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The C. P. Convention

Any attempt to examine the tenth national convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., held this week in New York, without understanding its relationship to the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, is doomed in advance to failure. The American Communist Party, like its sister organizations everywhere, is nothing but a diplomatic instrument of the Soviet Foreign Office. As such, it is completely subordinated to the interests of Moscow's present ruling clique.

When the convention proclaims that the C.P. is no longer a "section" of the Communist International, but is merely "affiliated" to it, the change is calculated to emphasize the "100 per cent Americanism" and "independence" of the party. In actuality, this is only a dodge for gullible people—for the "sheep" as Stalin would say. The truth of the matter is, as every informed person knows perfectly well, that the Communist Party does not take a single serious step in one direction or another without preliminary approval by, if not on the direct initiative of, the central Stalinist bureaucracy.

This bureaucracy has long ago abandoned the belief that the working class outside of the Soviet Union can and will take power and establish a socialist regime—at least in our epoch. Having landed in a blind alley as a result of its past policies, it now stakes all its cards on winning the "friendship" of various capitalist governments, on the theory that the latter will, if properly handled, come to the defense of the Soviet Union—and above all, of the ruling clan.

"If properly handled," has come to mean in practise the active aid of the Communist International in holding back the working class from struggle against its rulers, and where necessary, as in Spain, in directly crushing any revolutionary movement which endangers the sovereignty of capital. To promote the class struggle, especially in the so-called "democratic" countries, signifies in the Stalinist mind the promotion of a movement that would alienate capitalist "aid" from the Kremlin and weaken those alliances, already made or in preparation, upon which Stalin and Co. place such illusory hopes for self-preservation.

That is why the very suggestion of class struggle policies, of the classic idea of Marxism that the working class and the capitalist class have nothing in common, that there is a ceaseless struggle between them, is denounced by the present "communist" leaders as the very acme of treason, Trotskyism, Hitlerism or any other epithet in the official vocabulary of invective.

To demonstrate that it pays to make an alliance with Stalin, that no harm and much good can come of it, the Communist parties everywhere, and especially in lands like France, England and the United States, have been converted into stout pillars of capitalism. That putrid, obsolete social order of exploitation, iniquity and oppression which the early communist movement was sworn to destroy, finds in the present-day Stalinized movement its most vociferous spokesman and advocate—all in the interests, be it remembered, of preserving not so much "democracy" but rather the totalitarian regime in the Soviet Union. For if ever there was a more effectively anti-democratic, reactionary force in the labor movement than the Third International of today, we cannot recall it.

This background alone explains why the present convention of the C.P. is going through the indecent, farcical masquerade of "patriotism." The orgiastic pretenses to "Americanism," the 4th-of-July flag-waving which beats an American Legion convention hands down; the studied imitation of all the

munbo-jumbo of capitalist party conventions; the protestations of faith in American Institutions, American Democracy, the American Constitution; the very careful and deliberate obliteration of all reference to or mention of the horribly un-American term "class struggle" (imported into this country, as is known, by a Jew called Marx)—all these are not only so many emphases on the abandonment of the foundation ideas of Marxism and Communism, but constitute a frenzied appeal to the capitalist class to recognize the utter respectability of the Communist Party, its devotion to the status quo, its reliability as an ally in the coming war for the "defense of the Soviet Union" and of—American imperialist domination of the world.

Hence the revolting piece of chauvinism represented by the new constitution, which allows party membership only to those "loyal" Americans who are citizens of the Republic or have solemnly declared their intention of becoming citizens. There have been and are reactionary trade unions by the score in this country that never dared to write such an infamy into their constitutions.

The International which rescued Marxism from the mud of war "socialism" and taught from its inception that only revolutionary methods can bring about the final triumph of the workers, now has degenerated to the point where its American section ceremoniously renounces and denounces this doctrine and its advocates. The new constitution not only provides for the expulsion and public exposure of all "advocates of terrorism and violence as a method of party procedure," but brackets them with "strike-breakers, degenerates, habitual drunkards, betrayers of party confidence, provocateurs." Neither Marx, Engels, Lenin, nor even the pre-1924 Stalin could join the Communist Party under the new constitution.

Hence the new constitutional declaration that the party "opposes with all its power any clique, group, circle, faction or party which conspires or acts to subvert, undermine, weaken or overthrow any or all institutions of American democracy." If this is not a direct quotation from any of a number of state Criminal Syndicalism Laws, it is a perfect paraphrase. The Communist Party is at once watch-dog and Lord High Executioner for American capitalist rule and its institutions. And when one party functionary declares (*Daily Worker*, May 20, 1938) that "the danger they (the reactionaries) see of communism is not that the Communists will destroy the Constitution, but that they will uphold and enforce it"—he is accurately putting the Stalinist position of guardian and policeman of the document which legally consecrates and seeks to perpetuate the rule of capitalism in the United States.

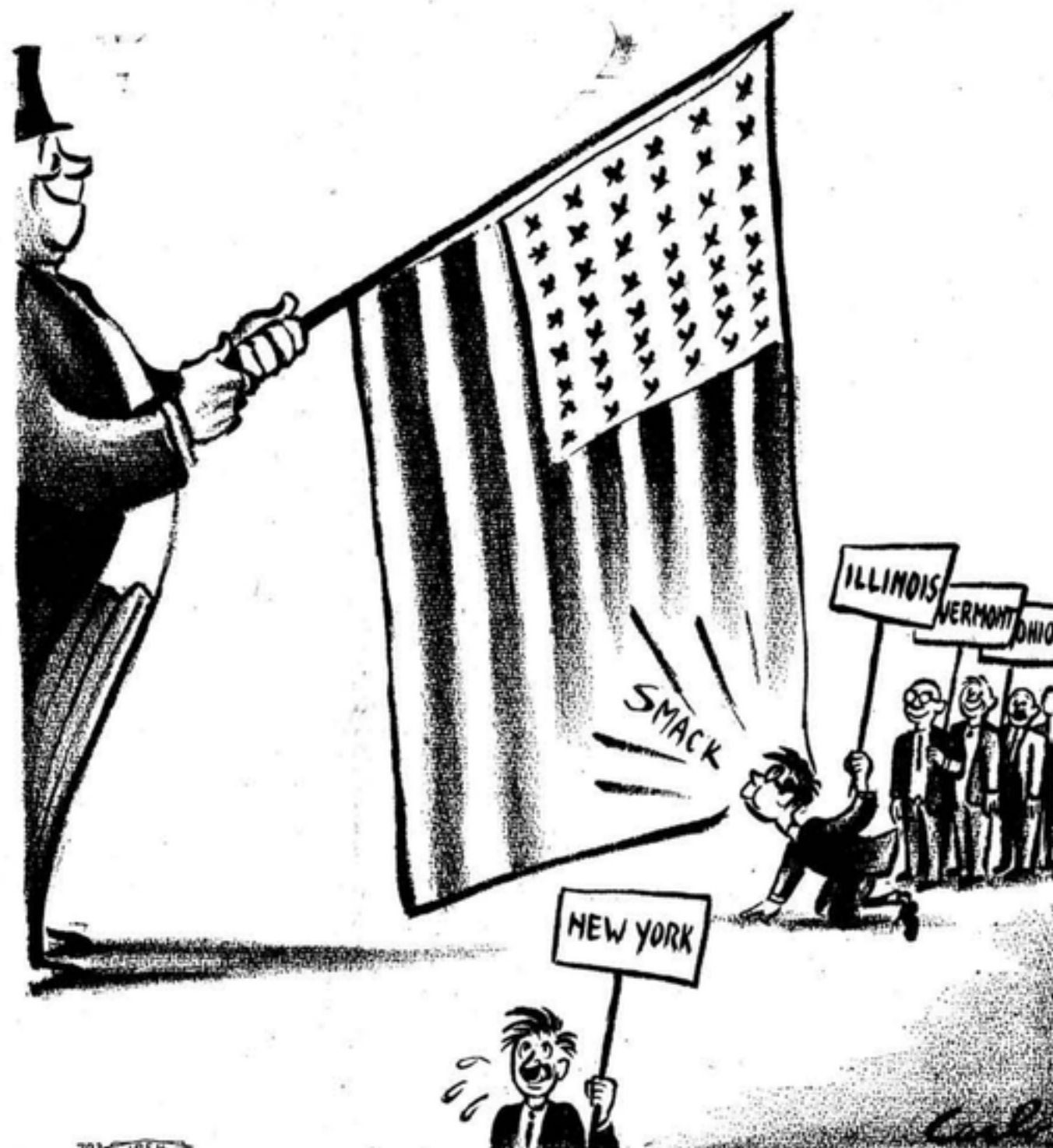
Hence, the active intervention by the Communist Party in American politics in opposition to independent working class action and organization. In the name of the newly-coined "democratic front," the Communist Party seeks to crush in the egg any movement of labor to break from its subjugation to the old capitalist parties. With the same slogan, it tries to whip the workers into line behind the reactionary slate of the Democratic Party in Pennsylvania, so long as it makes "some of the concessions to labor which it thought it could ignore before" (*Daily Worker*, May 20, 1938).

Hence, the generally recognized pro-war agitation of the Stalinists, calculated to drive the American workers into the trenches for the greater glory of Yankee imperialism and in the alleged interests of the Soviet Union.

Hence, finally, the pledge of the C.P. to American capitalism to ferret out, hound, suppress and lynch every true opponent of capitalist oppression and exploitation, every real fighter against capitalism and the sham which it calls "democracy." "Drive them out of the labor movement!" is the cry of the Stalinists, the reds of yesterday who have become the fiercest red-baiters of today.

Servile agents of the Stalin murder regime, interested only in its maintenance at any and all costs—that is the composition of the leadership of the Communist Party. Their convention once more illustrates the fact that there is no more virulent poison, no more sinister opponent of class independence and class struggle in labor's ranks today, than that represented by the totalitarian gang that is ruining the Soviet Union and undermining every section of the working class movement under its domination.

Stalinists In Convention



Hague's Gangster Rule Nourished By Roosevelt New Deal Patronage

By JAMES RALEIGH

Readers of the daily press, learning for the first time of Frank Hague and his domination of all social and political activity in Jersey City, are induced in the main to conclude that the common over popular rights now engendered there by rebellious elements is a purely sporadic phenomenon that will die down in due course either as a result of Hague's temporary surrender to adverse public opinion or because of the people's fatigue in opposing his entrenched power. Analysis will show this is not the case.

Briefly stated, Hague's control of the whole local government, begins with the police and ends with the judiciary. When he first took major public office in Jersey City as Commissioner of Public Safety, he realized that the police and fire department with their large personnel would be the most ideal center for building a personal political machine. The individual obligations of the cops and firemen were fruitful soil for planning his rotating crop of patronage and graft. True to expectation, the political manure in these two fields of public "safety" nourished his creeping vines until they were finally entwined about every phase of city, county and state officialdom.

Know Who Will Pass

Today, ordinary people in Jersey know in advance who will "pass" civil service examinations for key jobs before they are conducted, who will be "elected" to public office before they are nominated, and who will be sent to jail for election law "violations" before they are tried. Hague's power rests on his absolute domination of all sides of public life. And where private life crosses his path, as it must sooner or later, private life must make detour.

No one of importance criticizes him publicly without suffering retribution. No one of influence organizes against him unless he seeks to use the organization as a blackmailing device to induce Hague to buy him out. But woe unto him who incautiously blunders in this maneuver, for he may driven out and ruined.

Democracy in Jersey

No one may vote against him if in the future he wishes a favor. The "secret" polling booth has no curtain to hide the mark on your ballot. In Jersey City, pro-Hague citizens hand in their ballots unfolded as they leave the voting booth. Everybody kowtows to "Hague" as he is faintly called. Most people decide to "play ball" with him, even the Republicans. Thus we have in Jersey City a one-party totalitarianism a la Mussolini and Hitler. This is the secret of Hague's power.

Yet paradoxically, this is also the secret of his weakness. For every politician wants to be a cog in Hague's machine. But while dictatorship can build up a bureaucracy, the bureaucracy can never absorb the whole army of would-be political parasites.

Under capitalism, even under fascist capitalism, the legion of political misfits and disappointed unemployed must constantly grow. Even under early developing capitalism these elements are present, though at nowhere near the overwhelming numbers characteristic of capitalism's final stages.

Not Big Enough

Obviously Hague's political machine, no matter how well geared, can not be made big enough to carry all the disgruntled residents of the city, whose disgruntlement soon finds eloquence in numbers and unity. Several years ago, Hague had already enlarged his apparatus to such an extent that it was top heavy. Those who could not get comfortable berths in it were not the only grumblers. Property-owners became dissatisfied with the ever-rising taxes needed to maintain it. The blameless unemployed complained because no provision was being made for them. And even loyal Democrats still working in local industries were becoming embittered at the inadequate and falling wages. All in all, conditions in Jersey City, as elsewhere, were ripe, not for revolution, but merely change.

Into this hectic picture, on the heels of the glum-faced, rugged individualist, Herbert Hoover, stepped the smiling Friend of the Forgotten Man, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Among the others he came to save was Frank Hague, local despot of Jersey City. Jolly Franklin toddled into American history, jauntily dragging after him his little toy cart full of alphabet blocks to occupy the minds of the American unemployed and to provide free kindling wood for all the troubled Frank Hagues throughout the country. This was a godsend, for there was more than one set of letters in Roosevelt's wagon. There were even triple A's for the farmers and triple C's for the youths.

In the early days of the gold-rush to Washington, applicants seeking to fill the thousands of new jobs both there and in New Jersey were frankly told to see their congressmen. And Hague's congressmen were equally frank in telling them to see their ward-leaders back home. Hague lost not a single bet in portioning out the patronage plums. Roosevelt, as we know, filled these agencies without civil service competitive examinations. But only an embittered skeptic would dare accuse him of utilizing this non-competitive procedure for Democratic Party purposes.

New Deal Gravy

Yet, strange to relate, Hague came in for his due share of the gravy. In the early N.R.A. days, this barrel was full enough for him to parcel out pork to the leading incipient opponents of the then much worried Frank Hague. How effectively this system worked to the mutual satisfaction of Messrs. Hague and Roosevelt can well be gleaned from the national landslide that swept forty-six states, including

Republican New Jersey, into the Democratic electoral college, following the psychological public works program that gave hand-to-mouth jobs to millions just long enough before the 1936 election to make the masses feel deeply grateful to these two charitable gentlemen on the second Tuesday in November.

Recalcitrants Removed

In Jersey, men are removed from federal W.P.A. jobs and pointedly told that they had voted against Hague. Only favored applicants, vouched for by Hague's district leaders, can aspire to fill these vacancies. Lawyers, who by nature of their more articulate profession, are potential leaders of those discriminated against by the dwindling federal funds, are bought off by being given foreclosure work for those federal agencies that made mortgage loans on workers' homes. Theatre projects, writers' projects, sewing projects, music projects, lawyers' projects—all these New Deal palliatives are mysteriously closed to enemies of Frank Hague—even to lukewarm friends.

In the five years of the New Deal not one outspoken word has been uttered, nor one unmistakable gesture made to show that Roosevelt was opposed to the goings-on in Jersey under the tyranny of Hague. Only the other day in regard to the deportation from Jersey City of Norman Thomas and the intimidation of Representatives O'Connell and Bernard, the President announced that Hague's denial of constitutional rights was purely a local police matter. He forgot to add: a Hague-police matter. But then Hague is a vice-chairman of the National Democratic Committee.

Roosevelt Needs Hague

One hand washes the other. Without Hague to dispense W.P.A. jobs to make voters obligated to the Democratic Party, Roosevelt could not have carried New Jersey. Without Roosevelt to delegate New Deal appointments to him, Hague could not have maintained his political control over the state. But the signposts point to trouble. The recession has come upon New Jersey no less than upon Illinois and Ohio. Rent checks for Jersey City people suddenly fell two months in arrears, and funds for current relief could be raised only by diverting road funds from gasoline taxes. Young boys and girls are unable to find jobs.

One eloquent result of this development was the last local election. A group of unsatisfied youths, some just past the voting age, under the leadership of 24-year old John R. Longo, a middle-headed Democrat, would be bourgeois politician, impelled simply by the need of a job, saw a solution for themselves by filing a ticket in the Democratic Party primaries against Hague's hand-picked slate of candidates. In Hagueville, a primary contest such as that is lese majeste. Longo's naivete and inexperience, however, made him blunder in

In the N. Y. Painters' Union

5. Fight the Wreckers!

This is the fifth and concluding article in the series on the situation in the New York Painters' Union.

In the United States, the agents of the Stalin machine operate in every union, in every workers' organization, to this end: to make labor submissive and ready to be slaughtered in a war conducted under the banner of "democracy" and of "defending Soviet Russia," but in reality for the purpose of increasing the profits of Wall St. and of keeping the Stalinist job-trust in power as a dictatorship over the Soviet workers.

To the agents of the Stalin machine it is more important to use the Painters Union as a means with which to call a May Day demonstration for "Collective Security"—the fine slogan they use for the coming war—than to win better conditions for the painters.

Advance War Aims

To the agents of the Stalin machine, and all its Weinstocks, it is more important to get control of unions in preparation for their war aims than to safeguard the democratic rights of the rank-and-file workers. To the agents of the Stalin machine it is more important to live in peace with the bosses and to dress themselves up as "respectable" patriots than to disturb the country by organizing drives which will establish union conditions.

To achieve their aims, the Stalinists are ready to split, to disrupt, to wreck the organizations of the workers if they cannot control them. Look at their role in the seamen's unions, in the auto workers' union, in the foodworkers' unions, and you get the same picture everywhere: they are ready to line up with the most reactionary elements, to threaten the existence of every working class organization, if they cannot get control for their anti-working class aims.

It is impossible to go into great detail. A follow-up of events in the American labor movement, reported in these columns every week, can furnish the interested reader with sufficient details. For our purpose, for the purpose of understanding the role of the Stalinists in the Painters' union, what has been said above is enough to furnish a key to the situation.

Against the Wreckers

In order to defeat the Weinstocks and their henchmen, the policy which guided their actions must be understood thoroughly. As agents of Stalinism they are undoubtedly the greatest danger to the Painter's union. Stalinism determines their whole course in the union—their inaction against kick-backs, speed-up, the breaking of union standards; their grab for control through appointed officials; their fear of the real voice of the rank-and-file by means of the secret ballot.

Against the Stalinist wreckers in the District Council administration, all progressive forces of the Painters' union are now being welded together. Into this fight, every honest unionist, every painter concerned with the fate of the union, will have to be drawn. No matter what differences painters may have with regard to the solution of their troubles, all are becoming

preparing his petition: he forgot to witness all the signers as they made their signatures. His petition was "thrown out" by Hague's county clerk. His political blackmail failed. Longo was tried for election law "violations," the first such case in New Jersey, although such "irregularities" are regular, even in Hague's own petitions. Longo was convicted to get him out of the way.

Jury Packed

The jury was packed and the jurors even lied as to their occupations and connections in order to be sure to get on the jury to serve Hague. Longo now faces a five-year sentence for a "technical" crime as a lesson to the public on the sanctity of the ballot.

But why is Hague so disturbed about this young, inexperienced political upstart? Because Longo is a symbol. The huge machine must crumble, nay, it is beginning to crumble. The youth are the most inflammatory element in Jersey to cause its wreckage. They are too innocent to be called "reds," too impetuous to be restrained with "promises," too numerous to be bribed with "jobs." This is what will cause Hague's fall.

Will Roosevelt come to Hague's rescue again? Or will he throw Hague over to save himself?

increasingly convinced that the first step is to get rid of the Weinstock wrecking crew. To carry out this first step means to enable the union to work out the answers to its problems by normal rank-and-file discussion and by collective effort.

Progressives leading in this fight have made considerable headway. The Painters Educational Society, which for a long time led in the agitation for a clean, militant union on the basis of a well-defined program, has met with a mighty response. In recent weeks, progressive groups organized in all the Locals of D. C. No. 9 have combined into an Inter-Local Conference and adopted a militant policy.

Committee In Action

An Action Committee, elected by delegates from every progressive club, is issuing a paper, the *Progressive Painter*; campaigning for its position in the referendums; running mass meetings for the education of the membership on every issue confronting the union; and conducting an agitation for the election of officials in the coming elections on the basis of their program.

Nothing would be more fatal to the union than for any section of the progressives to go in for deals with the Stalinist union wreckers. The membership, in order to conduct its own affairs, has to be educated to take an interest in policy, in program—not to rely on false messiahs. The program of the progressives is simple, but direct:

1. It stands for the secret ballot in all voting. In the last referendum on this question, the administration defeated the proposal on the grounds that a secret ballot in a strike vote would give weaklings, the stool-pigeons, etc. a chance to play the bosses' game. In order to call the hand of the Stalinists, progressives are preparing to submit an amendment to the proposed by-laws of the District Council, calling for a secret ballot on all questions except the strike vote.

Election versus Appointment

2. The program stands for the election of all union representatives and against the appointment of organizers through political favoritism.

3. The Progressives are agitating for an open rotation system to be used in dispensing jobs under the 25 per cent rule, preferences to be given to the militant pickets. Open rotation systems are now in force in the Plumbers Union, the Plasterers Union, as well as other building trades unions. Such a system will abolish the weapon of the 25 per cent slips which the Stalinist administration now uses for its intimidation of the membership and will equalize the work among the unemployed.

4. The Progressives are fighting for a practical plan to organize the painting industry in all its branches, beginning with the union shops where union standards still have to be put into practice. Speed-up (spraying, dipping) as well as kick-back still has to be done away with.

5. The program of the Progressives stands for closer cooperation with the Building Trades Council and the legitimate labor movement for a real housing program that will do away with the slums and make needed work for the unemployed painters, instead of the miserably inadequate housing program offered by the government under the P.W.A.

The Fight Is On

On the basis of this minimum program, the united Inter-Local Conference of Progressives Clubs has begun its fight against the Stalinist wreckers. The hope for the union painter lies in the success with which this program can be carried out. Sentiment for it is on the increase. Enthusiasm for the Progressive fight may be gauged by the response that their printed paper has received, as well as by the big crowd of bona fide painters that turned out for the mass meeting at Hunts Point Palace a week ago last Saturday, when \$121 in cash was given in support of the struggle against the Stalinist wreckers. From the comments of rank-and-file artists that meeting, the sentiment may be summed up as follows: "The Painters union must be returned to the painters. The fight has just begun. The Weinstock wrecking crew will be cleaned out. The hope for the future of the painter lies in a clean, militant union."

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