

Rubber Workers Convene in Akron

Conservatives in Control, But Democratic Constitution Voted

By Jack Wilson

AKRON, Ohio.—The second annual convention of the United Rubber Workers of America recently held here reflected the general development of the CIO movement in the past year.

Tremendous organizational gains furnished the background for the convention. Membership had trebled in the past twelve months. Many important contracts and concessions had been won. Over 250 delegates with 400 votes were present compared to slightly over 100 at the 1936 convention.

Yet at the very moment the convention was celebrating the victories of the 1937 organizing drive, Goodyear Local voted to allow 1,700 lay-offs, and 2,500 Goodrich unionists were walking the streets, victims of production reductions.

Contrasted to the previous convention with its spirit of militancy, progressiveness, and its tone of class struggle, this convention was a somewhat routine affair.

Conservatives Dominant

Caucus meetings held before the convention indicated that the majority of delegates would be in complete agreement with whatever program the present leadership offered and that those who disagreed would be unwilling to struggle unless floor leadership could be offered. The defeat of the left wing candidates for delegates precluded that possibility.

It was no surprise, therefore, when not a voice was raised against a resolution outlawing all forms of sit-downs, although over 50 delegates with a voting strength of nearly 150 were firmly convinced that it is a powerful and necessary weapon. "I didn't want to stick my neck out," was the alibi of one progressive who had fought brilliantly at the previous convention for endorsement of the sit-down strike.

Direct pressure of the CIO and officers of the URWA kept Akron delegates from bringing up the case of B. J. Widick, former research director of the union. He had been removed by the executive board without any charges being placed against him and without any hearing.

Early in the convention Widick rejected a CIO suggestion that he make a deal for reinstatement which would, in effect, vindicate the executive board. He refused because that would again place him at the mercy of the board.

Delegates frankly declared they were afraid to buck the CIO or the leadership on that issue, although they recognized its political significance. When a caucus finally agreed to fight for the issue, the convention was about over and the matter couldn't be brought up.

Confusion on War-Fascism

Confusion on political matters was evident throughout the convention and was illustrated in particular by the action taken on the questions of war and fascism.

As one rubber worker said, "This convention adopted a Trotskyist resolution against fascism during one session and then turned around to pass a Stalinist resolution for war."

After the excellent resolution against fascism was adopted, it

seemed that one calling for opposition to all imperialist wars, etc., which presented a revolutionary position would be passed. Instead a muddled resolution calling on Roosevelt to invoke the Kellogg pact against Japan was adopted.

Labor's Non-Partisan League received unanimous endorsement, as resolutions calling for independent working class political action were tossed aside by the resolutions committee.

However, in one extremely important phase of its work did the convention carry on the progressive tradition of the 1936 convention. A very democratic constitution (compared to all other CIO unions) was adopted. Ample provision for protection of the rank and file and the left wing against attacks by the leadership was made.

Constitution Democratic

In the past year, reactionaries have used their position on local executive boards to bring progressives up on charges before them and thus have handicapped them tremendously. Now that power has been taken away from the executive boards and placed in the hands of the rank and file. Severe penalties for unsubstantiated charges are provided. One leading Goodyear progressive was ruined for two months by the false charges brought against him. The convention, incidentally, upheld him.

In terms of trade union perspectives, the convention adopted the correct slogan for the next period of its organizational campaign. "Organize Gadsden and the South!" "Eliminate the Sweatshops."

Per capita tax to the International was raised to forty cents so that this work could be carried out effectively. Previous tax was thirty-seven cents. Dues remain \$1 a month, however.

Since Gadsden, Alabama, has been the scene of terrorism, beatings, flagrant discrimination against union men, and of every other form of oppression, it symbolizes the open-shop reactionary South at its worst. More than one delegate at the convention had been driven out of Gadsden.

Goodyear has a key plant there. Other rubber companies are following it to the South in an effort to escape union labor. A victory there would be a real gain for the entire labor movement. The rubber workers, after two years of failure, will try again to organize it.

Election of officers and executive board members provided the only high light of the convention.

Some Progressives Win

The three-year campaign of the left wing and progressive forces against John House, reactionary president of Goodyear Local, finally bore fruit and he was defeated in his three attempts to be re-elected to the executive board. The margins were very decisive.

In the ballot between N. H. Eagle, Ohio district organizer, and considered one of the leading progressives, and L. S. Buckmaster, Firestone Local president and admitted strongest conservative candidate for the board, Eagle won by 230 to 190. Buckmaster later defeated House to return to the executive board.

NOTES FROM SPAIN

Collectivization Attacked

The Catalan Generalidad has set September 15th as the deadline for proving the legality of collectivized factories and lands. Since much of the collectivization was carried through in emergency fashion during the first two months of the civil war in an effort to speed the war against the fascists, it is expected that the government will seize upon "legal flaws" to return many properties to their capitalist owners.

The Gaceta of August 14 publishes a decree of the Ministry of the Interior which lapses all arms-permits. Now no arms are legally held by the workers or their unions. All previous arms-decrees had provided for the unions keeping the arms which are used to guard all factories and union buildings.

The CNT press publishes almost daily warnings advising the workers to guard against provocations.

Stalinist Insults Workers-Martyrs

A furor has been created throughout Spain by a speech of Comorera, Stalinist Catalan leader, on August 9, in which he contemptuously referred to the heroic first months of the civil war, when Aragon was conquered by the Catalan militias (mostly CNT) as: "The war began with some tribes that stormed the trains saying that they were going to take Zaragoza. Now we have a great army." "Tribus" (tribes) is an insulting term. The CNT press bitterly contrasts the successes of the "tribes" with the present stalemate.

The Stalinist-controlled Claridad (Madrid) has refused to remove from its masthead the title of "organ of the UGT" and the National Executive of the UGT has (August 12) repeated its repudiation of the sheet.

Anarchist Youth Refuse to Slander Trotskyists

The Peninsular Committee of the Libertarian (anarchist) Youth on August 10 issued a lengthy manifesto explaining why it re-

fused to constitute a "youth alliance" with the Stalinists. The breaking point was reached when the Stalinists proposed that Point 5 of the pact include following: "The youth.... considers it necessary to stamp the Trotskyists as agents of fascism, enemies of the unity of the people and of the antifascist youth, and organizers of the espionage center recently discovered by the police, and declares that they be punished in such a manner that they should not be able to raise their heads." The Libertarian Youth refused to sign its name to this slander and broke off negotiations.

Courts Re-Organized

With the FAI (anarchists) excluded by decree from membership in the Popular Tribunals and more and more functions of the tribunals arrogated to Special Tribunals appointed by the Ministries of Justice and Defense, Minister Irujo has embarked on further steps to change the composition of the Tribunals.

Roca, CNT member, ex-sub-secretary of Justice, now tells how, when the Popular Tribunals were formed (with a presiding judge and about fifteen members of workers and anti-fascist organizations constituting each) in September, 1936, a meeting of judges and magistrates was called by the Ministry of Justice, to secure volunteers to go to the provinces to set up the Tribunals to try the fascists. Not one would volunteer—they knew the fascists would have to be convicted. Most of the tribunals then formed were presided over by left-wing attorneys. Minister Irujo is now dissolving them, appointing the once-reluctant judges, who now eagerly accept the posts since the Popular Tribunals no longer ferret out fascists.

Apparently some supporters of the government are beginning to fear its isolation from the masses, for Alvarez Del Vayo, who ostentatiously appeared at a Communist Party plenum shortly after the dismissal of Caballero, is now calling for the return of the C.N.T. to the government.

Milton Tour Dates

Wed. Oct. 13, New Haven—Thurs. Oct. 14, Hartford—Fri. Oct. 15, Lynn—Sat. Oct. 16, Sun. Oct. 17, Boston—Mon. Oct. 18, Albany—Tues. Oct. 19, Syracuse—Wed. Oct. 20, Ithaca—Thurs. Oct. 21, Rochester—Fri. Oct. 22, Sat. Oct. 23, Sun. Oct. 24, Toronto—Mon. Oct. 25, Youngstown—Tues. Oct. 26, Akron—Wed. Oct. 27, Thurs. Oct. 28, Fri. Oct. 29, Cleveland—Sat. Oct. 30, Toledo.
Sun. Oct. 31, Detroit—Mon. Nov. 1, Chicago—Tues. Nov. 2, Chicago—Wed. Nov. 3, Minneapolis—Thurs. Nov. 4, Fri. Nov. 5, Sat. Nov. 6, Sun. Nov. 7, St. Paul—

All other executive board members and the present officers were re-elected. S. H. Dalrymple was unopposed for presidency. Thomas F. Burns defeated House for vice-presidency. Frank Grillo was re-elected treasurer.

L. L. Callahan, Goodrich Local president, and militant leader of many Akron strikes in the past year, won the sixth position on the board opened by House's defeat.

Mon. Nov. 8, Omaha—Tues. Nov. 9, En route—Wed. Nov. 10, Denver—Thurs. Nov. 11, Denver—Fri. Nov. 12, Sat. Nov. 13, Salt Lake City.

Sunday, Nov. 14, San Francisco—Mon. Nov. 15, Tues. Nov. 16, Wed. Nov. 17, Thurs. Nov. 18, Oakland—Fri. Nov. 19, Sat. Nov. 20, Sun. Nov. 21, Mon. Nov. 22, Los Angeles—Tues. Nov. 23, Fri. Nov. 24, en route—Thurs. Nov. 25, Kansas City.

Fri. Nov. 26, Sat. Nov. 27, Sun. Nov. 28, Mon. Nov. 29, Chicago Convention—Tues. Nov. 30, St. Louis—Wed. Dec. 1, Indianapolis—Thurs. Dec. 2, Louisville—Fri. Dec. 3, Sat. Dec. 4, Columbus—Sun. Dec. 5, Reading—Mon. Dec. 6, Quakertown—Tues. Dec. 7, Allentown—Wed. Dec. 8, Washington—Thurs. Dec. 9, Baltimore.

A Gala studio party sponsored by the Village Branch and intending to startle the entire city will occur this Saturday—Oct. 9th—at the home of Dr. Luttinger, 5 Washington Sq., North. A good time assured.

School Offers Five Courses

MARXIST SCHOOL

116 University Place, New York
FALL COURSES
OPENING OCTOBER 18th
(The registration fee for each course is seventy five cents (four sessions).)

I. Elementary Marxism

John G. Wright
Monday, 7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M.
An introductory course especially valuable for newcomers to the socialist movement.

1. Introduction to Marxian Economics.
2. Contradictions of Capitalism.
3. Classes and the Class Struggle.
4. The Road to Power.

II. China and The Far East

Robert Graves
Monday, 8:45 P.M.—10:15 P.M.
This lecture supplies the necessary background and material for an understanding of the present policy of the Roosevelt government in the Far East crisis.

1. The Reawakening of the Far East.
2. The Chinese Revolution—1925-1927.
3. Imperialist Interests in the Far East.
4. The Present Sino-Japanese Conflict.

III. Political Currents in American Labor Movement

Maurice Spector
Tuesday, 7:00 P.M.—8:30 P.M.
A critique of the politics of the A. F. of L., C. I. O., Communist Party, Thomas/Socialist Party and the Lovestone group with particular reference to third party and farmer-labor party movements.

1. "Reward Your Friends, Punish Your Enemies".
2. Rooseveltian Laborism.
3. Left Proponents of Farmer-Laborism.
4. The Revolutionary Party and Farmer-Laborism.

IV. Socialism and War

Max Shachtman
Tuesday, 8:45 P.M.—10:15 P.M.
An historical survey of the theory and practice of social democracy, Stalinism and Marxism in regard to war, with an eye to the specific problems of the day, democracy, fascism, collective security, defense of the Soviet Union when it is allied with an imperialist power.

1. The Epoch of Militant Resolutions or the traditions of the pre-war Social Democracy.
2. The Epoch of Social Betrayal and Proletarian Resurgence or "War-Socialism" and the founding of the Communist International.
3. The Epoch of Stalin or the social patriotism of the Third International.
4. Critique of Pseudo-Marxist Theories on War or an examination of the Bauer-Zyromsky theses, the Lovestone-ites, etc.

V. The American Trade Union Movement

James P. Cannon
Friday, 7:00 P.M.—8:30 P.M.
Lectures on the significance of the conflict between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O., problems of organization of the basic industries and the role of revolutionists in the trade unions today.

1. Industrial versus Craft Unionism.
2. Basis for the A. F. of L.—C. I. O. Split.
3. Problems in the C. I. O. Unions.
4. The Tasks of Marxists in the Trade Unions.