

AKRON CIO CHIEFS PLAY POLITICS WITH DEMOCRATS

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The rubber companies completed large inventories this summer and also their plans for decentralization of production. They began a campaign of attrition to break the union spirit. Production was lowered to two-day a week schedules. Lay-offs began by the hundreds. "If you don't like it, strike," Goodrich told the union committeemen.

Confident that the unions were on the turn, Goodyear and Goodrich permitted the National Labor Relations Board to hold employee elections to determine if the URWA would obtain sole collective bargaining rights. The Unions won 3-1 at Goodyear and 10-1 at Goodrich. Despite the wavering of the leadership, the union rank and file wasn't on the run. The great lessons of the past three years were not forgotten by the rubber workers.

In order to make this analysis of Akron as clear as possible, we must now refer to the specific political considerations that have been the center of controversy in the labor movement.

F. L. P. Scheme

The Stalinists began an intensive campaign for the formation of a Farmer-Labor party in 1936, in Akron as elsewhere.

Gathering delegates from all their stooge organizations, gaining some support from the unions here, the Stalinists called a convention in May 1936. Rubber unions sent observers. Since most of the delegates were either Stalinists or stooges, the movement collapsed, as the revolutionary Socialists had predicted. Attempts to blame the "Trotskyites" failed. The militants wanted independent political action but became disgusted and withdrew when the program adopted was so mild that its best supporters, along with the Stalinists, were the worst reactionaries in the labor movement, like H. B. Blanckenship, vice-president of the CLU at the time, one of Akron's notorious red-baiters.

The huge rubber workers vote in the last presidential election created the basis for the present political situation. Hungry Democratic politicians saw a possible means of grabbing the spoils of city hall from the entrenched Republican machine. Union bureaucrats saw a source of political power.

Democrat Victorious

Labor's Non-Partisan League, dormant after the Roosevelt reelection, was revived. The Stalinists lost no time in jumping on the band wagon. But they weren't quite as fast as reactionary A. F. of L. politicians who grabbed leading posts in the League, even though the rubber unions furnished the vote. A municipal judge, G. L. Patterson, a Democrat, was chosen for mayoralty candidate, to run on the Democratic party ticket. He didn't bother with a program.

Patterson received 17,000 votes in the primary, swamping the other Democratic nominee. The Republican mayor got less than half that figure but he was unopposed. This primary result was hailed as a great victory for labor.

No Program

However, subsequent events have already justified the revolutionary socialists who refused to support Patterson and the League's nebulous political program. The corrupt Democratic politicians, the ward heeler, and other stooges of the capitalist class, and specifically of the rubber barons, are backing Patterson. He is campaigning not as a labor candidate but as a democratic candidate. (The offi-

cials of Labor's Non-Partisan League, meeting with the Democratic chairman, determine this "strategy.")

In an off moment Patterson told the press, "I expect to go high in Democratic national politics." A labor candidate? Not an iota more than that faker, La Guardia, and not as clever, incidentally. Patterson admits he is simply trying to climb higher on the back of the workers. He hasn't even promised anything to labor, he has no program, yet the union officials are seeking to put him across.

Stalinists Right-Wing

And what are the Stalinists doing? No sooner had the character of this political campaign begun to expose itself and militant workers began demanding a break with the Democratic party, than the Stalinists organizer gave a radio address, begging the workers not to split with the Democrats! The usual attack against the "Trotskyites" also featured his speech. Stalinism is being exposed in all its brutality, hypocrisy, and reformism in this campaign. The Stalinists, to the amusement of many workers, are the right-wing of Labor's Non-Partisan League!

Uncompromising Struggle

Whether Patterson wins or not (his chances are (50-50) a new stage of political development has been reached in this rubber center. Basically, we have an attempt of the bourgeoisie to divert the growing class consciousness of the workers into the safe channels of class-collaboration on the political field.

JOHN BULL ARMS, LABOR LEADER AID

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(such as the Nyon Conference), and likewise be assured of complete support when the war itself breaks. Thus the decisions of the Trades Union Congress, which ended its session simultaneously with the Nyon Conference, are by no means an accident. The entire Congress revolved around the question of the foreign policy of the National Government. The entire work of the Congress was summed up in its vote to support the rearmament policy of the Government.

In this way, the officialdom of the British working class, following the lead of the Socialist and Stalinist deputies who in France in January voted the French war budget, announce their treachery in advance, in advance declare to the imperialist government that they will turn over to it the British masses for slaughter in the imperialist war.

Pledge Sell-Out Beforehand

During the last war it was not until after hostilities had begun that the parties of the Second International completed their betrayal and voted the war budget. The immeasurably greater profundity of the present crisis of world capitalism is indicated by this fact that today the bourgeoisie must exact its pledge beforehand. And it is this fact which at the same time gives the revolutionists the opportunity, which they did not have in 1914, to make clear before the outbreak of the war the exact character of the betrayal, to point unerringly at those guilty of it, and to rally the forces which are determined, at any and every cost, to oppose the war.

Crushing Left Wing Majority At YPSL Convention Make Impossible Alibi Attempt of Socialist Call

In last week's issue of the Socialist Call there appear two mealy-mouthed efforts to explain away Clarity's crushing defeat in the Young People's Socialist League. One, written by Al Hamilton, secretary of the Clarity-Right-wing caucus, is a sniping prevarication at the Ypsel convention after Clarity had bolted. The other, by some anonymous scribe, is an attempt to show strength where only weakness could be seen—the session of the Clarity-Right wing caucus that had the impudence to call itself a "YPSL Convention." The only impression that remains is that of the poor authors, pecking away half-heartedly at their typewriters, while a sickly blush betrays their tweaks of conscience.

Says Hamilton "A group of Appealites who were visitors, and a smaller group of about 40 delegates remained with him (Erber)", when he opened the convention. Hamilton never had an opportunity to estimate accurately the number of delegates present because he did everything in his power to prevent the convention from convening.

Let Hamilton think back: When Erber opened the convention and Hamilton fled out of the hall with a self-conscious handful of followers, there remained 148 people by actual count. Of these, 104 were regular delegates present in Philadelphia to attend a convention which Hamilton was determined would never be held. Who, that was present in Philadelphia, does not remember the miserable picture of the Clarityites shuffling out of the hall while the walls rang with the singing of the "International"? When all the Clarityites had left, not a dent had been made in attendance. Those who remained filled every inch of the room.

"Figures Compared"

Forty delegates, indeed! At the League convention there were no less than 23 delegates from Chicago alone, elected by 187 members (an under-statement, but the figure set by the Clarityite national administrative secretary, Judah Drob). Then delegates had come in from California to speak for at least 200 members; 8 other delegates could not manage to come in. Twenty-nine delegates from New York (only 27% of the total) most of them elected before the split there had taken place and all of them representing directly at least the number of members set by pre-convention rules. Other delegates attended from Louisville, Cleveland, Akron, Youngstown, Reading, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Boston, Dorchester, Lynn, Albany, Syracuse, Newark,—35 cities in all. Every one of these was there in the flesh, representing 1000 members all told, according to Drob's figures in most cases.

But examine the Clarity caucus: 92 delegates were seated, 53, or 57% of the total came from New York. Of the remaining 39, five were members of the NEC, who, by the bureaucratic rule of the old Constitution, had voting rights. Twelve came from Philadelphia—representing 44 people out of the 65 who voted in Philadelphia (the other 21 had voted Appeal) and only one voting delegate was allowed at our League convention for these 21! There was not one Clarity delegate from the country west of

the Mississippi! And east of the Mississippi? There were probably 2 or 3 from Cleveland, representing 20 members, 2 or 3 from Pittsburgh for the 3 or 4 members there, 2 from Baltimore (made possible by the purchase of dues stamps on credit in excess of the real membership of the YPSL in that city), 3 from Milwaukee, and possibly another 5 delegates from legitimate or semi-legitimate sections.

The Figures Broken Down

How much of a joke their pretense was, is revealed by the New York delegation. In New York City there were 357 paid up members. Allowing another 100 for "members in arrears", (the cemetery vote) the total is 450. Even the most unregenerate Clarityite will now admit that at least 200 of New York Yipsels were left wingers. (250 would be more accurate, but we won't quibble). That leaves a maximum of 250 for Clarity, the Right wing, the YCL stooges and miscellaneous independents. This 250 got 53 delegates. One of these came from Circle 6 Sr. Manhattan—and represented herself, the lone Clarityite in a circle of 14 members. Two came from 1C (City College) representing just themselves in a circle of 32 members. Ditto for Hunter College and other circles. Need more be added than the fact that in the last city elections the Appeal received the largest single bloc of votes, or 41% of the whole, and that since then many left wingers joined it.

Clarityite "Answers"

"During the (National) Committee's deliberations", says Hamilton, "the elaborate and widespread statements concerning gerrymandering (etcetera)..." were one after another answered, along with the nailing of lie after lie told by the Appeal leaders in a desperate effort to heighten the morale of a worried rank and file which did not want to leave the League." Where facts are not with you, use rhetoric. By whom were the "widespread statement" answered? Who answered for the record manipulations in New York? Barshop? Hamilton? Milt Friedman? We remember instead the pitiful complaint by Milt Friedman, the NEC member from Clarity's left, that the Appeal had put them on the defensive, that all that mattered was Appeal's "split" perspective. Who answered California's claims for unprecedented growth and activity? Hamilton did his best to belittle it. But Drob, with his last ounce of honesty, had to admit that California had made remarkable progress, "up to a certain point". After that certain point California had held the most successful summer school in the history of the YPSL, recruited members, and opened new circles.

Was the motion for an investigation committee an answer to the proof that Ward Rogers was a fink and a stool-pigeon? Did Hamilton "nail the lie" when the photostat was thrust under his nose? An answer was given by Blackie Palla, seaman, who declared Rogers would be hounded from the labor movement just as scabs and finks are chased from the waterfront.

Wishful thinking

Did Hamilton answer the claim that the delegates who packed the room represented all that was healthy and vital in the League, that they came from cities which had shown growth and activity? Could Hamilton dispute the fact that his few delegates, who represented hardly more than themselves, came from sections that had stagnated, declined? Was it an accident that Hamilton's report on the year's activities made absolutely no mention of figures on League membership!

Hamilton saw the "worried" look on the faces of the left wing delegates. These "worried" delegates held the most spirited convention in the history of the League. Were their shouts of enthusiasm when Erber opened the convention the cries of "worry"? Was it with "worry" that they boomed out the "International" while the Clarityites slunk out? Did Hamilton detect a single left winger who was not impatient with the delay of the convention by the centrists? Wishful thinking. Did Hamilton think the delegates would worry because he was leaving the League?

A Sorry Confession

Hamilton makes an admission that knocks the prop from under his arguments—"... the elimination of the large New York delegation might have given the Appeal a bare majority." Precisely!—only the majority would not have been "bare". In these words Hamilton admits that the Appeal had a conclusive majority in the entire country.

When the Old Guard-Militant split took place in the Socialist Party, the party convention gave both delegations equal rights until the convention had decided upon the merits of the case, and neither side had the right to vote on the qualifications of the other. At Philadelphia, however, the Clarity NEC sought to prevent the Convention from exercising its constitutional right of deciding delegate contests by decreeing in advance that this huge inflated Right wing-Clarity bloc was legal and that it would have voice and vote on its own eligibility. The NY left wing could not appeal as a contested delegation, but only as individual expelled members, seeking redress of grievances.

Precisely because the left wing was so certain of its majority if allowed the barest elements of democracy, it clamored for the opening of the convention. Conversely, because the Clarity-Right wing bloc knew its own weakness it tried to stymie the convention.

A "Convention"

Compare the League convention with the centrist caucus session. The old-young tired radicals who attended the centrist meeting lacked spirit and enthusiasm. They gathered in an air of discouragement. In their discussion on Spain, the right wingers combined with the "normal" centrists to defeat a minority of seven who presented a left-wing position. An NEC was elected, composed of budding lawyers, semi-retired radicals, and inactive incompetents. Only one member of the NEC Hamilton himself, can boast of any real or imagined contact with youth. He

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