workers. For more than a year, he would attempt to organize them from within the AFL, using various tactics to mobilize the Federation into action. Yet Lewis placed his faith not in the AFL hierarchy, but in the increasingly class conscious mass-production workers themselves. He was willing to support their militancy, espouse their hopes, and thus present himself as a class conscious
labor leader. He sympathized with the plight of these workers and echoed their contempt for men such as Green who advocated a partnership between labor and capital, telling them that while "labor and capital may be partners in theory, (they) . . . are enemies in fact."²⁶ As Dubofsky and Van Tine argue, "Lewis caught the gut feelings of auto and rubber workers," and reinforced their determination "to battle their employers."²⁷

While Green had suited Lewis's purposes on matters of crucial importance to the UMWA when the union was in dire straits, Lewis had little confidence that the moralist Green was capable of conducting successful campaigns in autos, rubber, or steel. Lewis had himself often employed the strategy of cooperation; he had done so in the 1920s and would do so again in the late 1940s and 1950s. Yet Lewis pursued cooperation as an expedient; he was not morally committed to the strategy. Unlike Green, Lewis recognized that the strategy of cooperation was unworkable in the climate of the early New Deal years. Employers were too well organized, too class conscious, too adamant in their resistance to unions. His experiences in the coal strikes and code negotiations of 1933-1934 convinced him that government officials would begin to play an increasingly important role in labor-capital relations, but he was also quite certain that only a militant, organized army of workers would compel government administrators to support
unions in their struggle against management. The times called for a union leader who would pose as a class warrior and move without hesitation to capitalize on worker unrest and thereby revolutionize not only the labor movement but power relations in the nation as a whole. 

Green was not such a labor leader. He did not share Lewis's sense of urgency. He did not believe the AFL was squandering the opportunity presented by Section 7a and labor's uprising. Indeed, he claimed in 1934 and again in 1935 that the AFL was making substantial progress. Certainly he saw the need for further advances, but the situation was not so desperate as to risk the destruction of the AFL and the abandonment of peaceful cooperation. Rather than risk achievements he believed labor had won by supporting the "immoral" militancy of the rank-and-file, Green stuck to his strategy of moral suasion. Green preferred to ask the Roosevelt Administration to live up to its stated ideals of promoting justice and equality rather than face squarely the fact that government in the New Deal years responded favorably to the better organized, more powerful party in any given conflict. The sound, cautious, peaceful policies of the AFL were making progress, Green insisted, and there was no need for alarm. In a speech in September 1934, Green likened the labor movement to a ship in troubled waters:
Like a vessel sailing upon the high seas, enveloped in a fog so thick and heavy as to be impenetrable, the ship of Trade-Unionism has cut through the waves of economic adversity along a safe and chartered course. It has not been diverted from the well-marked line of ocean travel by the siren blasts of the opportunist nor has it risked the safety of those on board by a reckless drive into the shoals of experimentation.

Green's caustic reference to the "opportunist" was undoubtedly aimed at Lewis, for by the fall of 1934 Green realized that his former boss, and numerous others, were challenging his ability to lead the labor movement. Green often felt the need to defend his cautious, moralistic leadership style. Yet mere words were not sufficient to appease those who envisioned a more militant labor movement capable of organizing mass-production workers and of wielding tremendous economic and political power. The "siren blasts" of Lewis the class warrior reflected the sentiments of rank-and-file workers who chafed under Green's ineffective leadership.

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If Green and Lewis represented two distinct styles of union leadership in the 1930s, craft unionists represented a third. Compared to Green and Lewis, both of whom in their own way sought the organization and advancement of the entire working class, the craft unionists who dominated
the Executive Council were Neanderthals completely devoid of social vision. Daniel Tobin of the Teamsters, William Hutcheson of the Carpenters, and their cronies were interested only in the affairs of their own individual unions, which they ran as private businesses, and in maintaining control over the affairs of the Federation. The cause of Christian cooperation or the economic and political possibilities of a massive labor movement held no appeal for them. They safeguarded their interests by an inflexible adherence to the chief weapon at their disposal: the principle of exclusive jurisdiction. On this issue craft unionists refused to compromise, even at the expense of the organization of the unorganized and the unity of the labor movement.

Craft consciousness had been the guiding spirit of the Federation since its inception. Conditioned to think in terms of the skilled craftsman rather than the unskilled factory worker, early AFL leaders viewed craft unionism as the most logical approach to the problem of organization. They were certainly not unaware of the levelling influence of technology upon skill, and in 1888 Gompers had in fact suggested organization into industrial divisions. Nothing came of this proposal, however. Since the skilled worker had taken the lead in organizing, the craft union remained the dominant form of organization, even though jurisdictional lines became blurred by the advances of technology.
In their struggle to increase membership, craft unions, if needed, could be quite flexible on the issue of structure. They afforded themselves substantial leeway and room to maneuver in order to meet changing conditions. Thus most craft unions represented a curious blend of craft-industrial jurisdictions.30

Despite their flexibility, craft unions were woefully inadequate to meet the needs of an industrial working class in the 1930s. As both Green and Lewis recognized, the millions of unskilled and semi-skilled workers could not be parcelled out among the existing craft organizations. The work of an unskilled factory hand did not fit any of the existing jurisdictions. Further, mass-production workers expressed no interest in joining craft unions. They were, in Green's words, "mass minded," and demanded the creation of new and massive unions that would include all workers in a particular industry. Craft unions could not meet this demand. The Federation's compromise, the FLU, was a temporary expedient, one that did not resolve the basic issue. Craft unionists correctly regarded the erection of new industrial unions that would embrace millions of workers and wield tremendous power at AFL conventions as a threat to their continued control of the Federation. They thus put forth jurisdictional claims over handfuls of skilled workers in autos, rubber, and other basic industries to prevent the organization of all workers in each industry and the rise of
powerful new unions that would assume control of the AFL.

The intellectual standardbearers of craft union ideology in the 1930s were John P. Frey and Matthew Woll. Frey, who was sixty-four years old in 1935, had been vice-president of the Iron Molders since 1900, a post he would hold until 1950. One historian has described him as "dogmatic, self-important, a snob, given to the ad hominem argument, and a big hater. He sincerely believed that skilled workers were better than ordinary workers." Upon the death of Gompers, Frey formed close ties with other craft unionists on the Executive Council, especially Tobin, Hutcheson, and Arthur Wharton of the Machinists. These leaders successfully worked for his election as secretary of the Metal Trades Department in 1927 and president of that body in 1934 so that Frey could watch out for their interests within the Federation while they ran their own unions without interference. Frey was an arch-Republican and anti-New Dealer who was deeply committed to the protection of craft union interests.

Matthew Woll was a relatively young labor leader in 1935, just fifty-five years old, even though he had already served a long tenure as president of the Photo Engravers Union from 1906 to 1929. Although the Photo Engravers had a membership of only a few thousand, Woll became an important figure in the Federation because of his close association with Gompers, and he was in fact considered Gompers' heir
apparent. Woll was elected eighth vice-president of the AFL in 1919, thereby becoming a member of the Executive Council. After stepping down as president of the Photo Engravers, Woll played virtually no role in the affairs of any union, devoting most of his time instead to his post as an officer of the Union Labor Life Insurance Company. Woll was perhaps the most talented red-baiter in the AFL and, next to Frey, the best versed in craft union traditions. 33

If Woll and Frey were the chief dogmatists of craft unionism, Hutcheson and Tobin were the premier practitioners. The outrageously obese William Hutcheson was sixty-one years old in 1935 and czar of the Carpenters union from 1919 until 1952. A lifelong Republican, he consistently supported conservatives for office and opposed New Deal policies. Under his leadership, the Carpenters were more concerned with protecting their jurisdiction than with recruiting new members. His organizing staff initiated jurisdictional disputes with other unions to increase membership rather than working to enlist nonunion carpenters. Hutcheson ignored the unorganized while claiming jurisdiction whenever another union entered the field. A popular saying among unionists was that "God created the forests and He gave them to Bill Hutcheson." But by the 1930s, long after technology had undermined much of the need for skilled carpenters, Hutcheson based his jurisdictional claims on the principle that anything ever made of wood was carpenters' work. Thus
Hutcheson was continually at war with machinists, bricklayers, and other unions. 34

Irish born Daniel Tobin was sixty years old in 1935 and had been president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters since 1907. The long standing tradition of local autonomy prevented Tobin from exercising real power over Teamster locals, and Tobin devoted most of his energies to the activities of the Federation. He served as an Executive Council member from 1907 until his death in 1955, excepting only the period between late 1929 and early 1934. As did Hutcheson, Tobin refused to extend money and organizers for campaigns in the mass-production industries, for he did not want unskilled workers in his organization. He expanded his union by allowing local leaders to compete with other unions for workers already organized, while he battled other craft unions for jurisdictional rights to these workers at the national level. 35

Tobin and Hutcheson, along with like-minded craft unionists, controlled AFL policy in the 1930s. The combined votes of the Carpenters, Teamsters, Machinists, Electricians, and the various small craft unions that invariably followed the lead of the larger unions on matters of import, represented the overwhelming majority of the convention votes. And before 1934, when the Executive Council was enlarged, only the craft union point of view was voiced in the AFL's high council. Even after it was enlarged, craft
unionists retained a firm hold over its affairs.

William Green had far less in common with craft unionists than he did with industrial union advocates. Many craft unionists came from the ranks and represented the interests of urban, skilled workers on the East Coast. Their attitudes and values could hardly be expected to mesh with those of a small town miner from the Midwest. Even after a decade of living in Washington, D.C., Green adhered to the values of small town America. And since all of Green's trade union experience had been with an industrial union, he did not share the craft leaders' devotion to exclusive jurisdiction or their prejudice against the unskilled. Even though Green had known the principal craft leaders for at least two decades, he was not close friends with any of them. Green was never a member of the inner circle of the Executive Council which largely controlled Federation policies. Since at least 1919, many of the important decisions of the Council had been hashed out at evening poker sessions held during quarterly meetings. Certain presidents of international unions who were not Council members often joined the poker sessions. Hutcheson and Tobin were regular members, but neither as AFL vice-president nor as president was Green ever a member of this elite group. Surely part of the reason for Green's exclusion was personal choice, for Green did not engage in
the standard activities of the sessions — smoking, drinking, and gambling — but perhaps an even more important reason was the fact that Green shared neither the close confidence nor the friendship of the craft unionists.

Unlike Green and Lewis, craft union leaders unequivocally dreaded rank-and-file militancy in the 1930s. While Green was ambivalent about the unrest for moral reasons, craft leaders had more secular and concrete reasons for their opposition. One one level, craft unionists believed that the unskilled were unorganizable. On a much deeper level, if somehow the millions of mass-production workers were in fact organized into industrial unions, the hegemony of craft unions in the Federation would be seriously threatened. Rather than squander money or risk the loss of their power, craft union leaders chose to cite union traditions and jurisdictional claims as reasons not to build industrial unions. In the final analysis, craft unionists had everything to lose and nothing to gain from campaigns in mass-production industries.\(^{37}\)

Despite the overwhelming evidence with which Green, Lewis, and others presented them, craft unionists steadfastly refused to concede that mass-production workers in fact wanted to join unions. This self-serving blindness was perhaps best illustrated when Arthur Wharton of the Machinists rose at the 1935 AFL convention to ask, "Who are those people on the outside who want to come in?"\(^{38}\) Another
spokesman for the Machinists declared in August 1936 that
the notion that mass-production workers were eager to join
industrial unions was "pure bunk"; they would not join any
union voluntarily and in fact could not even be driven into
one. 39 Similarly, John P. Frey maintained as late as
November 1935 that a large number of workers had "no
irresistable desire to join a union." 40

Also unlike Green and Lewis, both of whom had a warm
regard for all working people, craft union leaders held a
strong prejudice against semi-skilled and unskilled workers.
Prejudice against the unskilled was perhaps the most
virulent expression of craft consciousness. Tobin articu­
lated the craft union bias against the unskilled when he
declared in October 1934 that there were 135,000 Teamster
members and that "they are not the rubbish that have lately
come into other organizations." 41 Other craft unionists
undoubtedly shared this view, but they were seldom as
careless as Tobin in expressing them in public.

Craft union leaders preserved their power primarily
through the enforcement of the principle of exclusive
jurisdiction. AFL charters established the boundaries
within which an affiliate could operate. Regardless of
whether or not a particular union made an effort to organize
all workers within those boundaries, no union was allowed to
invade the jurisdiction of another union. Thus even though
the Machinists made virtually no effort to organize machinists in the auto industry, the union was within its rights as an AFL affiliate to prevent anyone from organizing machinists in auto plants. Exclusive jurisdiction could thus be used as a defensive weapon by which unions protected themselves from encroachments by other unions.

Exclusive jurisdiction was also an offensive weapon; it allowed unions to compete against each other for workers at the national level. As craft lines became increasingly blurred, the Federation became a battleground of literally hundreds of jurisdictional squabbles. It was far easier for the Carpenters, Teamsters, and other craft organizations to increase membership by contesting the jurisdictional boundaries of other unions than it was to organize the unorganized within one's own boundaries. Many of the jurisdictional disputes of the 1930s were patently absurd, such as Hutcheson's demand that the Carpenters be allowed to organize aircraft workers since airplanes had once been made of wood. 42 Again, in the fall of 1933, the Iron Workers and the Carpenters battled over which union was to have the work on elevators in the federal buildings then under construction, which to Green's embarrassment delayed completion of the new Labor Department building. 43 Much more serious disputes included the fight over whether the AFL should for the first time in its history charter a union, the
Amalgamated Clothing Workers, with the same jurisdiction as one already chartered, the United Garment Workers. The most divisive jurisdictional battle, of course, revolved around whether craftsmen in mass-production industries should be placed in FLUs or turned over to existing craft unions. This last battle involved a great deal more than competition over a few thousand workers; it involved the sanctity of the principle of exclusive jurisdiction itself, the craft unionists' major weapon for self-preservation and growth.

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The years 1933-1935 witnessed a growing polarization of views within the AFL between craft conscious labor officials and those favoring more militant tactics. John L. Lewis, Sidney Hillman, and other champions of industrial unionism made increasingly strident demands that the Federation set aside jurisdictional disputes, pursue a more aggressive strategy, and create a labor movement with real political and economic power. In response, their craft union opponents, who dominated the Executive Council and controlled AFL conventions, banded even more closely together to protect their interests. No one in the AFL, it seemed, was willing to compromise on the grave questions
facing organized labor. No one, that is, except William Green. Just as Green intended to mediate between labor and capital, he also sought a basis of accommodation within the labor movement. As he told the Executive Council:

I would grab at a straw to ... preserve the solidarity of the American Federation of Labor. It has been my whole policy in life to compose differences, to find a way out of a difference or dispute. I try to do that as President ... because I fully appreciate in this great voluntary movement we are dealing with men holding different opinions, different views and the real problem ... is to compose differences, hold men together, because as Mr. Gompers said years ago the Federation is a "rope of sand." 45

Composing differences between men holding such divergent views as to the future of the labor movement was the greatest challenge of Green's professional career. Yet he lacked the machinery, the leadership ability, and, above all, the values necessary to meet the challenge.

There was little question as to where Green stood on the basic issue of industrial versus craft forms of organization. That he personally continued to believe in industrial unionism in the 1930s was well known. But Green did not crusade for industrial unionism as AFL president, for he sincerely believed that his principal duty was to maintain peace and unity within the labor movement. He continued to hope that the Federation would adopt new forms of organization, but he was unwilling to sacrifice unity to achieve this goal. Moreover, while Green favored the
organization of mass-production workers, he did not support militant tactics. Green thus supported Lewis's goal -- industrial unionism -- while rejecting his means.

Even though a primary function of the AFL presidency was the resolution of disputes between affiliates, Gompers had never established formal machinery to do so. He had relied instead on an informal network of personal relationships that aided him in maintaining relative peace. Green lacked Gompers' network, which had died along with the old man, and Green possessed neither the ability nor the vision to develop his own. Unlike Gompers, Green was never "one of the boys." He kept a formal distance between himself and other Executive Council members, which restricted his ability to resolve disputes amicably and informally.

Failing to develop a personal following, Green relied almost exclusively on formal procedures to maintain harmony. He believed such legalisms guaranteed his own neutrality and assured a fair settlement of grievances, yet those formal procedures actually worked to the advantage of those already in control of Federation policy. At several key junctures during convention debates, craft unionists were able to outmaneuver their industrial union opponents, and Green, in attempt to remain an impartial mediator, unwittingly served the old guard.

An even more serious defect of Green's leadership, one that assured craft union victories, was his mechanistic
view of majority rule. The primacy of the majority vote at conventions had always been a cardinal tenet of Green's trade union philosophy. He never questioned whether the majority vote at AFL conventions in fact reflected the majority sentiment of organized workers, let alone the entire working class. According to the AFL's constitution, international unions were allowed one vote for every hundred members. City centrals, state federations, and FLUs were given one vote each regardless of their size, and some were quite large. Thus these latter bodies were denied an adequate voice during conventions and the sentiments of mass-production workers were never a factor in determining policy. Moreover, many unions had unit rules requiring all delegates to vote as a bloc, thus eliminating the view of delegates who may have sympathized with the industrial union outlook.

All in all, Green was a weak, unimaginative, and ineffectual peacemaker within the labor movement. His reluctance to shape policy, his dogmatic adherence to parliamentary rules of order, and his mechanistic view of majority rule -- all of which he believed guaranteed his impartiality -- functioned to maintain craft union hegemony. Green did not, as some historians claim, bow to the will of craft unionists solely out of respect for their power within the Federation. He was not so crude or self-serving. In this and most instances during his professional career,
Green's actions were lofty in purpose, but his leadership was passive at a time when only dynamic leadership could have succeeded.

Green's performance at the 1933 AFL convention revealed how the Federation president, by methodically following parliamentary rules of order, actually undermined efforts to discuss the situation openly and reach a compromise. Several resolutions on the organization of mass-production workers were introduced at the convention, and Green appointed members of both the craft and industrial camps to the committee on resolutions, hoping that committee members might resolve the dispute. The committee met every day for six days, but rather than rational discussion, the committee sessions were marked by continuous arguing between John L. Lewis and John P. Frey. The committee finally admitted its failure to reach agreement and submitted majority and minority reports to the convention. The majority report embodied the craft union perspective on organizing mass-production workers; it stated that all skilled workers organized into FLUs must be turned over to their appropriate craft unions. The minority report was an extremely cautious statement of the industrial union perspective. It did not call for the establishment of international unions in mass-production industries; it suggested only that skilled workers in FLUs not be
transferred to craft unions unless it were "practicable" to do so.  

After the reports were read to the convention, Frey, in a deft tactical maneuver, immediately moved that both reports be referred to the Executive Council and that the Council call a conference of all international unions to consider the matter. If successful, this motion would have prevented the one thing craft unionists hoped to avoid: a general convention debate on the issue of jurisdiction, which could only work to their disadvantage. Since Frey's motion was seconded, Green had little choice but to ask for a vote on referral. Several delegates who supported industrial unionism then moved that a full discussion of both reports be allowed, but Green, in strict conformity with parliamentary procedure, told the delegates that the only issue now before the convention was the motion to refer, which carried by a majority vote. Craft unionists had thwarted a general debate on the jurisdictional issue and had thus won the first round against industrial union proponents with the help of Green.

In accordance with the convention vote, Green duly called and convened the conference of international unions, held in Washington, D.C. on January 24 and 25, 1934. On the day before the convention began, nearly one hundred delegates from FLUs assembled in Washington in the hope that they would be able to argue the case for industrial unionism
at the conference. They came prepared with concrete suggestions and a willingness to compromise, but since the convention did not specifically invite FLU members to the conference, Green did not allow them to attend. By strictly adhering to the rules, Green had again squelched open and honest discussion of issues.

In his long opening address to the Washington conference, Green impressed upon the union representatives that changes were needed in AFL policies if successful campaigns were to be conducted in the basic industries. Section 7a presented labor with a marvelous chance to organize millions of workers, Green argued, but it also presented the AFL with a challenge. Unless changes were made, "in our organizing movement, in our administrative work ...," he warned, the opportunity would be lost forever. Although he stressed the need for flexibility and compromise, he made no specific recommendations, no proposal that moderates on both sides could rally around.

The Washington conference was another victory for craft unionists. Although the committee appointed to examine the majority and minority reports stressed the AFL's dedication to organizing the unorganized, it pointed out that the conference had no authority to alter the principle of exclusive jurisdiction. At the close of the conference Green made another long speech in the course of which he warned that mass-production workers were going to organize
"with or without us" and that AFL policy must be flexible enough to organize these workers.\textsuperscript{55} Again Green had demonstrated his desire for peace and proven his unwillingness to put forth a viable compromise proposal. According to Daniel Tobin, the result of the Washington conference was that industrial unionism "was most definitely thrown on the junk pile."\textsuperscript{56}

The intransigence of craft unionists at the Washington conference, combined with the continuing failure of Green's organizing drives in autos and rubber, fueled the movement for industrial unionism. Between January and October 1934, most of the unions that would later comprise the CIO declared themselves in favor of creating industrial unions in the mass-production industries. No less than twelve resolutions expressing industrial union sentiment were introduced at the 1934 AFL convention at San Francisco. From the Boilermakers and the Metal Trades Department came resolutions reasserting the gospel of exclusive jurisdiction and prohibiting the inclusion of skilled workers in FLUs.\textsuperscript{57}

Green again placed members of both blocs on the committee on resolutions. Quite unexpectedly, the committee was able to agree on a single report. Perhaps Green's strategy had paid off. Perhaps by forcing industrial and craft proponents to sit down and hash out their differences, common ground could be reached. The report stated, in bare outline, the compromise Green had been intimating all along.
It stated that the AFL should formulate policies which would "fully protect" the jurisdictional rights of all craft unions, but that the Executive Council should charter new unions in the automobile, cement, and aluminum industries and in "such other mass-production and miscellaneous industries" as the Council believed necessary. The committee's report passed by unanimous vote of the entire convention.\textsuperscript{58}

Had craft unionists, still securely in control of AFL policy, voluntarily compromised on the issue of exclusive jurisdiction in order to maintain peace within the labor movement and facilitate the organization of the unorganized? Outside observers believed they had done just that. Louis Stark, labor correspondent for the \textit{New York Times}, regarded the decision as an unqualified victory for industrial unionism; craft unions were to be protected "in their own sphere" but all workers in mass-production industries would be organized into industrial unions.\textsuperscript{59} The historian Charles Beard thought the AFL had taken "certain steps away from historic craft unionism in the direction of organizing workers in great industries into 'vertical unions.'"\textsuperscript{60}

Green himself was ecstatic. The unanimous acceptance of the committee's report, he told delegates, was a victory for "calm and careful deliberation. Democracy has been in action, we have seen it here, every question adopted
has been adopted in accordance with democratic rule and
democratic principles." He expressed his joy over "that
wonderful, historic decision," that allowed the Federation
to pursue a "flexible policy" and organize mass-production
workers "as solid units into this great Organized Labor
Movement." 61

Green was not alone among labor officials to regard
the San Francisco decision as a momentous victory for
industrial unionism. Industrial union advocates also
heralded the passage of the committee's report. They were
further inspired by the convention resolution to enlarge the
Executive Council from eleven to eighteen members and the
election of three members of their camp, John L. Lewis,
David Dubinsky of the ILGWU, and George Berry of the
Printing Pressmen, to the enlarged Council. Although craft
unionists still controlled the Council, Lewis told the
convention that he had faith the Council would interpret and
implement the report of the committee as it was intended. 62

The 1934 convention seemed to vindicate Green's
approach to peacemaking. The contending forces apparently
had reached a compromise through rational discourse. Craft
unionists apparently had agreed to forgo their selfish
claims in mass-production industries. Indeed, many craft
leaders complained that Frey, who chaired the committee on
resolutions, had given up too much. Frey wrote a friend
that presidents of some of the international unions had
criticized him "on the ground that I had given away a great deal more than I had authority to do ..." The convention revived industrial union advocates' faith in the ability of the Federation to adapt and renewed their confidence in Green's leadership abilities. Lewis had nominated Green for the AFL presidency every year since 1925, but in 1934 his speech was more glowing than ever. He spoke of Green's "unselfish devotion" to labor and called Green "a champion of democracy" and "a great leader of labor." Green had every reason to rejoice that reason, democracy, and Christian brotherhood had triumphed.

Green's jubilation proved short lived, for it soon became evident that among craft unionists self interest continued to be a much more powerful motivation than Christian brotherhood. The 1935 sessions of the enlarged Executive Council revealed wide disagreements over the proper interpretation of the San Francisco convention report. The report did not state precisely whether all workers in mass-production industries were to be placed in new industrial unions or segregated among the crafts, and craft unionists continued to demand that Green refrain from organizing skilled workers into FLUs. And as we have seen, when the Council finally issued charters to auto and rubber workers, craft unionists made certain the charters did not include jurisdictional rights to skilled workers.
The feeling of betrayal among the industrial union advocates was keen. As early as May 1935, Louis Stark reported rumors that Lewis would bolt the AFL and erect a rival federation of industrial unions if craft unionists continued to obstruct the organization of the unorganized.65 In June Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Francis Gorman of the United Textile Workers, and Emile Rieve of the Hosiery Workers all spoke before the Tamiment Economic and Social Institute, expressing their displeasure with Federation policies and calling for the creation of industrial unions.66 The following month Frey confided to a friend that "There are hotel lobby rumors that unless they (industrial union advocates) can have their way we may be faced with a secession movement."67

Even as rumors of secession spread in labor circles, Green did nothing. He continued to espouse the ideal of unity in the labor movement, but he did absolutely nothing to promote it. During August he exacerbated tensions by cramming restricted charters down the throats of auto and rubber workers, even though the charters did not jibe with his own interpretation of the 1934 convention report. His acceptance of a limited role for the AFL presidency tied his hands, left him unable to put forth and campaign for a binding compromise, and he braced himself for the showdown he knew would come at the 1935 convention.
By October 1935, the time of the Atlantic City convention, AFL organizing drives were at a standstill. Outside of coal and the needle trades, organized labor had few concrete victories in any industry in the first three years of the New Deal. The AFL's membership stood at just over three million, a smaller proportion of the nonfarm labor force than in 1922. More company unions than independent unions had been established under Section 7a and worker militancy had all but disappeared.68

Green nevertheless believed the Federation was making significant progress. In his Labor Day speech of 1935, he pointed to passage of the Wagner Act, the Guffey Coal Act, and the Social Security Act as symbols of labor's growing influence in national affairs. "In addition to achievements in the legislative field," Green continued, "the organized labor movement has increased its strength in the economic field during the past year. The membership of unions has grown and our extension into mass-production industries steadily increases."69 Green the cautious liberal saw no need for alarm in the fall of 1935. The Wagner Act provided a much more adequate expression of labor's right to organize than did Section 7a and, although it had not been tested by the judiciary, it revived Green's hopes for organizing work under the auspices of the federal government. Green was also relieved that the worker militancy of 1933-1934 had subsided, thus allowing him to
reassert labor's goal of peaceful cooperation without fear of contradiction from the rank-and-file. Finally, the movement for industrial unionism was making progress within the Federation. The support for industrial unionism had grown tremendously between 1933 and 1935, and there was reason to hope that by 1936 or 1937, as the mass-production unions grew and as other unions became convinced of its necessity, the movement would prevail.

John L. Lewis and other industrial union advocates did not share Green's optimism. Contrary to their interpretation of the San Francisco decision, restricted charters had been issued in autos and rubber, and the steel drive had yet to begin. Over two years of organizing work had not yielded a single contract between the AFL and a major mass-production employer. Further, the most potent weapon in any campaign -- worker militancy -- was withering away in the face of Federation inactivity. Proponents of industrial unionism recognized that immediate and even drastic action was necessary to rescue the labor movement from the selfish interests of craft unionists.

Craft unionists also understood the importance of the 1935 AFL convention. As early as March, John P. Frey predicted a confrontation between the industrial and craft blocs at Atlantic City. "There must be a showdown," Frey wrote to an English friend, "for it is becoming intolerable to have some International Unions determined that other
International Unions change their form of organization against their desire."\(^70\) Craft union leaders were prepared to settle the controversy once and for all while they still maintained a majority of convention votes.

That Green was unaware of the seriousness of the dispute could be seen in his opening remarks to the 1935 convention. He tried to impress upon delegates his belief that the Federation was a cautious yet liberal organization that could adapt to new situations, and he cited the 1932 convention's resolution in favor of unemployment insurance as evidence. "There are those who say that the American Federation of Labor -- and I mean our enemies -- occupies a rigid, static position. That is untrue. The American Federation of Labor has always followed a flexible policy, adjusting itself to the legislative, economic and social changes which have come about in a changing world. Our organization could not serve the workers or the social order unless it responded to facts and faced bravely and courageously the realities of life."\(^71\) Having reminded delegates that the AFL was in fact capable of progressive change, Green resumed his role as impartial chairman at the convention. Again he refused to throw the prestige of his office behind a viable compromise.

Twenty-two resolutions in favor of industrial unionism were introduced at the convention and, as in 1933, the committee on resolutions could not reach agreement on
them, finally submitting majority and minority reports to the convention. Of the fifteen committee members, nine, including chairman Woll, endorsed the majority report, which called for nonconcurrence with the industrial union resolutions. The minority report, signed by the other six members of the committee, directed the Executive Council to initiate aggressive organizing drives in unorganized industries, draft unrestricted charters for international unions in mass-production industries, and issue similar charters to independent and company-dominated unions that wanted to affiliate with the AFL.

After a convention debate that raged for seven hours, the convention rejected the minority report by a roll call vote of 18,024 to 10,933. Approximately thirty-eight per cent of the roll call vote was cast in favor of the report, and included in this percentage were the votes of twenty-one of the Federation's ninety-four international unions. Two unions divided their votes and eleven abstained from voting.

On the final day of the convention, after most of the delegates had gone home, debate resumed on the structural issue. As a delegate from the Rubber Workers launched into his arguments in favor of an industrial union charter for the rubber industry, William Hutcheson interrupted him and called for a point of order, asserting that the delegate was reopening an issue that had already been settled. Green
stated that he was "inclined to support the point of order," which prompted Lewis to take the floor.\textsuperscript{76} Lewis concluded his speech with a verbal attack on Hutcheson, arguing that raising points of order on minor delegates was "rather small potatoes." When Hutcheson defended himself by assailing Lewis's character, Lewis strode down the aisle to where Hutcheson was seated and punched him in the face. No act could have better symbolized Lewis’s calculated resolve to break with the craft unionists.\textsuperscript{77} According to at least one account, Green turned to Lewis after the incident and said, "You shouldn't have done that, John." "But he called me a dirty name," replied Lewis, whereupon Green apologized and said, "Oh, I didn't know that."\textsuperscript{78} It is unlikely that Green and Lewis ever exchanged such words, but the story does symbolize the dilemma of the AFL president who wanted so desperately to maintain peace but was unwilling to take the positive steps necessary to do so.

As in previous years, Lewis again nominated Green for reelection. In his speech of acceptance, Green made some comments pertinent to the internal conflict. "This is an historic convention. I think I can declare that no more historic convention of the American Federation of Labor was ever held. During its deliberations ... we have been torn by conflicting emotions; we realize, after all, that we have come through with flying colors and our ranks indissoluble and intact ... So it becomes our duty now to forget. The
debate is over. The problems have been solved. A settlement has been made, and from this convention we must go out united." Less than three weeks later the Committee for Industrial Organization was formed.
NOTES


7. Ibid.


10. American Federationist, January 1932, p. 17.


12. "Extracts from UMW Executive Board Meeting," January 1925, Reel 4, frame 665, WGC OHS.

13. UMWJ, January 1, 1925.


16. Green to Hoover, November 24, 1930, Reel 7, frame 364, WGC OHS.


20. Green to Walker, March 6, 1930; Walker to Green, March 8, 1930; Green to Walker, March 20, 1930, Reel 9, frames 875-876, 901-903, 1004-1007, WGC OHS.


24. Ibid., p. 192.


27. Ibid.


29. Address to Toledo Central Labor Union, September 17, 1934, Reel 15, frames 657-658.


33. Ibid., 6, pp. 706-707.

34. Ibid., 5, pp. 399-340.

35. Ibid., 5, pp. 690-691.


41. AFL, Proceedings, 1934, p. 453.

42. Bernstein, Turbulent Years, p. 360.

43. Ibid., p. 354.

44. Taft, The A. F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger, pp. 52-53.


47. AFL, Proceedings, 1887, p. 3.


50. Ibid., 1933, pp. 502-504.

51. Ibid., 1933, p. 504.

52. Ibid.

53. The federal labor unionists made their complaint in Labor Action, February 1, 1934.


55. Ibid.


58. Ibid., 1934, pp. 586-587, 598.


62. Ibid., 1934, pp. 589, 594-595.


64. AFL, Proceedings, 1934, pp. 681-682.


68. Dubofsky and Van Tine, p. 214.


70. Dubofsky and Van Tine, p. 214.


72. Ibid., 1935, p. 521.

73. Ibid., 1935, pp. 521-522.

74. Ibid., 1935, pp. 523-524.

75. Morris, p. 209.


On November 9, 1936, eleven high ranking labor officials from eight unions gathered at UMW headquarters in Washington, D.C. and created a permanent Committee for Industrial Organization. The CIO named John L. Lewis as president, Charles P. Howard of the Typographers as secretary, and John Brophy, a former foe of Lewis in the UMW, as director. The ILGWU, UMW, and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers (ACW) each pledged $5,000 to enable the organization to begin activities. According to the statement of purpose issued one week after the meeting, the CIO was formed to encourage the organization of mass-production workers along industrial lines and "bring them under the banner and in affiliation with the American Federation of Labor."¹

The CIO originally presented itself as a pressure group working for progressive change within the AFL. As such, it was neither novel nor illegal. On several previous occasions affiliates had banded together to achieve a purpose at odds with official AFL policy.² Yet the official
statement of purpose did not tell the whole story of the CIO's formation. Most CIO founders undoubtedly viewed the new organization solely as a means to influence AFL policy, but John L. Lewis had a grander vision, and as Dubofsky and Van Tine have written, "the CIO, at birth, was Lewis." Unlike the other CIO founders, Lewis exhibited little concern with the legality of the CIO in the eyes of AFL officials, nor did he care a great deal about the unity of the labor movement. From 1935 onward, Lewis remained steadfast in his purpose to make organized labor a vital political and economic force with national clout and, at the same time, to become the most powerful individual in the revitalized labor movement. Other CIO members may not have been completely aware of it at first, but Lewis was fully prepared to sever the ties with the AFL to achieve his goals. Through the successful organization of millions of mass-production workers, Lewis hoped to force craft unionists either to accept loss of control over Federation affairs or maintain control by expelling the CIO unions and obliging Lewis to create an independent federation of industrial unions with a larger membership than the AFL. "In either case," Dubofsky and Van Tine conclude, "Lewis would become the dominant power in the national labor movement, a leader whose massive union army would guarantee him unprecedented political and economic influence."
Eleven years had elapsed since Green served as Lewis's lieutenant in the UMW. Even though he had willingly deferred to Lewis's more forceful personality as UMW secretary-treasurer and, to some extent, as AFL president, Green believed that in those eleven years he had established himself as a labor leader in his own right. He had set the AFL on a course of Christian cooperation, had overseen the partial abandonment of voluntarism, and despite vast differences of opinion over politics and organizing strategy, had maintained the unity of the labor movement. And from his perspective, the AFL had made great strides under the New Deal, growing from a membership of 2.3 million in 1933 to 3.2 million in 1935. He believed his style of cooperative leadership was largely responsible for the passage of the Wagner Act. He was convinced that during his tenure the AFL was progressing steadily and he never doubted that, given time, the Federation would adopt policies that would make possible the organization of mass-production workers.

It was because Green understood Lewis's intentions that he recoiled in horror to the formation of the CIO. The CIO, as Green perceived it, was a Lewis plot to foist his own brand of union leadership on the entire labor movement and also undermine the power and prestige of the AFL president. Lewis had outmaneuvered Green to capture the UMW presidency in 1919-1920, and now he was making a bid to
supersede Green as the leader of all organized workers. Lewis had thrown down the gauntlet and forced Green into a personal contest for control of the labor movement. The stakes were high, for if Green lost the contest, he stood to lose his prestigious position and, even more unthinkable, the future of the labor movement would be left in the hands of the militant and opportunistic Lewis and progress toward the Christian cooperative ideal would be halted.

Another factor shaping Green's reaction to the CIO was the almost mystical qualities he attached to labor unity. For Green, labor unity rested not so much on economic necessity or a sound institutional framework, but on spiritual and fraternal bonds. In an essay written soon after the 1935 AFL convention, Green warned Lewis and the industrial union bloc that nothing posed a greater threat to brotherhood than "internal strife and personal gain." Even if Lewis and the others successfully organized workers in the basic industries, labor stood to lose if the fraternal bonds were severed in the process. "For what will it profit labor to gain power and material advantages if it loses the spirit of fraternity which sees men as brothers and gives itself in their service?"6 Locked in a power struggle of cataclysmic importance, Green determined to assert his personal authority by disciplining Lewis and preserving labor unity.
The formation of the CIO, however, did not immediately transform Green from a peacemaker to a self-righteous and vindictive anti-insurgent crusader. Indeed, until May 1936 Green sought to placate rather than punish the rebels, hoping to convince them of the value of a united labor movement. He directed most of his appeals at Lewis. Thus when he mailed identical letters of warning to each CIO member on November 23, 1935, he couched his message in terms of the UMW's internal practices and had Lewis's letter hand-delivered so that the UMW president would receive his copy before anyone else. Contrary to the opinion of Dubofsky and Van Tine, Green's letter of November 23 did not contain "dire warnings and exaggerated allegations," and he did not accuse committee members of dual unionism. Green simply told them the truth -- that craft union leaders would press for disciplinary action. "Some officers of National and International Unions ... regard separate movements formed within the main structure as dual in character and as decidedly menacing to its success and welfare." Green even hinted that he believed the CIO's cause was a noble one, but he reminded its founders that all AFL members had an obligation to comply with decisions arrived at by the majority at conventions. "Those who disagree with the action of the majority are accorded the right to urge the acceptance of their point of view at succeeding Conventions."
Green's missive contained nothing that CIO officials did not already know, and he certainly did not intend it to worsen relations with the industrial union bloc. It was Lewis, acting without the consent of other CIO members, who took the second step toward disunity when he responded to Green in a one-sentence telegram: "Effective this date (November 23), I resign as vice president of the American Federation of Labor." This bold move put Lewis and the CIO at the center of national attention for five consecutive days, and it became increasingly obvious to Green and the AFL old guard that Lewis was indeed prepared to break with the AFL and establish a rival federation. In the words of economist Walter Galenson, Lewis "used his resignation as a means of dramatizing the split and of driving a further wedge between the AFL and the CIO."

The CIO did not send an official response to Green's November 23 letter of warning. Instead, six committee members individually wrote to Green, most of them arguing that the CIO's intent was to strengthen, not weaken, the AFL. Charles P. Howard, in a typical reply, assured Green that the CIO did not intend to establish any form of dual unionism. "Quite the contrary is true," Howard wrote. "We seek to alter a policy that invites such dual organization." It is interesting to note that while all responses disavowed dual unionism and upheld the legality of CIO actions, no one commented on Green's warning that craft unionists would not
tolerate a permanent organization within the AFL dedicated to putting into effect a defeated minority report.

Dual union disclaimers did not appease Green. He understood that Lewis controlled the CIO, and he also knew that by early December 1935 Lewis was devising a strategy to organize mass-production workers. And Lewis's December 7 letter to Green showed his willingness to make the CIO a personal battle between himself and Green. Arguing that it was "bruited about" that Green personally sympathized with industrial unionism, Lewis told Green that he would be much happier and of greater service to workers were he to resign the AFL presidency and join the CIO. Privately favoring industrial unionism while officially opposing it made him vulnerable to criticism, Lewis told Green, and craft unionists might demand more than perfunctory support of their position. Why not "return to your father's house?" Lewis asked. "You will be welcome."12

Lewis's taunt infuriated Green. Not only was Lewis flirting with disunity, but he also had the arrogance to suggest that the Federation president join him in his disruptive activity. "I am governed by the laws of the American Federation of Labor," Green indignantly replied to Lewis. "The obligation I assumed when I became a member of organized labor and the responsible position I now hold require me to carry out policies adopted at annual conventions of the American Federation of Labor." And as if to
make clear that he accepted Lewis's challenge to his authority, Green added, "This I will do at any cost."¹³

By the time the Executive Council met in session at Miami, Florida in January 1936, the old guard faced not simply a group disseminating propaganda, but a permanent organizing committee preparing drives and succoring support among workers in the auto, rubber, steel, radio, lumber, gas, and coke industries. No longer was the issue that of tolerating propaganda for industrial unionism, but what actions to take against a massive insurgent movement acting in direct violation of a convention decision. With Lewis absent, several members of the Council -- William Hutcheson, Thomas Rickert of the Garment Workers, Arthur Wharton of the Machinists, and Harry Bates of the Bricklayers -- pressed for the immediate suspension of unions affiliated with the CIO.¹⁴ Their hostility proved that Green's original warning was not an exaggeration. Like Lewis, these craft union leaders were not concerned with legal technicalities. They hoped to use the formation of the CIO as an excuse to expel the industrial union bloc.

Green soothed their rage by counseling peace and moderation. The AFL constitution conferred no authority on the Executive Council to suspend unions, he argued correctly, adding that the Council would find it difficult to instill a proper regard for Federation law and procedure among CIO adherents if the Council itself violated the law in an
effort to punish them. "We are trying to conciliate and placate," Green told the hardliners. Largely because of Green's coaxing, the Council decided not to suspend the CIO unions. Instead, it issued a statement calling for the immediate dissolution of the CIO, which it branded as "a challenge to the supremacy of the American Federation of Labor and ... ultimately ... dual in purpose and character." The Council then appointed a committee, headed by George M. Harrison of the Railway Clerks, to meet with the CIO and discuss the Council's position. For the time being, Green had blunted the full force of the Council's rage.

Several events took place between the January and May 1936 Council sessions, however, that led Green the peacemaker to join with the hardliners and launch an aggressive and vindictive crusade to destroy Lewis and the CIO. The first event was the humiliation Green received at the 1936 UMW convention, which opened on January 28 in Washington, D.C. If the convention was a contest of personalities between Green and Lewis, it was certainly not an even match. Lewis, on his own turf, whipped the 1800 delegates into a frenzy as he detailed the staggering advances the UMW had made in the past few years. But Lewis was at his oratorical best when he brought up the issue of the CIO and the Council's demand that the CIO disband. At one point in his speech he howled that "all the members of
the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor will be wearing asbestos suits in hell before the committee (CIO) is dissolved. 17

Needless to say, Lewis had created a hostile audience for Green, who addressed the delegates on the last day of the convention to argue his case against the CIO. For ninety minutes, Green bared his soul to his beloved union in an uncharacteristically candid discussion of the issues as he saw them. He described the inherent weakness of his office, telling delegates that while had no authority to coerce affiliates, he was still duty bound "to find a basis of accommodation, to harmonize conflicting opinions." He assured them he was pressing for organization along industrial lines, and admitted that when he did, he was opposing "men who have a proprietary interest in the American Federation of Labor." Nevertheless, he argued, progress toward industrial organization was being made through the proper channels.

The CIO was wrong in principle, he continued, because it was not proper for a minority to organize after it had been defeated. All loyal union members "ought to be willing to abide by the decisions reached by the conventions in which we participate." If unionists could not do so, they had proven themselves incapable of self-government, for "self-government means the subordination of the opinion of myself and yourself to the will of the majority."
In his concluding remarks, Green warned delegates what they could expect if his peace efforts failed and Lewis established a rival federation. "Remain at home, for if you go out there will be but one result: The American Federation of Labor will remain supreme. It is so firmly established in our institutional life that storms from within and attacks from without can never move it from the solid foundations upon which it rests." 18

When Green resumed his seat, Lewis called on delegates who wanted compliance with the Executive Council's dissolution order. Only two delegates stood up. Lewis then rephrased the question. Only one delegate rose. When Lewis called on those who would continue to support the CIO, delegates rose en masse and applauded. "President Green," said Lewis, "you have received the answer of the United Mine Workers of America to your ultimatum." 19 Heywood Broun, the newspaper columnist, aptly commented that Lewis had "knocked out William Green in precisely three minutes." 20

Lewis had humbled Green before his own union. Green insisted, however, that he did not feel humiliated. He wrote a friend that despite being "fully conscious of the stage setting and of the psychological condition" Lewis had created, "I came away feeling quite satisfied with the results of my attendance at the meeting." 21 Yet Green was worried by the fact that Lewis's performance had further incensed craft union leaders and made peace in the AFL more
difficult to maintain. He discussed his predicament in a letter to James Maloney, president of the Glass Bottle Blowers Association:

I am doing all I can, going even beyond the limit, to maintain the solidarity of the American Federation of Labor. I am appealing to those who formed this organization . . . to accept the decision of the Atlantic City Convention and to adhere to the policies, rules and procedure of the American Federation of Labor. I know, however, from the sentiment which has been repeatedly expressed, not only by members of the Executive Council, but by officers and representatives of the International Unions . . . that an organization functioning in direct opposition to the policies of conventions of the AFL . . . will not be tolerated.22

Maintaining peace would prove even more difficult after the CIO's takeover of steel industry organizing. At its January 1936 session the Executive Council instructed Green to formulate yet another plan to organize the steel industry. But the CIO countered this move before Green had a chance to canvass opinion among AFL leaders. On February 22, Lewis and Howard wrote the AFL president and promised to contribute $500,000 to a steel campaign if certain conditions were met. First, organization had to be along industrial lines. A joint campaign without a waiver of jurisdiction would be useless, they wrote, and "We therefore require assurance that all steel workers organized will be granted the permanent right to remain united in one industrial union." Second, AFL unions must contribute another $1 million to the campaign fund. And third, "a
responsible and energetic person" must be placed in charge of the drive. This last condition presumably meant that CIO officials did not want Green or an AA official to conduct the campaign.

Lewis's proposal suggested a new departure in organizing technique. Whereas the AFL in the campaigns of 1933-1935 depended to a great extent on local labor bodies and cost only a few thousand dollars, Lewis envisioned a massive, centralized effort costing millions. The actual organization of the steel industry would prove that even Lewis's estimate of $1.5 million was conservative. Nevertheless, Lewis was prepared to face the realities of organizing a basic industry.

As Lewis expected, the AFL balked at his proposal. Executive Council members wrote Green expressing doubt that the CIO unions could muster the $500,000 or that AFL unions could raise $1 million. Others objected to the industrial union requirement. Still others, including Daniel Tobin of the Teamsters, claimed "There isn't a chance in the world at this time to organize the steel workers." And several advised Green not to respond to the CIO at all, fearing that any response might be construed as tacit recognition of the rebels.

On March 2, 1936, Green announced his plan to organize steel, and estimated that "preliminary needs" would cost $750,000. He canvassed 110 unions, including those
affiliated with the CIO, but received only 46 responses. The CIO unions did not respond; 29 unions could give no answer before referring the matter to the union's executive board or convention; and 12 declared their unwillingness or inability to contribute. Only five unions responded favorably, yet even they could pledge a total of only $8,625 and the services of four or five organizers. Once again, the Federation had demonstrated its indecisiveness toward the organization of mass-production workers.

Anxious to get a steel drive underway, Lewis wrote AA President Michael Tighe on April 15 offering $500,000 to initiate a campaign run jointly by the AA and the CIO. At the AA convention, which began April 28, many locals urged acceptance of the CIO's offer. But Tighe wavered. He feared aligning himself with the rebel movement because such a step would threaten his position within the AFL and, even worse, meant relinquishing much of his authority to Lewis. In the hope that the AFL would present a viable counter offer, the AA sent its secretary, Louis Leonard, to visit Green at his home in Coshocton. Without the backing of AFL unions, however, the best Green could offer was 35 organizers and an undetermined amount of money. The "confusion" created by the CIO, Green told Leonard, was responsible for his inability to state an exact figure.
Out of desperation, Leonard arranged an appointment with John L. Lewis on June 3 in Washington, D.C. At this meeting, as Leonard later told his executive board, "Lewis ... made it very plain that the Committee for Industrial Organization had practically decided to begin a campaign of organization ... whether they had the cooperation of the Amalgamated Association or not." The next day AA officials accepted Lewis's demands, affiliated with the CIO, and agreed to serve as an administrative unit in the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC). Lewis's victory was complete. He secured complete control over the steel drive and the legitimacy conferred by the AA's charter. He had also, once again, publicly humiliated Green.

The day after the June 4 agreement, an outraged Green told reporters that the CIO's steel campaign would probably fail and, with an air of condescension, added that he and the Executive Council would therefore watch the drive with interest. Lewis feigned disbelief. "It is inconceivable," Lewis wrote "Dear Bill" on June 6, "that you intend doing what your statement implies, i.e. to sit with the women, under an awning on the hilltop, while the steelworkers in the valley struggle in the dust and agony of industrial warfare." This, too, hurt Green, who was always sensitive to personal criticism, especially when it questioned his manhood. More important, the seizure of the AA offered Green positive proof that the CIO intended to
function as a dual organizing committee within the AFL.

A third transforming event occurred on April 2, 1936, when the CIO announced the formation of Labor's Non-Partisan League (LNPL) to rally labor support for Roosevelt's reelection. Even though a few less orthodox AFL leaders such as George Berry of the Printing Pressmen supported the League, Green denounced it as a "nucleus for a political organization" to gain the presidency of John L. Lewis. Less than three weeks after the League's formation, Green informed AFL members that LNPL was a CIO attack on the Federation's nonpartisan political policy. In order to "avoid division even in the pursuit of its political policies," the AFL had to maintain a "strict and close" adherence to nonpartisanship. When George Berry asked Green to join the League, Green refused, saying that he intended "in the future as in the past to subscribe to the non-partisan political policy of the American Federation of Labor." 

The May session of the Executive Council marked Green's complete conversion to the hardline stance in regard to the CIO. The CIO takeover of the AA and the formation of LNPL had convinced Green that the unity of the labor movement was impossible as long as the CIO existed. "Can the American Federation of Labor sit still and allow a rival organization to function within it?" he asked Council members. Without waiting for an answer he declared
that it could not "because either we will be destroyed or they will be." We cannot tolerate a "divided house." We must inform the rebels that "you are dual unionists and must either sever your relations with CIO or with AFL." And with a fierce resolve he had never exhibited when dealing with anti-union employers, he concluded by bellowing "We cannot shirk our duty."³³

Green then sought the legal advice of Charlton Ogburn, general counsel of the AFL, on the possibility of suspending or expelling the CIO unions. In an incredible display of legal gymnastics, Ogburn assured Green that the Executive Council did have the power to hold formal hearings, consider evidence, and decide on suspension. Ogburn's opinion, of course, completely ignored the constitutional stipulations (of which Green was fully aware) that the Council could suspend a union only if the union failed to pay per capita taxes and could expel a union only by two-thirds vote of the convention. Philip Taft, the principal historian of the AFL, considers Ogburn's interpretation "pernicious," "a perversion," and "careless advice given by one who knew little of the customs and history of the A. F. of L."³⁴ Yet Ogburn had told Green what he wanted to hear, and with this charade of legality, Green began to move against the CIO.
Why was Green, an impeccably moral man, willing to resort to obviously illegal means to subdue Lewis and the CIO? On a basic administrative level, there was nothing exceptional about Green's actions. No union leader, including those in the CIO, dared tolerate a powerful insurgent movement within his organization. As Philip Taft has written, "most unions explicitly prohibit the existence of factions, cliques, or political parties organized to discuss union business outside official meetings ..." The illegitimacy of organized opposition was mouthed not only by incumbents seeking to maintain their tenure, but also was a commonly held belief among the rank-and-file. Thus Green was quite correct when he told the National Press Club in July 1936 that no CIO union would "tolerate for a single moment" an organized opposition "which constitutes a challenge to the supremacy of the authority of their national unions."  

Among CIO leaders, no was more ruthless in his opposition to insurgents than John L. Lewis who, in the 1920's, crushed several threats to his dominance. As UMW secretary-treasurer and later as AFL president, Green had joined hands with Lewis to quell insurgency. We have seen how Green gladly assisted Lewis in 1930 to put down the RUMW. And no one ever accused Lewis of pursuing an overly legalistic approach to internal dissent. Lewis destroyed
his opposition in the UMW by any means possible.\footnote{37}

Even though the AFL was a federation and not a union, the illegitimacy of organized opposition rang as true in the AFL as it did in individual unions. If the Federation was to survive and prosper in a hostile environment, it could not afford to tolerate a large scale insurgent movement that proposed to unseat the existing power structure and radically alter organizational policy. As president, Green was always willing to assist individual unions when combatting opposition movements, especially Communist ones. More to the point, Green's takeover of the independent Workers' Education Bureau and his condemnation of Brookwood Labor College in the 1920s showed that he, too, firmly rejected the legitimacy of organized opposition within the AFL. The illegitimacy of organized opposition provided craft unionists with adequate justification to move against the CIO using any means at their disposal.

Green, however, was never one to justify his actions on mundane grounds. He sought a moral rationale for combatting insurgents and believed he found one in the concept of majority rule. "No great institution can live if it is to be governed by a minority or by factions, by those who disagree, individually or collectively, with a majority decision or majority rule," Green declared. By subverting the will of the majority, the CIO represented the rule of "force, the law of the jungle, the survival of the fittest."\footnote{38}
Yet Green chose to interpret majority rule in the narrowest possible sense -- conforming to the decisions of the Executive Council and conventions. And as the crisis deepened, Green foolishly insisted that the only issue involved in the CIO crisis was that of majority versus minority rule.

To the extent that convention votes and Council decisions were representative of AFL sentiment, which is debatable, the Federation did adhere to democratic practices. But in a much larger sense, the AFL represented the autocracy of craft unions over the majority of American workers, who possessed little or no skill and were not union members. In such a setting, democratic procedure could easily become a tool by which craft unionists maintained their hegemony over the labor movement and thwarted the rights and ambitions of millions of workers. John L. Lewis understood the dilemma: as long as craft unionists retained control of the Federation, mass-production workers would never be organized along industrial lines; and craft unionists would continue to control the AFL until mass-production workers were organized industrially. Until organized labor became a movement that truly represented American workers, democratic procedure served as a mask for the selfish interests of the minority of skilled workers.

Moreover, in his crusade to uphold his narrow interpretation of majority rule, Green ran roughshod over the
other guiding principle of the AFL: union autonomy. If
democratic procedure is a necessary basis for any voluntary
organization, so are the protection of minority rights and
the proper observance of law and procedure. By his willing­
ness to pervert the AFL constitution to punish Lewis and the
rebels, Green undermined his moral rationale. Green's
crusade against the CIO thus can be best understood as the
conditioned response of a labor official to an insurgent
movement expressed in terms of high ideals that had little
basis in reality.

Green and the Executive Council outlined their plan
of attack in conformity with Ogburn's advice. They reacti­
vated the Harrison committee, which still had not met with
the CIO, and gave the rebels a final chance to dissolve. If
the rebels refused, the Council would notify the CIO unions
of the charges against them, and then conduct formal
hearings that would result in suspension. The Harrison
committee met with CIO officials for two hours on May 19,
1936. Harrison admitted that he had no authority to
negotiate, only to insist upon the CIO's dissolution. This,
of course, Lewis and the others were unwilling to do. But
the Council now had the answer it sought, and Green was
instructed to proceed with the process of suspension.\(^{39}\)

On June 20 Green summoned each CIO official to
appear individually before an emergency session of the
Executive Council to be held from July 8 to July 15.\textsuperscript{40} Without exception, CIO officials spurned the summonses. Evidently, they found it difficult to believe that the Council would carry through with its threat of suspension. Despite the conspicuous absence of the accused, the "trial" of the CIO unions was set to proceed as scheduled with Green leading the cheers for suspension. Three letters from Ogburn, dated July 8, 9, and 13, however, rained on Green's parade. Ogburn warned Green that his summons of June 20 did not establish the legal framework for suspension. Green must provide the accused unions with details of the charges and possible penalties in advance of the hearings. If he failed to do so, Ogburn wrote, the CIO unions could challenge the suspensions in court and win.\textsuperscript{41}

Ogburn's letters jolted Council members, and at the July session for the first time there was widespread uncertainty as to how to proceed against the CIO. Many of those who had urged suspension in January now expressed fears of the possible legal ramifications. Green was taken aback, too, but he continued to press for ejection. Even if the CIO had its day in court, he argued, the AFL should suspend the CIO unions.\textsuperscript{42} In the end the Council agreed to begin the suspension process all over again, this time with greater regard for "legality." On July 16, Green "invited" the CIO union heads to appear before the Council on August 3, 1936. He included in his letters a copy of the charges
and a description of the procedure to be followed at the hearings.  

John P. Frey drafted the formal charges agreed upon by the Council at the July session. He named twelve unions in his brief: the ACW, UMW, ILGWU, AA, the Textile Workers, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, the Hatters, the Flat Glass Workers, the Oil Workers, the Typographical Union, the Auto Workers, and the Rubber Workers. Frey accused each of these unions of dual unionism, "fomenting insurrection," "rebellion" against the 1935 AFL convention decision, and violation of its AFL charter. George Harrison of the Railway Clerks was the sole Council member to question the charges. He analyzed each one, pointed out the lack of evidence to substantiate them, and argued that whether or not the charges were true, the Council had no authority to suspend a union. Green, in turn, felt compelled to counter Harrison's objections.

Upon receipt of Green's letter of July 16 detailing these charges, CIO leaders defended themselves on legal and moral grounds. Suspension would be a breach of the AFL constitution, an illegal device to get around the requirement of a two-thirds convention majority for expulsion. They also attacked the character of the "heads of certain craft unions" who exercised "dead-hand control of the Federation" and smugly refused to meet the needs of the
unorganized. In a stinging moral indictment of the craft union position they wrote that labor leaders have an obligation that ought to outweigh their personal ambitions, and may even call for some sacrifice of real or fancied advantages enjoyed by the crafts they represent. That obligation is to organize the unorganized for the common benefit of all who toil, whether craftsmen or unskilled ... In the fair and just solution of those problems rests the welfare of all our working millions and the heritage they shall leave their children. 46

Such powerful moral reasoning had no effect on Green and the Council. On July 22, Ogburn, obviously frightened by the possible legal repercussions of suspension, wrote Green and urged him not to follow through on his course of action. In a complete reversal of his earlier position, Ogburn argued that courts would not allow suspension to be used as a means to evade the two-thirds majority convention vote for expulsion. Green, however, casually brushed aside Ogburn's warning. 47

Council members assembled at AFL headquarters on August 3 to conclude the trial. They spent three hours listening to Frey repeat his charges and Edward Bieritz of the Electrical Workers support them. On August 4, Dubinsky of the ILGWU, who was still a member of the Council, made a final plea for restraint. He argued that several CIO unions, including the ILGWU, had a sincere desire to remain loyal to the Federation, but that suspension would compel them to tie their fortunes to the rival federation. Out of
Desperation, Dubinsky offered a compromise. The ILGWU would break with the CIO if a simple majority at the 1936 AFL convention, not two-thirds, resolved that the CIO was dual in character. 48

Council members were not impressed. Hutcheson, Wharton, and John Coefield of the Plumbers derided Dubinsky's offer and attacked him for participating in the CIO. And Green, offered a final opportunity to show restraint, proved again that he intended to deal ruthlessly with the insurgents: "We were patient in January, patient in May, patient in July, we are patient now." The Council had made offers even though the CIO did not come in with "clean hands." But now the issue had become "a fight for democracy," comparable to the struggle against Fascism. 49 On the following day, with Dubinsky not voting, the Council resolved that the CIO unions were guilty of dual unionism. Green was instructed to inform these unions that if they did not withdraw from the CIO by September 5, 1936, they would stand suspended. 50

Even in the eyes of a sympathetic observer, the historian Philip Taft, the suspension vote demonstrated "a failure of leadership that has no equal in the history of American labor." Taft attributes much of this failure to Green himself: "As president of the Federation and the man who might at this stage have prevented the action by
threatening to resign, Green must bear the chief blame." Yet in all fairness to Green, he had acted as a responsible labor official faced with the threat of insurgency. He had given the rebels adequate warning, and had moved against them only after he was convinced that they were operating as a dual movement. Even his support of an illegal suspension was understandable, if not justifiable, because the Federation lacked appropriate channels to deal with a large scale insurgent movement. Given the fact that Green did not share the outlook of Lewis, he had acted as would any union official faced with a similar threat. Green will always suffer the judgment of history, however, for his failure to recognize the CIO as a progressive union movement seeking the advancement of the entire working class.

At its meeting of August 10, the CIO faced a choice. It could either accept suspension and the split in organized labor or challenge the decision in the courts. The CIO's legal counsel advised that the insurgents had a solid case, but they would have to demand seats at the 1936 AFL convention at Tampa and continue to pay per capita assessments to the AFL. There would be "no chance of our getting admitted to the Tampa convention," Lewis told his cronies, and paying per capita taxes "seems futile." Lewis recommended that the CIO "carry on and not let suspension detract from our organizing activities." By a unanimous vote, CIO officials decided not to challenge the suspensions in court.
Thus on September 5, 1936 all ten unions stood suspended. That same day Green, acting on his own initiative, instructed city centrals and state federations not to kick out locals affiliated with the CIO. In his mind, the troublemakers had been ejected, and the remainder of the AFL could be maintained intact.53

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Green's response to the dual movement was well conditioned and consistent. He simply followed the prescribed formula. But the CIO did not collapse. Rather, it thrived in 1936 and especially in 1937. The CIO had sufficient size and strength to launch organizing drives without assistance from AFL affiliates. More importantly, the CIO attracted the support of millions of workers disenchanted with the AFL and was able to translate their militant desire for unionism into lasting union gains. By mid 1937 the CIO achieved amazing success in autos and steel and Lewis had displaced Green as the recognized spokesman for America's working class.

Numerous factors account for the CIO's early success in organizing mass-production workers. First, suspension freed the CIO unions from the jurisdictional barriers that hampered earlier campaigns. No longer were workers subjected to the separation of skilled and unskilled. Second,
the CIO was able to raise huge sums of money for organizing drives. As opposed to the few thousands the AFL spent on the drives of 1933-1935, the CIO spent almost $1.7 million on the organization of steel workers alone.\textsuperscript{54} Much of the funding came in the form of direct contributions from affiliates, and the rest was raised through an exceedingly high (compared to the AFL) per capita assessment. Third, whereas the AFL always suffered from a dearth of organizers, the CIO employed thousands of organizers drawn from affiliates, radical groups, including Communists, and rank-and-file leaders. Fourth, prolabor sentiment in Washington, represented by the Wagner Act, meant that employers could no longer depend on governmental neutrality or assistance in their behalf.\textsuperscript{55}

Yet the single most important ingredient of the CIO's success was its support of rank-and-file militancy. This, too, had been largely impossible within the Federation. By upholding his religious commitment to industrial peace, Green had alienated millions of mass-production workers. His values, combined with AFL weakness and employer hostility, had all but crushed the worker militancy that erupted in 1933 and 1934. Indeed, 1935 and 1936 were years of relative quiescence in American factories. But with the rise of the CIO, workers again exhibited intense enthusiasm for unionism that surpassed even the upheaval of 1934. Because the CIO supported and
encouraged walkouts and mass picketing, "sit-down" strikes and slowdowns, workers in the basic industries flocked into the insurgent camp. And with an army of workers having tremendous confidence in collective economic action, the CIO was able to win major battles against the two most powerful anti-union employers: autos and steel.

The first significant breach in the anti-union wall around mass-production industries occurred on February 11, 1937 when General Motors, faced with the novel and immensely effective weapon of the sit-down strike, in which workers took physical possession of the plant, strong governmental pressures, and artful negotiating by Lewis, signed a contract with the United Automobile Workers (UAW). To be sure, the contract did not include a union shop provision, but GM granted exclusive representation to the UAW in the struck plants, agreed not to discriminate against union members, and agreed to rehire all strikers. 56

Green, of course, offered no support to the striking auto workers. When the UAW appealed to the AFL for financial help on February 2, Green told reporters that he had no intention of asking internationals to contribute. With more than a hint of bitterness, he added that it was "rather surprising that the United Automobile Workers now comes to an organization which it had deserted with a plea for financial aid." 57 Moreover, by insisting that the UAW's demand for exclusive representation would deny representation
to the handful of auto workers in AFL craft unions, Green actually obstructed negotiations between GM and the UAW. On February 6 GM proposed a settlement that would have made the UAW the exclusive bargaining agent in the struck plants for a temporary period. Green immediately visited President Roosevelt at the White House and later telephoned him to voice his opposition to the proposed settlement. That same day Green telephoned Governor Murphy of Michigan, who was directly involved in the negotiations, and, as Green later told the Executive Council, "in a rather long and very clear and definite conversation" urged him not to "yield to force and wrong." Green also sent a telegram to Murphy, telling him that any agreement in which the UAW was accorded exclusive representation would be a "direct injury" to the AFL. 58

When negotiations between the UAW and GM resumed, Governor Murphy showed Green's telegram to Lewis, who thereupon rose from the conference table and went for his coat and hat. When asked where he was going, Lewis answered that if AFL demands were to be considered, he and his associates would gladly leave and GM could settle the strike with the AFL. Lewis then proposed that Haile Selassie be invited to the negotiations since he represented as many GM workers as did Green. 59 Lewis's outrage was warranted, historian Sidney Fine has observed, because "the intervention of the AFL undoubtedly reinforced GM's determination
not to yield on the issue of exclusive representation."\textsuperscript{60}

On the day the settlement was announced, Green was happy to detail its shortcomings to the press. Indeed, his animosity toward the CIO led him to claim the agreement represented a "complete surrender" of all major UAW demands. "So far as recognition of the union is concerned, the situation is practically the same as it was before the strike was called," he erroneously told reporters. "As regards the closed shop principle, the defeat is complete."\textsuperscript{61}

CIO leaders did not overlook Green's obstructions, and the hostility Green aroused made a reconciliation between the AFL and the CIO even more unlikely. One CIO official, Van A. Bittner, indignantly wrote to Green that the AFL Executive Council included "men who face this battle between the automobile workers and General Motors with only one thought in mind -- to drive the automobile workers back to work so that it might be said that the Committee for Industrial Organization is a failure."\textsuperscript{62} When the contract was signed, UAW President Homer Martin denounced Green as "the modern Judas Iscariot of the labor movement."\textsuperscript{63} And the UMW Policy Committee condemned both Green and John P. Frey for "their gratuitous, anti-union, strikebreaking statements."\textsuperscript{64}

An equally historic, if somewhat less dramatic CIO breakthrough in the mass-production sector occurred on
March 2, 1937 when U.S. Steel, the leading bastion of the open shop, signed a contract with the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee. The victory was less complete than in autos because SWOC was named bargaining agent for its members only without any guarantee of union security. Nevertheless, the agreement was a tremendous conquest for organized labor and, unlike the GM accord, there had been no dramatic confrontations between workers and management and virtually no governmental interference immediately prior to the agreement.65

Green, who was in Coshocton celebrating his sixty-seventh birthday when the U.S. Steel contract was made public, again refused to concede that the CIO had won a major victory. He condemned the CIO for failure to "stand up" for the union shop. "Neither side ... attempted to invoke the National Labor Relations Act provisions to determine the sole bargaining agent," he complained. "Only in such union recognition and in no other way can the cooperative industrial relationship between companies and workers be improved."66

On the surface, Green's reaction to the CIO's advances in steel and autos seemed to be simply a matter of sour grapes. There is undoubtedly some truth to the view that Green was unable to admit that a dual federation could succeed where he had failed. Yet a great deal more than jealousy motivated Green. Above all, his need to justify
Christian cooperation led him to claim the victories were failures. Indeed the overriding factor behind Green's vindictive crusade against the CIO after 1936 was his disdain for worker militancy. His entire career rested on the premise that labor would gain only insofar as all parties to the production process promoted harmony and cooperation. He considered the CIO's approach barbaric, futile, and immoral, and he steadfastly refused to believe that its tactics could ever be successful.

The CIO's use of the sit-down strike, which was of dubious legality, its tolerance of Communists, and its occasional willingness to break a contract and conduct sympathy strikes were, for Green, all signs of the CIO's immorality, symptoms of a "disease which is eating into the vitals of trade-unionism." He held the sit-down strike in particular contempt and referred to it as "sabotage beyond the wildest dreams of the I.W.W." The sit-down "connotes a desire to bargain by violence, to use force in the taking of public and private property, to take the law into one's own hands ..." Such tactics, Green argued, not only violated Christian precepts, but they also imperiled labor's standing by alienating public opinion and arousing the hostility of government. Thus even as the CIO grew in power and influence, Green regarded it as "a perversion and contradiction of all the ethical standards which Organized Labor had created and observed."
The CIO's capacity to translate worker militancy into trade union gains, particularly in 1937, pointed out the fallacy of Green's approach. Cooperation had failed to secure a single signed contract with a major mass-production employer. The "immorality" of the CIO, not Green's Christian ideals, brought millions of workers into the trade union fold and made labor a force to be reckoned with in the nation's political and economic life. Green never recognized that moral suasion, in and of itself, was an ineffective tool for the advancement of working-class interests.

The CIO enjoyed remarkable growth in early 1937. The UAW followed up on its GM victory by winning a contract with Chrysler on April 6. The Rubber Workers became firmly entrenched in the rubber industry. The United Electrical Workers won bargaining rights at RCA, General Electric and other radio and electrical companies. In areas dominated by mass-production industry, the CIO met with considerable, although by no means complete, success. At the CIO conference in October 1937, the rebels claimed four million members. This figure, however, was an exaggeration, the real membership being closer to two million. Nevertheless, the CIO could boast 32 international unions, 600 local industrial unions (comparable to FLUs), and 80 state federations and city centrals.
Try as he might, Green could not whistle away the CIO's early success. If the Federation hoped to avoid being swallowed up by its rival, immediate and aggressive action was necessary. And to the surprise of many observers, the AFL under Green was able to meet the challenge and initiate a powerful counterattack. Only after the CIO demonstrated conclusively that unskilled workers could in fact be organized and that industrial unionism was a viable strategy did AFL affiliates adjust their organizational strategy. Without any fanfare, the Carpenters began to organize lumber and sawmill workers on an industrial basis; the Machinists advanced a formula to organize mass-production workers; and the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers began to recruit all electrical workers regardless of skill. Faced with potentially ruinous competition, these and other AFL unions scrapped their dogged adherence to craft unionism. The CIO menace forced AFL affiliates to recognize that twentieth century economic developments required a twentieth century form of unionism. 72

At the April 1937 session of the Executive Council, Green voiced the fears of AFL leaders as the CIO expanded:

The country seems to be filled with C.I.O. organizers. Every town and every city, small and great, seems to be filled with organizers employed ... by the C.I.O. I am amazed at the reports I get from our people in all towns and cities ... advising they have ten or twelve, or five or six C.I.O. organizers active ... Because of these activities there has come a general demand that the Council proceed to take action ...
Green persuaded Council members to call a special convention on May 24 at Cincinnati so that the Federation could devise a strategy for a counter-offensive. Several Council members suggested that if the AFL were to compete successfully, it would have to launch campaigns comparable to those of the CIO. Green replied that a dearth of organizers precluded such a policy for the present. "Our foes are heavily financed and we are limited." If the AFL planned to mount massive organizing drives, Green concluded, a scheme to raise money would have to be approved at the Cincinnati convention.74

At the well attended special convention, delegates approved the Executive Council's recommendations to establish a "war chest" by levying an assessment of one cent per member per month; to have international unions "carry forward without limit aggressive organizing campaigns within their respective jurisdictions"; and to expel locals affiliated with the CIO.75 Without explicitly stating so, the Cincinnati convention signaled the end of the debate over industrial versus craft forms of organization. In the ensuing civil war, both the AFL and the CIO chartered craft and industrial unions alike. Some AFL unions, such as the Carpenters, Teamsters, and Machinists, emerged from the war with jurisdictions as broad or broader than those claimed by some CIO unions.76
The Cincinnati convention was indeed a declaration of war against the CIO. Green had been one of the most vocal supporters of war, yet he did not consider the battle cry adequate justification to abandon cooperation and morality in organizing. The convention provided him with a five-fold increase in organizing funds and allowed him to increase his organizing staff to 200. Green appointed Lewis G. Hines, a dyed-in-the-wool conservative trade unionist who shared Green's misgivings about labor violence, as his special assistant in charge of organizers. And in his instructions, Green placed a ban on sit-down strikes and urged organizers to sell the AFL by pointing out to workers and employers that the Federation did not condone the CIO's "irresponsible tactics." 77

Fortunately, many organizers and AFL affiliates paid no heed to Green's prohibition of militant tactics. Many of the 477 sit-down strikes recorded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1937 were led by AFL unions. 78 Green dismissed many organizers who spurned his instructions, but because he did not have the authority to interfere with the practices of individual unions, he could do nothing when affiliates violated his moral code. And indeed, the tremendous growth of the AFL in the years 1937-1941 was a result of militant campaigns conducted by individual unions. With the rise of the CIO, affiliates no longer looked to Green and the AFL front office to organize workers for them.
Divested of most of his organizing duties, Green played the role of cheerleader for AFL unions as they battled their CIO opponents. And by the time the AFL met in convention in the fall of 1937, Green had a great deal to cheer about. The AFL had regained practically all membership losses caused by the suspensions. Further, the tremendous initial surge of the CIO seemed largely spent. Defeat in the Little Steel strikes, highlighted by the bloody Memorial Day Massacre in Chicago that left ten dead, served notice on the CIO that it could expect no more quick, nonviolent victories. The strikes also demonstrated the limits of New Deal support for the insurgents. President Roosevelt wished a plague on both the CIO and Republic Steel during the strike. The UAW's attempt to organize Ford also met with armed resistance and ended in disaster. These and other CIO defeats were followed by an upsurge in unemployment. During the "Roosevelt depression" of 1937 and 1938, the number of jobless again reached eleven million. Largely as a result of layoffs, the UAW and other CIO unions lost tens of thousands of members. Because AFL unions were not concentrated in mass-production centers, they were not hit quite as hard as CIO unions.

Intoxicated by AFL successes and CIO setbacks, Green expressed his desire to carry the fight against the CIO to the finish. In a ninety minute speech to the 1937 AFL
convention, delivered in the same Denver, Colorado convention hall in which he had nominated Lewis for the AFL presidency in 1921, Green declared the AFL would build "the greatest fighting machine that was ever created within the ranks of organized labor" to drive the CIO "out of existence." Amid cheers from the 600 delegates, Green blasted the "destroying, destructive, ripping policy" of the CIO. Again he denounced the sit-down and pledged AFL loyalty to private property rights and the sanctity of trade agreements. Unlike the CIO, the AFL wanted "to avoid industrial conflicts, to promote understanding between employers and employees," and "to win our battles in accordance with law and lawful procedure." He then asked delegates to clothe the Executive Council with authority to revoke the charters of the suspended unions: "The clock is struck. The hour is here ... Having appealed to them for two years to come back, you are now going to say that appeal will no longer be made." By a vote of 25,616 to 1227, delegates empowered the Council to expel the CIO unions.

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By the fall of 1937, mounting pressure both within and outside the CIO forced the rebels to initiate peace talks. The "Roosevelt depression" and numerous organizing
failures contributed to a spirit of compromise. The loss of much of their influence with President Roosevelt also convinced a number of CIO officials of the need for labor unity. Accordingly, on October 12, the CIO forwarded a telegram to AFL Secretary Frank Morrison calling for a conference of two hundred representatives, one hundred from each federation, to consider unity. The telegram specified that any peace agreement must include AFL acceptance of the principle of industrial unionism in the mass-production industries. Although Green considered the message "pure propaganda," he called the Executive Council together on the evening of October 13 to compose a reply. Green told his colleagues that prospects for peace were slim since many of the unions chartered by the CIO had jurisdictions that overlapped with existing AFL unions. He also suspected that a throng of two hundred was far too unwieldy to conduct negotiations. Nevertheless, he opined, the Federation must keep its doors open. With the Council's consent, Green named a committee of three, headed by Woll, to compose a reply. Woll's letter stated that a conference of two hundred was unworkable, but that the AFL stood ready to negotiate.

Power realities within the AFL made peace an unlikely prospect. Hutcheson, Tobin, Wharton, and W.D. Mahon of the Transit Workers all demanded assurances from
Green that the interests of their unions would not be
sacrificed in any unity plan. Hutcheson, for instance,
threatened to pull the Carpenters out of the AFL if the
CIO's Woodworkers Union was allowed to affiliate. Green assured Hutcheson that "no organization of the
International Woodworkers of America will be taken into the
American Federation of Labor." Green also promised
Hutcheson that the CIO's United Electrical Workers would
never be admitted "except through absorption in and
affiliation with the International Electrical Workers of
America." Furthermore, Green himself consistently opposed AFL
concessions to the CIO. In his mind, responsibility for "the
division in the house of labor must rest absolutely upon the
shoulders of those who divided it through the setting up of
a dual movement." He would allow the CIO unions back into
the AFL, but he would not allow them to impose any condi-
tions on the parent organization. "We ask them to come into
the open forum of debate with their opinions, their sugges-
tions and their recommendations, and we say to them, 'If you
can win a majority of the delegates to your point of view,
amen, all right, but you must do it in democratic, orderly
fashion and not in accordance with minority rule or the rule
of the jungle.'"

Unity talks were held from October 25 to December
21, 1937. George M. Harrison, Matthew Woll, and G.M.
Bugniazet of the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers represented the AFL, while the CIO sent twelve officials, led by Sidney Hillman, C.P. Howard, and Phil Murray. The initial proposals showed just how far apart the AFL and the CIO were in 1937. The CIO proposed that all of its affiliates be accepted by the AFL at once; that an autonomous department, to be known as the Committee for Industrial Organization, should be created with full control over the affairs of its affiliates; and should be joint AFL-CIO proposal because it meant conceding all the issues that had led to suspension. The Machinists believed the CIO's plan "bordered on brazen effrontery" and represented an attempt by the "Big Bad Wolf" to devour the "Meek Little Lamb."\textsuperscript{89}

On October 12, the AFL put forth a counterproposal that included the immediate dissolution of the CIO and reaffiliation of CIO unions holding AFL charters. All other CIO unions holding AFL charters. All other CIO unions should then confer with AFL unions which contested their jurisdictions. The CIO proved equally hostile to the AFL proposal because, as Phil Murray stated, it allowed the original CIO unions to return only "with the distinct understanding that these ... organizations desert and betray the ... new national and international unions" chartered by the CIO. Murray understood that the AFL offer was a "rejection of the principle of industrial organization in mass production and other basic industries."\textsuperscript{90}
After the rejection of both initial proposals, according to the report of the AFL negotiating committee to the Executive Council, a "basis for agreement" was formulated and accepted by both sides but later rejected by Lewis. The AFL negotiators reported that both sides agreed to admit all CIO unions after joint committees adjusted jurisdictional disputes; to have the AFL specify certain industries in which an industrial union policy would be followed; and to amend the AFL constitution to prohibit the Executive Council from suspending or expelling unions. The AFL negotiators added in their report that Phil Murray was absent when the agreement was reached, but that when he learned of it and discussed it with Lewis, he "refused to carry out the understanding" and proposed instead that the entire issue of unity be referred to a subcommittee. 91

Although the AFL demanded that the CIO honor the agreement, in the end the AFL participated in the subcommittee, which consisted of Lewis and Murray for the CIO and Green and George M. Harrison for the AFL. At the subcommittee talks, Lewis insisted that the AFL take in all 32 CIO unions "with the understanding that when these unions were admitted to the A. F. of L. they could not later be suspended if the points of conflict were not adjusted." 92 Green and Harrison complained that Lewis's proposal would establish dual unionism in the AFL. Having reached this impasse, the peace talks abruptly ended. 93
The AFL heaped abuse on Lewis for personally subverting the peace talks, but it seems clear that neither the AFL nor the CIO was sincerely interested in peace in 1937. In large measure, the peace negotiations dragged on for weeks only because neither party wanted to appear responsible for the breakdown of the talks. Throughout the negotiations, as Dubofsky and Van Tine have shown, the AFL demanded that the CIO disband prior to a settlement and steadfastly refused to put in writing the industries to be organized on an industrial basis.\(^\text{94}\) The CIO could not accept these terms, for it would have meant a return to the situation that existed before the CIO's formation. On the other hand, the CIO would not retreat from its position that all 32 of its unions be admitted with full rights. And in 1937, the AFL was unwilling to put its stamp of approval on dualism.

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The failure of the peace talks led to an intensification of the AFL's war on the CIO. Declaring that it was time to "meet the challenge of the C.I.O. in a militant, determined and uncompromising way," Green terminated the services of thirty-eight AFL organizers whom he deemed pro-CIO, and systematically began to purge subordinate bodies of CIO influence.\(^\text{95}\) As early as February 24, 1937, Green had
informed state federations and city centrals that they "must
decide whether they will be loyal to the parent body ... or
give support to an organization which is classified as dual
and rival ..." He insisted that they "renew their pledge of
loyalty and devotion to the American Federation of Labor and
to the principles and policies which it represents." The
majority of these bodies dutifully expelled CIO locals.

By the end of 1937 Green began to revoke the
charters of city centrals and state federations with CIO
unions. When Green demanded that the West Virginia
Federation of Labor oust all CIO locals, John B. Easton, the
Federation's president, retorted that if all CIO locals were
expelled, "the Federation would be so weak that it would be
of no material benefit to the workers of the State." Green reminded him that the officers of subordinate bodies
were duty bound to conform to the rules and interests of the
parent body. After a trial in which Green appeared to
present charges, the state federation was reorganized.
Similar action was taken against the Kentucky and Pennsyl-
vanian state federations and recalcitrant city centrals.

On the national level, Green and the Executive
Council also moved to seal the split in organized labor by
expelling the suspended unions in the CIO. Before taking
this step, the Council waited for the Mine Workers to expel
Green, thereby avoiding the embarrassing situation of having
an AFL president who was a member of an expelled union.
Under the UMW constitution, expulsion trials were to be held before a committee of the accused member's local union. Whatever the verdict, either side could appeal the case through subdistrict and district organizations to the UMW executive board, which served as the board of final appeal. Yet, Green's local, no. 379 in Coshocton, was largely defunct. The mines were not in operation and the local was held together largely for tradition's sake. Many of its members had worked with Green at the turn of the century. Only the local's president, J.R. McCormick, who was also a CIO organizer, was willing to obey Lewis's order and try Green. Many of the others, such as Ben Mobley, declared their intention to "stick with Billy Green to the last." If the order to try Green was given, Mobley said, "We'll just ignore it entirely." Thus Lewis was denied the opportunity to expel Green through constitutional means.

The UMW executive board, at its meeting in July 1937, considered charges that Green was "encouraging a dual union," the Progressive Miners Union. Green had in fact given an FLU charter to this UMW splinter group of about 30,000 Illinois miners in June 1937. Still, the UMW executive board refused to move against Green, perhaps fearing that a trial before the board would be regarded as prejudicial. In a clearly unconstitutional move, the executive board referred the matter of Green's expulsion to the February 1938 UMW convention. In a four thousand-word
letter to UMW Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Kennedy, Green argued that since the convention had no jurisdiction over expulsions, he would not appear to defend himself.\textsuperscript{102} The trial took place on the last day of the convention, but before the act of expulsion had been finalized, Green tendered his resignation.\textsuperscript{103}

Green now found himself in the ridiculous position of having to present himself as a member of the Musicians Union, which had anticipated expulsion by issuing him a membership card on February 28, 1936.\textsuperscript{104} "That is appropriate," Lewis's quipped to the miners' convention, "Like Nero, he fiddles while Rome burns."\textsuperscript{105}

With this formality out of the way, between February and May 1938 Green and the Executive Council proceeded to revoke the charters of the suspended international unions. In the cases of the Flat Glass Workers and the Mine Workers, the Council took further action by chartering rival unions, the National Flat Glass Workers and the Progressive Mine Workers. The promotion of the dual miners' union was clearly inspired by Green, who carried on negotiations with the group as early as 1936. It was a vindictive act intended to antagonize Lewis. Based almost entirely in Illinois, the Progressive Mine Workers had no chance of displacing the UMW. Indeed, the Executive Council had to give it $50,000 just to keep it afloat and, soon after the union received its charter, thirty-six of its leaders were
In October 1938, after almost three years of independent activity, the CIO issued a call to all affiliates to meet on November 14 in Pittsburgh for a constitutional convention. Representatives from 34 internationals, 8 organizing committees, 23 state federations, 116 city centra, and 137 local industrial unions gathered in Pittsburgh to adopt a constitution and change the name of their organization to the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Delegates elected Lewis president, Murray and Hillman vice-presidents, and James B. Carey of the United Electrical Workers secretary. The split in labor was sealed.

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Although Green played a limited role in the AFL's organizing campaigns of 1937-1941, he spearheaded the AFL's war on the CIO in the halls of Congress and among the public. In his continuing effort to cultivate public acceptance of the AFL, Green stressed the real or supposed differences between the rival labor federations. The picture he painted of the AFL was that of a responsible, patriotic organization committed to the free market and cooperation with management; the CIO, by contrast, was dictatorially controlled, a bastion of Communists and other
radicals, and a militant organization bent on class conflict and social strife. His speeches bore little resemblance to reality, but they did increase Green's popularity among the public. A Gallup poll conducted in the fall of 1938 posed the following question: "Which labor leader do you like better: Green of the A. F. of L. or Lewis of the C.I.O.?" Seventy-eight per cent of those responding favored Green, whereas in July 1937, when the same question was asked, only sixty-seven per cent voted for the AFL president. 108

Some of the most intense feuding between the AFL and CIO took place in the political arena and, in particular, over the administration of the Wagner Act. And throughout labor's civil war, Green proved to be an adept lobbyist, competing successfully against the CIO for federal favors. Even as Green lobbied for passage of the Wagner Act in June 1935, craft unionists, who feared the act would be interpreted in favor of industrial unionism, pressured Green to secure a guarantee that would protect craft unions. Tobin wrote Green in June 1935 that many Executive Council members would rather have no bill at all than allow a government board to promote industrial unionism at the expense of craft unions. 109 By April 1937, when the Supreme Court validated the Wagner Act and the CIO rivaled the AFL in a number of industries, the apprehension of craft unionists seemed justified.
Competition between the AFL and CIO created sticky administrative problems for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). When forced to determine the proper bargaining unit in an industry, the NLRB often had to choose, in effect, between the AFL and CIO. Decisions made in favor of the CIO prompted AFL dissatisfaction with the administration of the act. Opposition intensified when the NLRB made several decisions setting aside AFL contracts with employers that were deemed collusive arrangements to frustrate the desire of a majority of workers to join a CIO union. For instance, in 1936 the CIO's United Electrical Workers began an organizing drive at the National Electric Products Company. Although the drive attracted a great many workers, the company refused to bargain with the CIO union and signed a closed shop agreement with the AFL's Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The NLRB cancelled the AFL contract because it did not represent the free choice of the majority of workers.

Green and the Executive Council considered decisions favoring CIO unions and setting aside contracts a serious threat to the AFL's existence and unwarranted interference with legitimate relations between employers and unions.

Green was careful lest criticism of the NLRB be construed as an attack upon the basic principles of the Wagner Act itself. Thus when he met with President Roosevelt on August 19, 1938 at Hyde Park, Green took the
time to mention the great benefits the act provided labor before he detailed instances of the NLRB's supposed CIO bias. Green told the President the AFL was particularly upset over the decisions of two of the NLRB's administrators, Edwin Smith and Donald Wakefield Smith. Green urged the President not to reappoint the latter, whose term expired in 1939. The President promised Green he would discuss the AFL's complaints with Senator Wagner.\textsuperscript{111}

Green followed up his visit with a telegram to Roosevelt on August 25 charging Donald Wakefield Smith with "bias" in favor of the CIO.\textsuperscript{112} The President, by now irritated with Green's pressuring, wrote the AFL president that the charge of bias, "standing by itself, means nothing." Employers and unions often complained about the administration of the act after they "lost their case before the Board," which was, Roosevelt supposed, "a very human and natural attitude to take."\textsuperscript{113}

Green complained to the Executive Council that Roosevelt's letter was "uncalled for," and the Council responded to the President with a long bill of particulars, spelling out its grievances in detail. Although Roosevelt declared his intention of reappointing Donald Wakefield Smith, Green lobbied so effectively against him that his name was never submitted to the Senate. Instead, Roosevelt nominated William L. Leiserson, at that time chairman of the National Mediation Board. The CIO, which had supported
Smith, was upset over the new board member.\textsuperscript{114}

Despite its success in preventing Smith's reappointment, Green and the Executive Council continued the offensive unabated. They sponsored a series of amendments to the Wagner Act which would have made a craft unit rule mandatory upon the board, prevented the board from invalidating agreements with AFL unions notwithstanding a finding that they were collusive, and replaced the existing three-man board by a new five-man board with a mandate to overhaul the staff. The amendments were opposed vigorously by the CIO, and although they were adopted by the House of Representatives, the Senate failed to take action upon them.\textsuperscript{115}

In their campaign against the NLRB, Green and the Council formed an unholy alliance with the House Committee on Un-American Activities, created in June 1938 under the chairmanship of Representative Martin Dies of Texas. The Committee's first notable witness, John P. Frey, who testified for three days in August 1938, made nation-wide headlines with sensational charges that Communists had captured the CIO and that the NLRB was its handmaiden.\textsuperscript{116}

On the eve of the 1938 elections, Dies took his Committee on a tour throughout the country to smear gubernatorial candidates friendly to labor -- Frank Murphy in Michigan, Elmer A. Benson in Minnesota, and Culbert Olson in California, among others.\textsuperscript{117}
By legitimizing the conservative assault on prolabor politicians, Green and the AFL bear partial responsibility for the 1938 election results, which significantly altered the political balance in Washington. For the first time in ten years, the Republicans made significant gains, picking up eighty-eight seats in the House and eight in the Senate. Among the new Republicans in the Senate was Robert A. Taft of Ohio, who was to make anti-union legislation his specialty. In the upcoming 76th Congress, an alliance of Republicans and southern Democrats would have control over those issues on which they agreed, notably labor.

While Green and the AFL continued to advocate changes in the Wagner Act, their objections were largely satisfied by changes in personnel and administration. Green successfully opposed the reappointment of Chairman J. Warren Madden in 1940 and greeted with satisfaction his replacement by Harry A. Millis. In 1941 Green also blocked the reappointment of Edwin Smith, thus making a clean sweep of the NLRB's original personnel. Under Millis and Leiserson, the NLRB underwent drastic changes in administration and policy. In particular, craft groups were given greater opportunity to establish separate bargaining rights, and AFL contracts were afforded a greater measure of protection against CIO charges of collusion. The extent of the policy shift was indicated in 1941, when the AFL convention
characterized the administration of the Wagner Act as "fair and impartial" and "a vast improvement over the previous administration." 

That Green found himself supporting the anti-New Deal coalition in the late 1930s to attract support for AFL amendments to the Wagner Act revealed the lengths to which he was willing to go to combat the CIO and its "immorality." In January 1940 Green approved of an Executive Council statement that termed acceptance of CIO endorsement by any candidate the "kiss of death" and warned: "we caution the members of the American Federation of Labor not to be misled by the endorsements or blacklists of the so-called Labor's Non-Partisan League. This League is a sham. It is merely a paper organization, a puppet of the CIO." Green's crusade against the CIO in the political arena undoubtedly weakened labor's voice in Washington.

Green and the AFL may have competed successfully against the CIO in national politics, but they proved unable to match the CIO's efforts to attract black workers to trade unionism. Indeed, the formation of the CIO not only exposed the AFL's incapacity to organize mass-production workers, it also exposed the AFL's shameful record on the organization of Blacks. The AFL's record had in fact fueled the enmity
between the Lewis group and the craft bloc between 1933 and 1935. At the 1934 AFL convention, black workers picketed outside the convention hall. Inside the hall, black unionists introduced resolutions condemning the AFL's treatment of Blacks. They complained about the eight international unions that completely excluded Blacks from membership, the unions that accepted Blacks but forced them to join separate "Jim Crow" locals, and the overall lack of concern about the special problems facing black workers. A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, which was composed primarily of Blacks, argued that there was "widespread unrest ... with the existing status of Negro workers in the American Federation of Labor, and with its policy toward the organization of Negro workers." 122

Randolph proposed that the convention expel all unions that violated the AFL constitution by excluding Blacks. He also called for the appointment of a committee to investigate discrimination against Blacks in the AFL. The committee on organization, to which Randolph's resolution was referred, claimed that the AFL, from its inception, held all workers eligible for membership, regardless of race, creed, or nationality. Further, the committee stated that the AFL could not "interfere with the autonomy of national or international unions" and could not "say who
are eligible or who are not eligible to membership in national or international unions." Nevertheless, the committee did authorize Green to appoint the investigating committee on discrimination Randolph desired.\textsuperscript{123}

Before the strident tones of disgruntled black unionists made themselves heard at the 1934 AFL convention, Green had said little on the question of racism in the AFL. Since Green had been a member of the UMW, one of the least discriminatory unions in the AFL, some Blacks had hoped that his election in 1924 would lead to changes in AFL policies. In September 1925 Green had encouraged these hopes by writing in the black journal, the \textit{Messenger}, that the doors of the AFL were now open to Blacks. Yet his article showed that Blacks could expect little change. Green repeated the old argument that black workers had only themselves to blame for their exclusion from AFL unions and that they could expect to receive equal treatment only when they developed a trade union mentality.\textsuperscript{124}

If Green's words provided little solace to black workers, his actions proved that he had at least some interest in improving their status. When the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was formed in 1925, Green worked hard to convince the Executive Council to give the new union international status. However, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union, which claimed jurisdiction over the porters, blocked the Brotherhood's application. Green and
the Brotherhood were forced to accept a compromise, in which Brotherhood locals received FLU charters. Thus while Green was not a racist, he was unwilling to challenge the racist policies upheld by the Executive Council.

For reasons which are not altogether clear, Green waited eight months, until June 1935, to appoint the Committee of Five on Negro Discrimination authorized by the 1934 convention. Witnesses appeared before the committee and presented an impressive body of facts on the racist policies of AFL unions. One witness argued that, because of depression conditions, many workers found it impossible to travel to AFL headquarters and suggested that the committee hold regional hearings to collect additional evidence. Green, however, claimed that "there was no necessity for holding such hearings" and ordered the Committee of Five to submit its final report.

It was hardly surprising that the report of the Committee of Five received little attention at the 1935 AFL convention because of the debate between craft and industrial unionists. In his determination to maintain peace at any cost, Green did not even present the full report to the delegates. Instead, he had George M. Harrison of the Railway Clerks prepare a summary. Green disallowed all discussion of this emasculated version of the committee's report until the last day of the convention, after most of the delegates had gone home.
The Committee of Five's report thus went largely unnoticed by most delegates. During the short debate on the report, Green emphasized the progress made by the AFL in fighting racism. He pointed out incorrectly that 100 of the AFL's 105 affiliates accepted black members. And he declared that, although he personally abhorred discrimination, he did not have the power to "say to an autonomous International union how it shall draft its laws." Randolph's proposal to revoke charters of unions barring Blacks, Green continued, was unworkable. The AFL could only hope that through education racism in unions would be eliminated. Meanwhile, FLUs served the needs of black workers excluded by internationals.  

Green's suppression of the report of the Committee of Five convinced many Blacks that the AFL would never do anything to advance the cause of black labor. Thus with the formation of the CIO, Blacks abandoned hope in the AFL and threw their support to the rebels. Blacks supported the CIO in large measure because the great majority of black union candidates were employed in mass-production industries. Even A. Philip Randolph, who kept his Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the AFL, recognized the tremendous promise the CIO held for black workers. "The craft union invariably has a color bar against the Negro worker," Randolph declared, "but the industrial union in structure renders race discrimination less possible, since it embraces
all workers included in the industry, regardless of race, creed, color or craft, skilled or unskilled."

The CIO organizing drives in mass-production industries, by recruiting both black and white workers, brought dramatic changes in the race relations of working-class communities. At least temporarily, class consciousness supplanted race consciousness among black workers, and many whites began to protest against discrimination their black co-workers faced. While the CIO did not revolutionize the status of Blacks, in its early years the CIO revealed a strong sympathy for the plight of black workers and struggled to overcome divisions in the working class based on race.

As the demand for the organization of black workers shifted to the CIO, Green and the AFL once again were able to ignore the problems Blacks faced and maintain their racist policies. Indeed, the economist Walter Galenson concludes that "there is no evidence to indicate that the Executive Council gave the question (of discrimination) any serious consideration" between 1936 and 1941. For his part, William Green continued to assert his opposition to racist practices in AFL unions, but claimed his hands were tied because of union autonomy. Thus Green remained silent when eight black leaders appealed to the AFL's Railway Employees Department in April 1938 for action to strike out discriminatory clauses from AFL union constitutions. He
failed to intercede when the Railway and Steamship Clerks Union organized white redcaps and barred black redcaps. And when the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters applied for jurisdiction over the black redcaps, Green actually helped the Railway and Steamship Clerks Union in its successful effort to block the Brotherhood's petition. Green was not a racist, but his unwillingness to exert his influence to put an end to discrimination made his condemnation of racism sound insincere. Few Blacks found comfort in Green's declaration at the 1940 Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters convention that "So long as I can express myself, I shall fight against racial intolerance and hatred in America."  

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It is an irony of history that the two men most responsible for the split in organized labor and the ferocity of labor's civil war, William Green and John L. Lewis, should both suffer a loss of personal power as a result. Dubofsky and Van Tine have carefully analyzed Lewis's fall in 1940, when Lewis threw his support to the Republican Willkie in the presidential election and kept his promise to resign as head of the CIO if Roosevelt won. Although he maintained his official position, Green, too, suffered a loss of power in the wake of the civil war. Most significantly, Green no longer conducted massive organizing
drives as he had done in the 1920s and early 1930s. Competition from the CIO forced international unions to conduct their own drives, and they no longer looked to Green to organize for them. Thus in his declining years, Green served largely as an administrator and figurehead for the Federation.

Even in these duties Green was forced to share his workload. In 1939 the Executive Council forced the retirement of seventy-nine year old AFL Secretary-Treasurer Frank Morrison and replaced him with New York State Federation of Labor President George Meany. In seconding Meany's nomination at the 1939 AFL convention, Daniel Tobin argued that Green, who was then sixty-nine years old, needed an officer "who will be helpful and assume the responsibilities of office. He does not need just a bookkeeper ... The President wants a man who is able to take his place, engage in the work of the Federation, one who is able to take the platform in his absence explaining the work and the position of this Federation." 135

Green, however, did not want such and active underling. He jealously guarded his control over all aspects of the AFL's affairs, and he had no intention of sharing his authority. As one AFL administrator, Boris Shiskin, recalled: "Meany moved a little too fast for Green, and friction developed quickly. This had the effect of encouraging Meany to push stronger ... The conflict,"
Shiskin continued, "was not so much on substance but on the manner in which things were done. Meany wanted to make the AFL more responsive to current conditions; Green liked things the way they were."\textsuperscript{136}

Although the relationship between Green and Meany was never overtly hostile, Green was wary of the new Secretary-Treasurer's ambitions. In Meany's first few years, Green gave him as little important work to do as possible. But he could not prevent Meany from making administrative reforms clearly within the jurisdiction of his post. Meany captured control over the management of the American Federationist and frequently complained to Executive Council members that he wanted to serve as the AFL's chief lobbyist.\textsuperscript{137} Even though Green continued to serve the AFL as chief lobbyist until the late 1940s, he was clearly a waning star in the labor movement galaxy.
NOTES


4. Ibid., p. 226.


9. Lewis to Green, November 23, 1935, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 1, SHSW.


11. Charles P. Howard to Green, December 2, 1935, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C Box 1, SHSW.

12. Lewis to Green, December 7, 1935, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 1, SHSW.

13. Green to Lewis, December 9, 1935, Adolph Germer Papers, Box 2, SHSW.


16. Ibid., p. 11.

18. Ibid., pp. 303-309.

19. Ibid., p. 309.


21. Green to W.E. Ingersoll, February 8, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 1, SHSW.

22. Green to James Maloney, February 11, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 1, SHSW.


24. Tobin to Green, February 26, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 2, SHSW.

25. Arthur Wharton to Green, February 28, 1936; Matthew Woll to Green, February 29, 1936; Felix Knight to Green, March 6, 1936; Joseph Weber to Green, February 27, 1936; and Harry Bates to Green, February 25, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 2, SHSW.

26. Green to the Presidents of International Unions, March 2, 1936; "Replies to Letters of March 2, 1936," AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 2, SHSW.


29. AFL, Information and Publicity Service, June 5, 1936, CIO Folder 1, AFL-CIO Archives.

30. Lewis to Green, June 30, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 1, SHSW.

31. Green to All Affiliate Organizations, April 23, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 3, SHSW.

32. Green to George Berry, April 27, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 3, SHSW.


34. Taft, *The A. F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger*, p. 156.


37. On Lewis's suppression of insurgency, see Dubofsky and Van Tine, pp. 112-131.


40. Green to Lewis et al., June 2, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 2, SHSW.

41. Ogburn to Green, July 8, 9, and 13, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 2, SHSW.

42. Taft, The A. F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger, pp. 162-163.

43. Ibid.; Green to Lewis et al., July 16, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 2, SHSW.

44. The United Automobile Workers and the United Rubber Workers joined the CIO on July 2, 1936. The Typographical Union and the Hatters were not prosecuted because neither were affiliated with the CIO.

45. Taft, The A. F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger, pp. 164-165; Bernstein, Turbulent Years, p. 419.

46. John L. Lewis et al. to Green, July 21, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 1, SHSW.

47. Ogburn to Green, July 22, 1936, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 2, SHSW.


49. Bernstein, Turbulent Years, p. 422.

50. Ibid.  


53. Green to ALL Affiliate Organizations, September 5, 1937, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 3, SHSW.


59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.


64. Ibid., February 16, 1937, p. 1:8.


68. Ibid.

69. Labor Day Address, Dallas, September 6, 1937, Reel 15, frames 723-724, WGC OHS.

70. Tomlins, p. 1023.


73. Taft, *The A. F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger*, p. 188.

74. Ibid.


77. Green to Salaried and Special Organizers, June 14, 1937, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 3, SHSW.


79. Tomlins, p. 1023.


82. Ibid., pp. 377-417.

83. Phillip Murray to Frank Morrison, October 16, 1937, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 24, SHSW.


86. Hutcheson to Green, November 8, 1937, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C. Box 24, SHSW.

87. Green to Hutcheson, November 12, 1937, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 24, SHSW.


89. Cited in Morris, p. 268.


93. Ibid.


95. Green to National and International Unions, State Federations of Labor, City Central Bodies, and Directly Affiliated Unions, December 29, 1937; Green to AFL Organizers, January 24, February 23, 1938; Green to Presidents of National and International Unions with Locals in Pennsylvania, February 28, 1938, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 21, SHSW.

96. Green to State Federations of Labor and City Central Bodies, February 24, 1937, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 21, SHSW.

97. John B. Easton to Green, August 16, 1937, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 21, SHSW.

98. Green to Easton, August 4, 1937, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 21, SHSW.


103. AFL, Information and Publicity Service, February 11, 1938, CIO Folder 2, AFL-CIO Archives.


106. Coleman, p. 177; Bernstein, Turbulent Years, p. 696.


110. Ibid., p. 131; Bernstein, *Turbulent Years*, pp. 660-661.


112. Green to Roosevelt, August 25, 1938, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C. Box 23, SHSW.

113. Roosevelt to Green, August 25, 1938, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C. Box 23, SHSW.


118. Ibid.

119. Ibid., p. 667.


127. Harris, p. 91; Foner, *Black Worker*, pp. 209-211.


131. Galenson, pp. 627-628.

132. Foner, Black Worker, p. 235.

133. Ibid.

134. Van Tine and Dubofsky, pp. 323-364.

135. AFL, Proceedings, 1939, pp. 582-585.


137. Ibid., pp. 78-81, 92, 114, 116-117.
The Second World War provided Green another golden opportunity to stress accommodation between labor and capital. And in the war years, management, government, and labor cooperated on an unprecedented scale in an effort to mobilize America's resources to meet the Axis threat. Immediately after the declaration of war, Green proudly announced that the Federation would forgo voluntarily all strikes for the duration, a pledge the Federation was remarkably successful in keeping. Yet it was ironic that despite the cooperation of labor throughout the emergency, the war years gave rise to powerful anti-union sentiment among conservative Congressmen and the general public. The Smith-Connally Act and the Taft-Hartley Act revealed that significant political forces were still unwilling to accept the existence of a strong labor movement. Christian cooperation remained an elusive dream.

The war years also witnessed the continuing decline of Green's influence over the affairs of the AFL. The Executive Council chose not to appoint Green to important
posts on government boards, naming instead younger, more energetic officials. Increasingly, Green was delegated to less critical tasks, such as addressing union conventions to garner support for Roosevelt's defense policies, raising money for the relief of displaced persons, and publicizing the AFL's contribution to the war effort. While the powerful craft union leaders remained loyal to Green until his death, they no longer called upon the aged president to do their bidding.

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Despite the oftentimes tense relations with the Roosevelt Administration, Green and other AFL leaders recognized the need to maintain harmonious relations with the federal government once war broke out in Europe in 1939. While the CIO was hopelessly split into isolationist and interventionist wings, the AFL was basically united behind the President's defense program. AFL unity rested largely upon the ascendancy within its ranks of the ardent New Dealers George Harrison of the Railway Clerks and Dan Tobin of the Teamsters, both of whom now headed a large, powerful organization, which had grown steadily in the five years preceding the defense emergency. Green encouraged the AFL's support of Roosevelt's defense program because of his
attachment to the Democratic party, his intense patriotism, and his opposition to Fascism and Nazism.

Throughout his life, Green was a vocal opponent of totalitarianism in every form, whether Soviet Communism, Italian Fascism, or German Nazism. Beginning in 1933, he carried on a propaganda war against the Nazi's ruthless suppression of trade unions and persecution of Jews and racial minorities. In part because of his efforts, the 1933 AFL convention unanimously adopted a resolution that the Federation join hands with other organizations in a boycott of German goods and services "until the German government recognizes the right of the working people of Germany to organize into bona fide, independent trade unions of their own choosing, and until Germany ceases its repressive policy of persecution of Jewish people." Succeeding conventions reaffirmed the boycott, which lasted until 1945. Green also convinced the 1934 convention to establish a "Chest for the Liberation of Workers of Europe" to raise funds for German and Italian workers resisting government efforts to squash independent trade unions.¹

But while Green was quick to denounce Hitler and Mussolini, he consistently opposed any action on the part of the U.S. government that might lead to U.S. involvement in war. He drew a sharp line between voluntary action against aggressors and the conduct of the government in foreign affairs. He insisted that the U.S. champion the cause of
peace and "never again ... become involved in a European conflict." Consequently, he refused a request by Walter Citrine, Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress, that the AFL pressure the federal government to impose an embargo upon Japanese goods after Japan invaded China. He did support a boycott of Japanese goods, however, which the 1938 AFL convention approved. Nevertheless, he did not want to advocate policies that might lead to open hostilities.

When fighting broke out in Europe in 1939, Green reaffirmed his opposition to American involvement. "Labor firmly believes that we should have no part in this European War," Green wrote in the AMERICAN FEDERATIONIST. "We have had no part in its causes, and can have no responsible part in its adjustment. We want policies best calculated to keep us free of European entanglements."

Green shared the belief, common among trade unionists active during and after the First World War, that the transformation of the economy to a war footing would inevitably strengthen the domestic enemies of labor and restrict labor's economic and political power. While the AFL had made tremendous membership advances during World War I, the gains proved ephemeral. Cooperation with government and capital in 1917 and 1918 gave way to a massive anti-union movement after the war that depleted the AFL's ranks by almost thirty per cent. In his opening address to the
1939 AFL convention, Green argued that American involvement would bring regimentation at home and wipe out many of labor's recent gains overnight. He suggested instead that the U.S. might serve as mediator in conflict.\(^5\)

With the fall of France in June 1940, the AFL hierarchs, with the notable exception of William Hutcheson of the Carpenters, declared their unreserved support of Roosevelt's aid to Britain. The Nazi takeover of France shattered the illusion that America was secure from Fascist attack. Should England follow France in defeat, only the U.S. would stand between Hitler and world conquest. Viewed in this light, aid to Britain was an essential part of America's defense against Hitler. AFL members "feel that all possible aid, short of our entry into war, should be extended to the Allies, not only because of our emotional sympathy with their cause but in the true interests of our national defense," Green declared in late June 1940. "If the Allies can still defeat their totalitarian aggressors, the threat to our safety automatically ends. If they prolonge their resistance, weaken the power of the dictators and keep the war in Europe, it will give us time to strengthen our defenses and keep the war away from our shores."\(^6\)

Once committed to the defeat of the Axis powers, Green pledged the AFL's "active and cooperative support with
industry and with every appropriate governmental agency having to do with the production and construction of material for national defense." In return he asked only that any governmental agency set up to deal with the emergency be truly representative of labor, management, and the public.7 Thus there was a feeling of outrage among AFL leaders when Roosevelt appointed the CIO's Sidney Hillman as the sole labor member of the seven-man National Defense Advisory Commission. Green also protested Hillman's elevation to the post of associate director-general of the Office of Production Management in December 1940, making him second in command to William Knudsen as administrator of the entire defense production program.8

Despite the AFL's willingness to cooperate with the President, Roosevelt denied the AFL (and the CIO as well) adequate representation on war agencies. One historian has found that, in 1940 and 1941, "labor's influence was vastly inferior to that of management spokesmen" in defense agencies. And indeed, throughout the war years, labor exercised only "limited influence over governmental policy."9

Yet Green and the AFL remained committed to the President's defense policies. In addition to patriotism, one principal reason for the AFL's loyalty was that defense production, which was in full swing by mid 1940, was a boon
to the nation's economy and was largely responsible for pulling the country out of depression. Eight years of the New Deal had been unable to solve the problem of unemployment, but between June 1940 and the attack on Pearl Harbor twenty months later, 4 of the 8.5 million unemployed found work. As job opportunities increased and as lucrative defense contracts boosted corporate profits, wages also began to rise.10

The expansion of production, however, also contained perils for organized labor. Management regarded the defense boom as an opportunity to curb unionization. The war gave business a chance to drape a cloak of patriotism around anti-union activities; to insist that "labor peace" was essential to defense production; and to attack the closed shop as undemocratic and un-American. As the employer offensive took shape, Green placed another qualification on the continued cooperation of the AFL: the Federation would join hands with government and industry in transforming the country into an "arsenal of democracy" as the President wanted, but not at the expense of gains won during the New Deal. In a 1940 Labor Day speech made in Denver, Green declared that "Our National Preparedness program must provide for the maintenance of our social and economic gains. They must neither be lowered nor wiped out."11 Thus labor's support for defense depended on continued enforcement of prolabor legislation.
Government support for prolabor legislation became increasingly difficult to maintain, however. Although the number of strikes in 1940 represented a sharp decline from 1939 and had only slight impact on the defense program, conservatives in Congress made use of the few strikes that did occur to attack the labor movement, and a number of bills intended to limit labor's right to strike were placed in the Congressional hoppers. Green responded at the 1940 AFL convention by pledging a no-strike policy on defense orders. He and other labor officials asserted that the number of defense strikes was greatly exaggerated and that blatantly anti-labor proposals were masquerading as defense measures.12

Despite Green's no-strike pledge, labor-management conflict intensified in 1941, when strikes occurred in virtually every industry. There were twice as many strikes and four times as many strikers in 1941 than in 1940. In an attempt to reduce industrial conflict and appease conservatives in Congress, Roosevelt created the National Defense Mediation Board in March 1941. The board was tripartite in structure, with four representatives each from management, labor, and the public, and attempted to settle disputes through mediation rather than arbitration. Green hailed the creation of the board as an "important and constructive step toward the promotion of uninterrupted production in defense
industries," and on behalf of the AFL pledged full cooperation in the interests of industrial peace and stability.\textsuperscript{13}

The AFL was satisfied with the board and its procedure. In May 1941, Green called upon all affiliates to "refrain for any reason whatsoever from calling a strike interfering with national defense production until full opportunity has first been given to the Conciliation Service of the Department of Labor and to the National Defense Mediation Board to bring about a peaceful settlement of the dispute."\textsuperscript{14} Later in the year the AFL convention renewed Green's approval of the board, and resolved that the AFL would lend "hearty support to the board in its work to promote our national welfare and it will zealously safeguard as a function of that board its work of promoting voluntary arbitration, and inferentially of opposing mandatory arbitration."\textsuperscript{15}

The CIO was less happy with the National Defense Mediation Board. During the first months, several of its left wing unions wrangled with the board over national defense strikes. When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 and the Communists in the U.S. threw their support behind the war effort, John L. Lewis continued the fight against the board by leading a strike in the captive mines during the fall of 1941. And when a majority of the board, including William Green, voted against the union shop clause demanded by the miners, the two CIO representatives, Phil
Murray and Tom Kennedy, resigned, so that the board's effectiveness was destroyed. The result was increased activity in Congress to curb labor's right to strike. On December 3, 1941, the House of Representatives, by a vote of 252-136, passed an extreme anti-strike bill. Only the attack on Pearl Harbor four days later prevented similar action by the Senate. The collapse of the National Defense Mediation Board gave Green added proof of the need for all out and peaceful union cooperation during the emergency and of the continued "immorality" of the CIO and John L. Lewis.

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The Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor unified the nation to a degree unequaled in the twentieth century. By 1941, American workers had been so appalled by the excesses of the Nazis against unions, racial minorities, and conquered nations that the traditional feelings of pacifism and isolationism had yielded to a deep-seated hatred of Hitlerism and all its works. American workers recognized that labor organization and democratic rights invariably had been among the first casualties in the successive Nazi conquests. As for the Japanese warlords, their brutalities in China had caused such intense distrust and dislike that the sneak raid upon Pearl Harbor quickly turned into bitter
hatred, a hatred in which American workers shared equally with their employers.

Green and other AFL hierarchs only grudgingly accepted the fact that the Soviet Union was an ally. Despite his opposition to totalitarianism of both the left and the right, Green recognized the need for Russian armies to drain Nazi military might. Green undoubtedly shared the view of Daniel Tobin, who wrote in his union's journal that Americans should send help to the Soviet Union "not because we hate communism less, but because we hate Hitlerism more."17

Green acted quickly and decisively to the Pearl Harbor attack. On behalf of the AFL's five million members, Green pledged a no-strike policy in all war and defense material industry, and urged the government to create a war labor board, similar to the one that functioned during the First World War, to deal promptly with disputes arising between employers and employees. A conference of officers of all affiliated unions endorsed both the no-strike pledge, broadening it to include civilian occupations, and the plea for the creation of a war labor board. Insisting that there be no repressive legislation and that the right to strike as a last resort be maintained, the Federation leaders nevertheless pledged themselves to forgo the exercise of that right during the war emergency, and to submit differences with employers to government agencies.
"Labor needs no restrictions upon the right to strike, when to cease production is to strike at the very heart of the nation," Green said. "Labor will produce, and produce without interruption." \(^{18}\)

At the same time, Green put forth what he considered to be the basic requirements for effective union-management-government cooperation during the war. First, he urged that the labor movement be given "adequate and effective representation of its own choosing" in the planning and execution of defense policy, pointing to the current British experience and to that of the U.S. during the First World War as justification. He also called upon industry to share with labor "the added responsibilities entailed in maintaining peaceful and cooperative relations." Third, he renewed the plea for labor unity, stating that the destructive rivalries and jurisdictional conflicts that had beset the American labor movement since the formation of the CIO had no place in the war emergency. Finally, Green declared that conservatives in Congress must "forgo their unjustified attacks upon trade-union organizations and their legitimate functions." If all three groups pulled together, Green concluded, America could not only insure an Allied victory, but establish once and for all an ethical foundation for capital-labor relations.\(^{19}\)

On December 17, 1941, President Roosevelt called a joint labor-management conference to agree on, as quickly as
possible, a policy under which defense production stoppages would cease for the duration of the war. William Green headed the AFL contingent that met with six CIO and twelve management representatives. The conferees agreed quickly that there should be no strikes or lockouts for the duration, and that all disputes should be settled by peaceful means. They bogged down, however, on the controversial issue of union security. Industry representatives, seeking to block the extension of the union shop, would not agree that disputes over this issue should go to the war labor board that the conferees asked the President to establish. The labor representatives insisted that disputes over the union shop, along with all other disputes, be within the board's jurisdiction, a view with which Roosevelt was in accord. With the management and labor representatives apparently hopelessly split on the union shop issue, Green was ready to break off the conference and ask the President to order the labor plan into effect. Roosevelt resolved the impasse on December 23 by cutting the conference short and seizing upon the points on which it had agreed. The President declared that he would at once create the war labor board the conference proposed, and that the board must "cover of necessity all disputes that may arise between labor and management." During the war then, the battle over the extension of union security was fought out within the board itself.
The President created the National War Labor Board by executive order on January 12, 1942. It consisted of twelve representatives, four each from labor, management, and the public. The AFL and the CIO were each asked to name two representatives. The Executive Council named George Meany and Daniel Tobin to represent the AFL, reflecting Green's waning influence.²²

Although it had gotten off to a rocky start at the labor-management conference, the labor-management-government cooperation Green envisioned seemed to be taking place in the first months of the war. Whether it was his no-strike pledge or the heightened sense of responsibility brought on by the Pearl Harbor disaster, strikes virtually disappeared for several weeks. With labor and management apparently cooperating in the war effort, conservatives in Congress relaxed their assault on labor's right to strike. The Smith anti-strike bill passed by the House prior to Pearl Harbor was quietly shelved and never brought up for a vote in the Senate, much to Green's delight.²³

Green recognized, however, that no matter how well AFL unions were able to maintain the no-strike pledge, true cooperation between labor, capital, and the state could never be achieved as long as the labor movement remained divided. The war years did not alter Green's views on the requirements for an AFL-CIO reconciliation. Despite Lewis's resignation as CIO president, Green continued to regard CIO
leaders as selfish and "immoral," and Green would forgive them only after they had demonstrated genuine repentance. The war years did witness an outpouring of invitations from Green to the CIO to "return to the house of labor." Once again, however, it was Lewis and not Green who stole the headlines by announcing a scheme for labor peace.

In a letter dated January 17, 1942, and sent to both Murray and Green, Lewis declared that "America needs unity in every phase of its national economy. Labor imperatively requires coherency, in order to maximize assistance to the nation in its war effort ..." If "accouplement" could be brought about, "then the government will be aided in the operation of its war economy and the membership of labor appreciably benefitted." Lewis, as a member of the CIO's standing negotiating committee, proposed a peace formula that called for Green's retirement and the elevation of Meany to the presidency of a unified movement.24

Green himself probably opposed the plan because it would have meant labor unity without a confession of responsibility for the split on the part of the CIO and because it would have placed Lewis in the position of kingmaker at his expense. Nevertheless, Green dutifully followed the Executive Council's order to accept the peace overture. Unfortunately, Murray, the new CIO president, who received no prior notice of Lewis's actions, rejected the proposal. Acknowledging that Lewis's peace proposal was a
test of his personal authority, Murray informed Lewis that all arrangements on behalf of labor unity "will necessarily have to be initiated through the office of the President of the Congress of Industrial Organizations." 25

At this point Roosevelt intervened with a substitute plan that rescued Murray from a position in which he appeared to block labor unity. Under Roosevelt's proposal, which did not call for a merger, a committee of six members, three from each federation, would consult periodically with the President on all matters that affected labor's participation in the war effort. Both federations quickly embraced the President's proposal, ending whatever chance Lewis's proposal may have had. The "Combined Labor War Board" thus created, or Labor Victory Board, as it was often called, met frequently with the President. It considered a number of issues such as the no-strike policy, manpower, and labor representation on government agencies. Yet the board never became an important formulator of labor policy, and it did not encourage either the AFL or the CIO to pursue the prospects for labor unity. Indeed, while both the AFL and CIO supported Roosevelt throughout the war, World War II did not lessen the tensions between the rival labor organizations. 26

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If the continued division in organized labor weakened Green's dream of a cooperative war effort based on the mutual sacrifice of all sectors in the economy, the dream all but collapsed under the demands of a wartime economy. One of the most serious economic problems on the domestic front throughout the war was that of inflation, which the Administration sought to check by limiting wage increases. In the first months of 1942, prices rose considerably, and the National War Labor Board felt obliged to concede wage increases in line with the rise in the cost of living. It also pursued a policy of raising substandard wages and eliminating unfair differentials. In the important "Little Steel" case of July 1942, the board worked out a formula for measuring what should be awarded, on the basis of increases in the price level as indicated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Cost of Living Index. In practice, the Little Steel Formula limited wage increases to fifteen per cent above the hourly wage rates prevailing in January 1941.

Green was horrified by the government's interference on the wage issue, heretofore the exclusive domain of labor and management. Shortly after the promulgation of the Little Steel Formula, Green wrote Roosevelt that "developments of the past week have convinced me that as the spokesman for the American Federation of Labor whose membership have proven their loyalty through over sixty years of
trial and in two world wars, I must speak plainly about the proposed invasion of Labor's basic rights. It is not necessary to freeze wages and suspend collective bargaining in order to prevent inflation."28

Green recognized, however, that the Administration would never abandon wage restrictions unless inflation were under control. He therefore devised an anti-inflation program of his own and published it in the AFL Weekly News Service in July 1942. The program included provisions for wage adjustment not through government boards, but "through the process of collective bargaining between labor and management," and the use of voluntary wage stabilization agreements. He also suggested the appointment of a tripartite wage commission which would be given the power to unify and coordinate the wage policies of all government agencies. Future wage increases, he declared, should be paid in war bonds which could be cashed only after the end of the war. In addition, he asked for the enactment of a program of progressive taxation designed to prevent profiteering during wartime, increased contributions for an extended social security program, effective control of prices and rents, and the rationing of scarce commodities. Labor was willing to accept government stabilization of wages, according to Green, only if this were accompanied by control of profits. Moreover, wage "stabilization must not preclude correction of substandard rates, elimination of
inequalities, nor adjustment of rates to compensate for increased skill and output.\textsuperscript{29}

Completely ignoring Green's program, Roosevelt, on October 2, 1942, signed the anti-inflation bill, and under its authority he established the Office of Economic Stabilization and appointed Justice James F. Byrnes as Director. Under the legislation, wages and salaries were not to be increased without the approval of the National War Labor Board. The NWLB, however, was prohibited from approving increases above those prevailing on September 15, 1942, unless such increases were necessary to correct inequalities or to aid in the effective prosecution of the war. This blatant effort to freeze wages angered Green and the Executive Council, with some members, including William Hutcheson, feeling that the freezing of wages justified the abandonment of the no-strike pledge.\textsuperscript{30}

In the early part of 1943, Green and Murray together requested Roosevelt either to relax wage controls or revise the Little Steel Formula so that larger percentage increases would be permitted. Roosevelt declined. On March 16, 1943, the AFL filed a petition with the National War Labor Board asking for the relaxation of the Little Steel Formula. Although the petition was supported by the CIO, the board rejected it by a vote of eight to four. The board did agree to proceed with the development of a wage policy which would recognize the existence of inequalities, substandard wages,
and the need to devise standards which would aid in the more effective prosecution of the war. The board also observed that rising food prices jeopardized the continued application of the Little Steel Formula and recommended subsidies as a means of holding down retail prices.\textsuperscript{31}

The government's anti-inflation policy not only alienated organized labor, it failed to stop the rise in prices. In a move to strengthen price and wage regulation, Roosevelt, on April 8, 1943, issued the Hold the Line Order in which he said "We cannot tolerate further increases in prices affecting the cost of living or further increases in general wages or salary rates except where clearly necessary to correct substandard living conditions. The only way to hold the line is to stop trying to find justification for not holding it here or not holding it there." The President asked that all items affecting the cost of living be brought under control and that no further price increases be sanctioned unless imperatively required. There were to be no further wage increases beyond the Little Steel Formula, except where they were clearly needed to correct substandards of living. Reclassifications and promotions were not even considered justifications for wage increases.\textsuperscript{32}

Green immediately informed the President that AFL members would never become reconciled to the Hold the Line Order. He wrote Roosevelt that the order was confusing, and that workers were apprehensive that the "door has been
closed to the correction of economic injustice and the correction of wage inequalities." Green insisted that individual increases in wages must be allowed and reclassification of workers permitted even if such changes meant wage increases. Green also objected to the freezing of wages for workers whose cases were already under consideration by the National War Labor Board.33

Following Green's letter, the AFL members of the National War Labor Board defined their attitude on the Hold the Line Order. On April 13, 1943, they declared the order "neither sound in construction nor workable in practice. To the contrary ... a literal interpretation and application of the order will work manifest injustices upon American labor and industry and be detrimental to the war effort." They declared, however, that although the Administration's position on wages was an unfair intrusion into the realm of collective bargaining, they would abide by the order of their decisions.34

Throughout the debate on wage regulation, AFL criticism of the Office of Economic Stabilization remained far more harsh than its criticism of the National War Labor Board. At "every meeting ... of the Combined Labor War Board with the President," Green told Executive Council members in August 1943, "we had this issue over wage awards made by the War Labor Board. We have never modified our position on that. We think the Board should be free to
decide on wages and its decisions should be final." The Office of Wage Stabilization, he insisted, should have no authority to dictate terms of wage increases to the labor board.\textsuperscript{35}

Green remained severly critical of the government's wage and price policies throughout the war emergency. Workers, he said, were "hard-pressed between the millstones of price inflation and wage stabilization. Because of their intense desire to win this war regardless of self-sacrifice, they have stilled their complaints. But the breaking point is rapidly approaching."\textsuperscript{36} The 1943 AFL convention echoed Green's complaints. Delegates adopted a resolution that protested government fixed wage formulas which supplanted "wage policies hammered out by democratically organized bodies which have been voluntarily created." They reminded the country of the AFL's continuous efforts to guarantee an Allied victory, to its long espousal of voluntary arbitration, and they warned that the AFL "cannot and will not ... after hostilities have ceased, agree to the continued existence in any form whatsoever of the National War Board, and will not countenance domination by the Government in any form or character of its right to bargain collectively, fairly, and freely."\textsuperscript{37}

Although Green and the Executive Council continued to express their dissatisfaction with wage controls, they did so with little effect. The President could effectively
ignore their protests because he realized that the AFL
hierarchs would never challenge the authority of the
National War Labor Board or the Economic Stabilizer and
undermine the war effort. Roosevelt understood that Green
and the Executive Council considered support of the NWLB "of
supreme importance." When it came under attack after the
refusal of the management of Montgomery-Ward to obey its
dicta, Green and the Executive Council came to the board's
defense. The AFL leadership declared that "regardless of
the material facts of the issues involved in the controversy
with the Montgomery-Ward Company, the Executive Council is
primarily concerned in upholding the power and authority of
the National War Labor Board. This is the issue which
transcends all other considerations in the Montgomery-Ward
case." The statement referred to the many unfavorable
decisions which organized labor had accepted from the board
for the sake of the war effort.\textsuperscript{38}

At the conclusion of the war, Green championed the
AFL's desire to return to unrestricted collective bargaining.
He called for the abolition of the National War Labor Board
and spoke out against "Government by Emergency" in peacetime.
In October 1946 he declared that "the way to establish and
maintain industrial peace and stability is to remove govern­
ment control of wages immediately." It was imperative,
according to Green, to abolish governmental controls,
restore normal collective bargaining, and allow wages to
rise to their "proper" level. Delegates to the 1946 AFL convention approved of Green's desire to return to unfettered collective bargaining. They authorized the AFL president to take "positive steps... to free (collective bargaining) from the remnants of Federal regulation which was necessary only in time of war."\textsuperscript{39} Needless to say, the ending of wage control won wide approval in the ranks of the AFL.

Patriotism and loyalty to Roosevelt go a long way toward explaining why Green ultimately acquiesced in the establishment of wartime wage controls, but acceptance of the Little Steel Formula had been made much more palatable by a National War Labor Board decision of June 1942. Green and other AFL hierarchs recognized that the Little Steel Formula might have disastrous consequences for union organization. Few unorganized workers would care to join and pay dues to unions they felt would have little prospect of winning improvements for them, especially in wages. Indeed, Green and others expressed as much concern with the effect of wage regulation on the stability of dues payments as with its effect on living standards. Catering to this, the National War Labor Board devised an inducement for union officials to help enforce wage regulation. This was the so-called maintenance of membership clause.
After experimenting with a series of legal devices, each one stronger than the last, the board announced a standard maintenance of membership formula in June 1942 that automatically applied to any union whose leaders agreed to enforce the no-strike pledge and otherwise cooperate with the production effort. The board's policy included a fifteen-day "escape" period during which a new worker (or an old worker under a new union contract) could withdraw from the union; after which he must remain in the union for the duration of the contract. Employer members of the board had insisted upon this clause in the name of an employee's freedom of association, but few workers made use of the escape clause. Once enrolled under a maintenance of membership contract, war workers were bound to pay their dues, usually under a checkoff agreement, and abide by all union regulations. Otherwise they could be expelled from the union and then fired by the company.

Largely because of the maintenance of membership formula, the APL enjoyed substantial growth in the war years, climbing from a membership of 5.1 million in 1941 to almost 6.9 million in 1945. Undoubtedly, the maintenance of membership formula tempered Green's objections to wage regulation, but he willingly gave it up after the war to return to unfettered collective bargaining.

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In addition to wage regulation, the increasing hostility of Congress and state governments to labor during the war years undermined Green's hope for a cooperative defense effort. The no-strike pledge both the AFL and CIO made immediately following the attack upon Pearl Harbor was repeated and clarified by both Green and Murray in March 1942 before the House Naval Affairs Committee. "I say to you," Green told the Committee, "that I publicly disavow any strikes of any kind by any A. F. of L. union for the duration. I say to you that in the few unauthorized, wild-cat, local strikes that have occurred since the war, union officials have immediately exercised their influence to get the men back on the job as soon as possible. And they have succeeded marvelously." The no-strike pledge, Green continued, covered jurisdictional, outlaw, and every other type of strike. He declared his intention to take prompt and decisive action against any union which struck a war production job.  

The year 1942, America's first full year of participation in the war, witnessed a sharp decline in the number of strikes from 1941. Although almost 3000 strikes occurred in 1942, involving more than 4 million man-days of idleness, this represented only one-twentieth of one per cent of time worked, and only one-sixth of the time lost in 1941. Government administrators appreciated labor's ability to maintain its commitment, with Chairman Davis of the National War
Labor Board in April 1942 hailing labor's no-strike pledge as an "outstanding success."\(^43\)

But when strike activity picked up slightly in the summer of 1942, the government became harshly critical of both the AFL and CIO. Members of the board were particularly impatient when jurisdictional disputes flared into strikes. In one such instance in July, Wayne L. Morse, a public member of the NWLB, warned that treason laws would be applied to anyone who tried to bring about a work stoppage over a jurisdictional quarrel, a warning that Chairman Davis endorsed.\(^44\)

To such attacks on labor's strike record, Green retorted that the no-strike pledge had been kept as well as was humanly possible. The policies of employers and the delays of government agencies were responsible for many of the strikes, he asserted, pointing out also that other factors, to which relatively little publicity was given, caused far more delays in war production. In an article written for the *American Federationist*, Green declared that:

> Labor's no-strike pledge on wartime production has been kept 99.97 per cent. The reason it has not been kept 100 per cent is supplied by the records of the National War Labor Board and other government agencies dealing with labor disputes. Human endurance to withstand an injustice is not without limit. Human patience is not without bounds. Human nature is not perfect.

Some of the stoppages, Green wrote, were due to employers who sought to take advantage of labor's no-strike
pledge or who resorted to subterfuge to escape their legal
or moral obligations toward their workers. So far as the
effect on war production was concerned, Green argued that
strikes were a relatively minor factor as compared with many
other causes of delay:

There have been many delays in war production. Management has been responsible for some of them, workers have been responsible for others. There have been delays due to mistakes made by govern­ment agencies. There have been idle war plants waiting for material. There have been warehouses with finished fighting equipment waiting to be shipped but lacking means of transportation. There has been loss of production time due to avoidable industrial accidents, due to absenteeism which can be corrected. Compared with any one of these delays, the delay suffered because of strikes has been of least importance.

The strike situation became slightly more serious in
1943, however, as living costs skyrocketed and workers
chafed under the Little Steel Formula and favorable treat­ment granted business. The number of strikes increased only slightly over 1942, but the number of man-days lost reached a total of 13.5 million, more than tripling the figure of 1942. Over two-thirds of the man-days lost in 1943 can be attributed to one union, the United Mine Workers, which conducted several strikes that year.

Lewis, who had led the UMW out of the CIO in October
1942, felt little compulsion to embrace the Administration's conduct of the war. Through his spokesman on the miners' journal, K.C. Adams, Lewis characterized Green, Murray, and Hillman as "weak-kneed" union officials subservient to
Roosevelt. They had given up the independence of the labor movement "for a mess of pottage or the crumbs doled out by any self-announced set of palace burrocrats." According to Dubofsky and Van Tine, the UMW strikes of 1943 represented in part, Lewis's desire to seek a labor policy that "would thrust him once more to the forefront of the labor movement." 47

The 1943 coal strikes fostered widespread hostility to Lewis among the public, the labor movement, and government. It was largely in response to the coal strikes that Congress, in June 1943, passed the Smith-Connally War Labor Disputes Act over Roosevelt's veto. The act required a union contemplating a strike in a war plant to issue a strike notice, to be followed by a thirty-day cooling off period; on the thirtieth day after the strike notice was filed, the National Labor Relations Board was required to conduct a strike vote. Other provisions empowered the President to seize any struck facility, penalized by fine or imprisonment a strike once a plant was in government possession, and outlawed political contributions by unions in federal elections. 48

Green and other labor leaders reacted with bitterness and anger to the act, heaping upon it virtually every epithet in their vocabulary. In their joint memorandum to the President urging him to veto the bill, Green and Murray, along with David Robertson of the Brotherhood of Locomotive
Fireman and Enginemen, saw in the bill the destruction of collective bargaining and a Fascist threat to the country:

The "War Labor Disputes Act" is a wicked, vicious bill. It is the worst anti-labor bill passed by Congress in the last hundred years. It is born of revenge and malice. It is the very essence of fascism. It destroys the philosophy of voluntarism on which free trade unionism is founded. Its enactment follows the tactics of the Fascists who, as a forerunner to totalitarianism, first attacked and destroyed free trade unions in Germany and Italy.  

This set the tone for labor comments that continued long after passage of the measure.

As historian Joel Seidman has shown, the Smith-Connally Act did not effectively limit the right of unions to strike and actually worked to strengthen labor's bargaining position. Workers "often voted overwhelmingly for strikes in which they had no intention of participating, in order to strengthen their leaders' hands in bargaining." Yet while the Smith-Connally Act did not function as it was designed, it did symbolize the growing anger of conservatives in Congress at what they considered the abuse of power by unions, an anger that would express itself in crippling legislation after the war.

Although the Smith-Connally Act was the only important labor relations measure Congress enacted during the war period, there was a great deal of feverish legislative activity, overwhelmingly anti-union in spirit.
Congress considered measures relating to the limitation of the right to strike, violence and coercion, labor conscription, restrictions on the closed shop, amendments to the Wagner Act, prohibition of political contributions by unions, compulsory registration of unions, and requirements for the filing of financial data. The war years also witnessed several successful anti-union crusades in state legislatures. Much of this legislation came from states in the South, West, and Southwest and paralleled the anti-labor bills in Congress.51

Green led the AFL's battle against restrictive legislation. He applied pressure on legislators during debates, and when states passed anti-union legislation, he made sure that the constitutionality of the laws was challenged in court. Green's outrage was justified. The AFL had a marvelous strike record, AFL members had purchased millions of dollars worth of war bonds, and in every way, Green and the AFL had proven to be shining examples of patriotism and sacrifice during the war emergency. Green could not understand why Congress sought to undermine labor's rights even as the Federation was giving its all to the war effort. In 1943 Green declared that anti-union legislation passed by the states "has one fundamental objective, that is, the complete destruction of labor unions, or the rendering of them so weak and ineffective as to amount to virtual destruction. By these enactments there
has been launched in this country the philosophy of the totalitarian states -- Fascism -- which includes the destruction of free trade unionism."52

The temper of Congress, as shown by the passage of the Smith-Connally Act and the large number of anti-union bills introduced, clearly showed a mounting unwillingness to accept a large and powerful trade union movement. The relative friendliness of Roosevelt and the need for a high degree of national unity until victory was achieved saved labor from the passage of severely restrictive measures. But in the states, the great number of anti-union bills adopted offered a forecast of the federal legislation that might follow the war. If Green and the AFL hoped to alter the course of Congress after the war, they would have to reassess their political assumptions, in particular the effectiveness of nonpartisanship.

* * * * * * *

The war years exacted a heavy toll on Green's physical health. He emerged from the struggles over the Administration's wage policies and Congress's anti-union bills an aged and infirm man. The characteristic rosy glow in his cheeks and the enchanting smile were both gone, and it was apparent to many that Green, who was seventy-six years old in 1946, was simply too old and too weak to
continue as AFL president. Beginning in the mid 1940s, Green entered hospitals several times each year for checkups. Although the exact reason for these checkups was never released to the press, by 1950 it was widely known that Green had a serious heart condition. During the postwar years, Green frequently returned home to the restful quiet of Coshocton for extended periods, leaving his duties in the hands of George Meany.  

Even when in Washington, Green was no longer able to maintain the hectic schedule to which he was accustomed. According to one employee at AFL headquarters, the most important activity in Green's working day in the postwar years was his afternoon nap. Green was no longer physically capable of addressing those countless union conventions, state and city body gatherings, and other labor groups that the AFL president was expected to do. Rather, he placed this dreary burden on Meany. By the mid 1940s, Green no longer wrote many of the editorials that bore his name in the American Federationist every month, leaving this task to more active underlings. An even more important indication that Green lacked the stamina to conduct his affairs as usual was his resignation, in early 1947, from the AFL's legislative committee. No longer would he serve as the AFL's chief lobbyist, a position he had guarded jealously since Meany became secretary-treasurer in 1939.
Rumors began circulating at the end of the war that Green would soon retire. Yet Green, despite his failing health and advanced years, dismissed such rumors as without foundation and insisted that he had no intention of stepping down as long as the Executive Council desired his services. Why Green refused to retire in spite of his obvious inability to perform all the duties expected of him will always remain a matter of conjecture. For labor leaders whose lives centered on amassing power, the question of why they clung to power is easy to answer. But Green shunned the exercise of economic power. He had no union army at his command. However, he did derive great satisfaction from the attempt to exercise moral influence in economic and political affairs. And perhaps more than at any point in his career, Green stressed the theme of Christian cooperation in the last years of his life. Of the few articles and speeches Green wrote and delivered in his declining years, a large percentage dealt with religious themes. Thus perhaps Green chose not to retire because he continued to recognize the need for spiritual leadership in the labor movement, leadership that would be lost if George Meany succeeded him as head of the Federation. Whatever his motivation, Green's refusal to step down helps explain why the AFL failed to take advantage of the tremendous opportunities open to organized labor in the postwar years.
Organized labor emerged from the war a powerful economic and political force in the nation. "Measured in numbers, political influence, economic weight, or by any other yardstick," conceded the president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in 1944, "labor is a power in our land." At the end of the war, the combined membership of the AFL, CIO, and the independent unions stood at fifteen million, a five-fold increase since 1933. According to historian David Brody, "political action ... held out seemingly boundless opportunity for the exertion of labor's power at the close of World War II. It did not appear beyond reason to anticipate a role comparable to that played by the labor movement in British political life." Many CIO officials recognized the political possibilities and emerged from the war with schemes to radicalize the Democratic party or launch a third party.

The AFL lagged far behind the CIO in terms of political thinking, but even Green and the old guard moved to expand labor's political interests. Among the sources of the AFL's heightened political awareness were the Great Depression, which proved that labor's well-being could not be isolated from the health of society as a whole, the strong identification with the New Deal, and also the dramatic increase in size and resources that obligated the AFL to look beyond its narrow interests. By the late 1930s, and certainly by the end of the 1940s, the AFL, for the most
part, had committed itself to the ideal of the welfare state -- that government had a responsibility to provide a decent living standard for all its citizens. In the halls of Congress, Green battled for an adequate minimum wage for all workers, the extension of social security benefits, the establishment of a national system of health insurance, the improvement of public education, and government housing programs. Yet although the AFL exhibited increased concern with social welfare legislation, AFL leaders did not recognize the need to alter the nature of the Federation's participation in politics. Green doggedly adhered to the principle of nonpartisanship.

In the early years of the AFL, nonpartisanship was at times an effective policy. It had strengthened labor's bargaining power with both the Democrats and the Republicans. But by the 1930s, nonpartisanship no longer suited the political environment. The original justification for the AFL's political policy -- the rough equivalence of the two parties on labor issues -- was no longer true after the election of Roosevelt. The vast majority of workers voted Democratic in the 1930s and 1940s, and the AFL found it increasingly difficult to treat the two parties evenhandedly. The Federation had almost no influence within the Republican party, and its influence within the Democratic party was crippled by the unwillingness of Green and other AFL leaders
to abandon nonpartisanship and either establish institutional ties with the Democratic party or launch an independent labor party.

If the policy of nonpartisanship was outmoded in the 1940s, why then did the AFL not pursue a different political course? One powerful reason was the existence of a powerful anti-New Deal bloc within the Federation. In 1939 ten AFL officials publicly attacked the New Deal, much to the embarrassment of the Executive Council majority. William Hutcheson of the Carpenters resigned from the Council in 1936 to protest the Council's support for New Deal legislation. Hutcheson returned to the Council in 1940 and served as the leading Republican in the AFL until John L. Lewis and the UMW reaffiliated in 1946. Lewis's return was yet another factor that weakened the AFL's ability to form close ties with the Democratic party. Since the AFL was a voluntary institution, these anti-New Dealers could not be coerced into any new political venture. 58

Another factor was the dead hand of tradition. Green and the AFL old guard were too complacent, too set in their ways to take full advantage of labor's potential political strength. Green found it much easier to mouth time-worn slogans about the merits of nonpartisanship than to look creatively at the political possibilities for organized labor. Even after the disastrous elections of 1946 Green argued that "the best interests of the AFL's
entire membership have been protected and conserved through
a strict adherence to a nonpartisan political policy."

A third reason for the failure of the AFL to abandon
nonpartisanship was the coming of the Cold War. Green's
dread of Communism— and like many others he tended to
stigmatize all political and economic dissenters as
Communists— did not become moderated with the years. At
every AFL convention Green made sure to attack Communism and
to link it, at least by implication, with the CIO unions.
Thus it was easy for Green to dismiss the CIO officials'
advocacy of national planning, an economic policy designed
to assure full employment, or a third party as Communist-
inspired. In 1946 he lashed out at the CIO's Political
Action Committee, which had been created in 1944 to bring
the CIO's political force to bear in national elections.
Although the CIO PAC endorsed Roosevelt, Green declared that
the ultimate purpose of the CIO PAC was the imposition "upon
our nation a form of foreign-conceived ideology totally
unsuited to our American way of life." Green's penchant
for linking political innovation to Communism intensified as
relations between the Soviet Union and the U.S. continued to
deteriorate.

The force of tradition, the anti-New Deal bloc
within the Federation, the Cold War, and the infirmities of
the aged Green all locked the AFL into a nonpartisan stance.
In the congressional elections of 1946, there was no change
in Federation policy. Records of congressmen and senators were sent to central bodies, and again the nonpartisan policy was recommended. In a letter to all affiliates, Green wrote that voting a straight party ticket did not make for good government. He explained that the "nonpartisan political policy of the American Federation of Labor is based on the principle that the workers should elect the friends and defeat the enemies regardless of their political affiliation." The election results of 1946 demonstrated the fallacy of nonpartisanship. Republicans won control of both houses of Congress for the first time since 1930.

The hostility of the Republican-controlled Eightieth Congress to organized labor put Green on the defensive. When the Taft-Hartley bill was first introduced, he opposed it with unusual vigor. In his testimony before the Congressional committees, in numerous speeches, and in articles and communications he insisted that the proposed law was a means of depriving labor its hard-earned rights and was therefore a piece of "vicious anti-labor legislation." In a letter to the New York Times he was particularly bitter against the attempt to restore the labor injunction: "Aside from an attack on the fundamentals of personal freedom which working men and women cherish as a common heritage, the anti-labor legislation referred to in this communication would render unions weak and impotent, create a highly objectionable bureaucracy and provide
methods by which labor-hating employers could destroy labor unions through the institution of prosecution of civil damage suits."

Among other restrictions, the Taft-Hartley bill proposed to outlaw the closed shop, restore the use of injunctions, outlaw jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycotts, require unions to file their financial reports, by-laws, and constitutions with the Secretary of Labor, require union officers to sign non-Communist affidavits as a condition for using the services of the National Labor Relations Board, and prohibit unions from making any contributions in connection with national elections or primaries. When the Taft-Hartley bill passed over Truman's veto and became law of the land, Green felt tricked and troubled. In vain did he plead with and scold conservative politicians and their industry supporters that their anti-union objectives could not be effected without endangering economic prosperity, if not the capitalist system itself. On the platform and in periodicals Green preached the gospel of high wages and defended the rights of organized labor with passionate eloquence. He also contended that the Taft-Hartley Act would drive workers into the camp of the radicals. At the 1947 AFL convention he asked rhetorically:

Do those who make war on labor want to destroy the one labor agency that stands as a defender of the free enterprise system in the United States of America? Well, I interpret that action of the sponsors of the Taft-Hartley bill as meaning that
they prefer anti-labor legislation of this kind to limit the freedoms and the liberty of working men, than to have a great agency like the American Federation of Labor stand immovable in defense of the free enterprise system.

Nevertheless, Green urged compliance with the provisions of the "slave" law. Thus Green became a truly thwarted and indignant man -- the implacable enemy of radicals and the rejected defender of capitalism.

Only with the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act did the AFL old guard feel the need to change its political tactics. The 1947 convention, therefore, ordered the establishment of a special political agency, and in December of that year Labor's League for Political Education was established. The LLPE was financed by voluntary contributions and was directed to acquaint the workers of the country with the economic and political views of the AFL, to prepare and disseminate information on the attitudes of candidates for nomination or election to federal office, raise funds, and employ a staff for carrying out its duties. A conference of AFL affiliates was called in December 1947 to make final plans for launching the LLPE. In explaining the need for an intensified political program by the AFL, Green informed the conference that he had been surprised by the strength of the anti-labor feeling in Congress and by the overriding of Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Act.

Although Green was anxious to use the LLPE to have the AFL's proposals embodied in the Democratic and
Republican party platforms, he sought to avoid too close an involvement with either party. When James Roosevelt, on the eve of the 1948 Democratic National convention, asked Green to join a caucus in the convention city to draft a candidate, Green refused to allow the use of his name for that purpose. And when the Executive Council discussed the policy to be pursued in the 1948 presidential election, Green sided with the majority and argued for strict adherence to the traditional policy of no endorsement.  

Until his death, Green refused to accept the arguments of Meany and his followers that LLPE could be more effective if it endorsed a presidential candidate. In Green's view, such an endorsement was tantamount to party endorsement, a clear violation of nonpartisanship. But as his health declined and as he found it increasingly necessary to return to Coshocton for extended periods of rest, Green's views carried less and less weight in Federation circles. And as Green's influence declined, George Meany's increased. In 1952 Meany persuaded the Executive Council to hold the AFL convention after the nominating conventions, but before the elections. He avoided making any final commitment on the candidates until after both the Republican, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and the Democrat, Adlai Stevenson, had a chance to address the AFL convention. At the convention, Stevenson came out in favor of the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act while Eisenhower waffled. In the face
of such a clear cut choice, the AFL, for the first time in its history, endorsed a candidate from a major party for the presidency. This shift in political strategy was a result of Meany's maneuvering and clearly indicated a decline in Green's power.

That Green was a sick, failing man was obvious to everyone at the September 1952 convention. Weak though he was, Green insisted or presiding and making several long speeches, and attending committee meetings and conferences. "It was a sad thing," an AFL employee said. "Green was so near the end of the road, and he seemed to realize it. He didn't want to turn loose." After adjournment, Green spoke to the secretary-treasurer, telling him "I'm tired, and I think I'll go home for a few days and rest."67

Green returned to his hometown, Coshocton, and spent two days at the Coshocton Memorial Hospital where doctors discovered he was suffering from exhaustion and a failing heart. Then he went home to bed. Always thinking of the American Federation of Labor, he kept in touch with Washington headquarters by telephone. He was saddened when voters on November 4 failed to elect Stevenson. And then a few days later came another hard blow -- the sudden death of Phil Murray. Despite their union differences the two old miners had respected and liked one another personally, and Green felt the death keenly. He did not try to go to Murray's funeral, and he telephoned Meany to say, "It
dosen't look like I'm going to be back in the office for a while; you have the authority to do whatever needs to be done. Good luck."  

On Thursday, November 20, 1952, in his home at 409 South Fourth Street, William Green suffered a heart attack. He sank rapidly in the night and on Friday, at 1:22 in the afternoon, his heart stopped beating. On Monday, November 24, Green was laid to rest in South Lawn Cemetery, not far from where he was born, not far from where he had dug coal and become a trade unionist.
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2. AFL Weekly News Service, September 26, 1936.

3. Green to Walter Citrine, January 25, 1938, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 23, SHSW.

4. American Federationist, October 1939, p. 1051.


6. Address delivered at Dinner for the Benefit of the Leon Blum Colony in Palestine, New York City, June 26, 1940, Reel 15, frames 863-864, WGC OHS.

7. Labor Day Address, Denver, Colorado, September 2, 1940, Reel 15, frames 882-883, WGC OHS.


10. Ibid., p. 31.

11. Labor Day Address, Denver, Colorado, September 2, 1940, Reel 15, frame 884, WGC OHS.


14. Green to All Affiliate Organizations, May 27, 1941, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File C, Box 26, SHSW.

15. AFL, Proceedings, 1941, p. 404.


23. Seidman, p. 80.
25. Ibid.
28. Green to Roosevelt, July 20, 1942, Reel 20, frame 355, WGC OHS.
33. Green to Roosevelt, April 14, 1943, Reel 20, frame 881, WGC OHS.
34. Statement of AFL members of National War Labor Board, April 13, 1943, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File A, Box 11, SHSW.
35. Green's statement to the Executive Council, August 14, 1943, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File A, Box 11, SHSW.
36. Address to Economic Club of Toledo, July 19, 1943, Reel 17, frame 444, WGC OHS.
37. AFL, Proceedings, 1943, p. 505.

40. Seidman, pp. 91-108.


43. Seidman, p. 134.

44. Ibid., p. 135.

45. American Federationist, March 1943, p. 3.

46. Seidman, p. 133.

47. Dubofsky and Van Tine, p. 417.


50. Seidman, p. 190.

51. Ibid., pp. 173-194.


53. See, for example, Green to Meany, May 14, 1947; October 12, 1950, Reel 19, frames 435, 966, WGC OHS.


60. Ibid., October 29, 1946.

61. Ibid.


65. James Roosevelt, July 3, 1948, AFL Papers, Office of the President, File A, Box 12, SHSW.


67. Goulden, pp. 177-179.


AFTERWORD

Labor historians invariably depict William Green as a bumbling incompetent, vain and ignorant, the cheerful servant of selfish and reactionary craft unionists, and the person most directly responsible for the split in organized labor in 1935. As one historian put it, Green was "depressingly cautious and almost completely without imagination. Whatever forward motion the labor movement made from Green's accession to the AFL presidency in 1924 to his death in the 1950s was made despite Green rather than because of him."¹ Other historians describe his "weakness of character," his "naivete," and his "ineptitude."² These harsh judgments contain elements of truth but they also serve as a myth that obscures an understanding of the man and his values. In large measure, Green is a victim of the strong CIO bias held by labor historians who follow the lead of early CIO bigwigs, especially John L. Lewis, and use Green was a whipping boy to personify the backwardness of the AFL.

This is not to deny that Green was a weak labor leader. His deficiencies contributed to the failure of the AFL in the 1920s and 1930s to meet the needs of the millions
of unskilled workers in mass-production industries. His
dogged commitment to time-worn labor traditions such as
exclusive jurisdiction, political nonpartisanship, and union
autonomy prevented the AFL from exercising real political
and economic power during his tenure. Under his leadership,
the Federation remained a weak and conservative organization
of mostly skilled workers. But Green himself was not a
narrow-minded craft unionist, and to place in the same camp
with Arthur Wharton of the Machinists, William Hutcheson of
the Carpenters, and John P. Frey of the Metal Trades
Department is to misunderstand him. Green was above all a
decent, honorable, and even courageous man who recoiled at
economic injustice and labored unsparingly to bring all
workers into the trade union fold.

Green's impotency as a labor leader stemmed not from
personal weakness, selfishness, or lack of effort but from
his inability to abandon the ideal of Christian cooperation
after it had proved bankrupt as an organizing strategy.
This inability, as much as anything else, led to the
collapse of the AFL's campaigns in the basic industries and
spawned a rival labor federation. Adherence to outmoded
Christian ideals also prompted Green to lead the
conservative assault on those who bravely banded together in
the CIO.

Green's career reminds us that moral idealism in
itself is a weak tool for the advancement of the working
class. One cannot escape the conclusion that Green lacked a sophisticated understanding of the depth and breadth of economic injustice. Nor did he possess sufficient confidence in the power of working people themselves to improve the conditions of their existence.
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