



newsletter

Volume 10, No. 2

PAST PROGRAM

February 14, 1969

SIGMUND ARYWITZ, Executive Secretary of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, expressed the view that 1969 will be a year of turmoil--for the country in general and for organized labor in particular. He contends that the labor movement, although it sustained overall losses in the presidential election, emerged as a powerful factor and motivating force on the national scene.

Mr. Arywitz feels that no major disruptions will occur in the policies of the Department of Labor, and that pressures on the Nixon Administration will not be so great as to warrant further emasculation of the NLRB. Economically, however, there is cause for concern. While the standard of living is rising, accompanied by increasing consumer purchases of goods and services, the conservative policies of Nixon's economic advisers will result in heightened unemployment. Paradoxically, the Federal Reserve Board which until now created tight money crises may emerge as the only stopgap affecting the growing dollar signs in the eyes of the bankers. It is the manipulation of money, rather than the production of goods, which is becoming the prime factor to be watched. The danger of increasing unemployment rates is a serious one that could snowball into an avalanche.

For California, Mr. Arywitz sees trouble ahead because of Nixon Administration policies. There will be less federal money available for state expenditures. Adding to this what we know about Reagan, it spells a decline in services and an erosion of the autonomy of departments and the universities. He also predicted a hardening of employer attitudes toward union demands that will lead to more strikes in the future. He referred to the current strike against the Herald-Examiner, in which management seems to be determined to break the union, even at the cost of losing the paper. In rural California, archaic attitudes designed to keep farm workers in a situation of feudal serfdom--e.g., proposed legislation prohibiting boycotts and strikes during harvest time--will lead to turmoil as the order of the day. As public employees become increasingly militant, more strife is a potential in this area, too.

On the bright side, Mr. Arywitz commented that the recently adopted Los Angeles County Ordinance for Employee-Management relations is a good one. He said that such ordinances are needed so as to diminish conflict rather than impose deprivation of rights.

In more general terms, Mr. Arywitz believes that organized labor could be headed for more problems than at any time in the last thirty years. The phenomenon of rejected agreements by union members after negotiations have been concluded is the result of abuses and mistrust of union leadership instilled in the rank and file by management. But the gaining of rights for workers in all sectors of the economy is not a question of appeasement or compromise. Negotiations is the key word--negotiations is the answer. If things do become more difficult, he expressed confidence in the labor movement's ability to deal with all problems which might arise.