

Resolutions Adopted by National Committee Plenum

Trade Union Resolution Points Road to Unity, Progressive Work

(Resolution of the Plenum of the National Committee)

1. A marked trend towards unity has been an outstanding feature of the developments in the American labor movement in the recent period. It was expressed clearly in the events of the A.F. of L. convention where the progressive revolt of a large section of the membership, especially the Teamsters Union, against the reactionary policies of the "diehard" clique in the executive council was revealed. The action of international unions of the C.I.O., of state C.I.O. councils, and Local unions, calling for unity with the A.F. of L. was another manifestation of this trend. Roosevelt administration pressure for unity, as part of his strategy of achieving national unity in war-time has increased tremendously following the September war crisis. The swing to the right in the off-year elections has further served to strengthen sentiment for the unification of the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L.; both organizations feel themselves to be in greater jeopardy from reactionary forces consolidated in Congress seeking to foist union-smashing legislation on the divided labor movement.

The hegemony of the industrial workers in the American labor movement as reflected in the increase in industrial unions within the A.F. of L., the growth of power of the large truck drivers international union with its pro-unity sympathies, and the permanence of the C.I.O. has served to aid the shift in the direction of unity, because of the vital needs of this decisive force in the labor movement.

Labor Unity

In light of these developments, we strongly reiterate our unequivocal support of unity in the labor movement, and reiterate the following considerations from our National Convention Trade Union Resolution:

"Although it is impossible for us at the present time to influence decisively the course of events, or to determine the pace and method of trade union unity, we are nevertheless bound to concentrate our propaganda and agitation activity among the workers in favor of the most desirable basis for unity, that is, democratic organization and a wide measure of autonomy for the affiliated unions, especially such a measure as would facilitate the organization of the basic industries into industrial unions and preserve the integrity of those already in existence. Every attempt to carve up the industrial unions into craft formations must be stubbornly resisted as thoroughly reactionary."

Pro-C. I. O. Direction

2. Basing itself on the numerically greater dues-paying A.F. of L. membership in comparison to the C.I.O., and the increase of Stalinist influence in alliance with John L. Lewis, there has arisen a certain tendency within our own ranks which can best be described as "pro-A.F. of L.-ism." It has appeared in some of the trade union publications influenced by our comrades and in some policy proposals in certain instances. This attitude is false. In spite of specific tactics in separate union situations, dictated by exceptional circumstances, and though avoiding any "organizational fetishism," we have been, and remain, pro-C.I.O. The key to a thorough understanding of and support for the C.I.O. lies in recognizing that it is primarily a social movement reflecting the needs, desires and aspirations (even if often in distorted form) of the most decisive sections of the industrial proletariat. Historically, it remains a progressive break from the conservative and antiquated traditions of the A.F. of L. The future of the American labor movement depends on the success of this mass movement of industrial unionism in the economic field, and its development on the political field as the leading force in an independent working class political party.

Transitional Program

3. While our propaganda and agitation for the creation of a labor party is a very important task of the Party primarily in the trade unions, it must be accompanied by the equally important struggle for the popularization of our program of transitional demands as a vital part of our strategy of rallying the workers against the blows on the economic and political fields of the social crisis. The inescapable contradictions of the present policies of the trade union movement in seeking to alleviate the miseries inherent in a decaying capitalist society within the frame-work of that re-

Political Committee Rapped on Election

(Resolution of the Plenum)

With the exception of the Newark local, the party failed to conduct any serious election activity in the various state campaigns recently concluded. No S.W.P. candidates appeared on the ballot—save for Newark where the party made a splendid showing—in any of the state, congressional or local contests.

Write-in campaigns have in all cases proved ineffective and aroused little or no interest among the workers. In several states, it was possible to place at least one party candidate on the ballot. But these opportunities were uniformly missed.

Responsibility for this failure rests with the Political Committee. Parliamentary activity is a vital part of our work and our program. Serious efforts must be made to correct the faults evidenced in the recent campaign.

Reactionary society, opens the way for fruitful activity of our Party centering around the slogans of (1) Sliding Scale of Hours and Wages, (2) Open the Idle Factories, (3) Workers Defense Guards, and other demands contained in the transitional program.

4. One of the gravest dangers to the labor movement has been the deadly alliance of John L. Lewis and other C.I.O. bureaucrats with the reactionary Stalinist machine. Despite protests of an ever-increasing section of the C.I.O. movement, the criminal and irresponsible policies of the Stalinists were forced down the throats of important unions with the aid of John L. Lewis. The ruinous practices of Harry Bridges, West Coast C.I.O. director, brought a spontaneous revolt of progressive unionists which was temporarily defeated only by drastic intervention of John Brophy, Stalinist C.I.O. director. The autonomy of the auto workers union has been seriously jeopardized and all progressive tendencies within that union badly crippled by the infamous bloc of Lewis and the Stalinists.

Everywhere within the C.I.O. and other unions, the Stalinists hound and seek to destroy genuine progressive and revolutionary workers who resist their "rule or ruin" policy with its war-mongering dictated by the needs of the Soviet bureaucracy, which seeks to tie the American labor movement to the Roosevelt war machine in return for a Stalin-Roosevelt bloc. Ruthless disregard of vital union democracy, slandering and framing of progressives, creation of a dictatorial-bureaucratic structure for the C.I.O.; these are the methods of the Stalinist agents within the labor movement.

"Lesser Evil" in Unions

5. Blocs with non-Stalinist workers, and even with conservative elements genuinely interested in saving the union movement from destruction at Stalinist hands are not only permissible but at times necessary. While always expanding our own program independently and maintaining our right of criticism, our Party, in a certain sense, supports the "lesser evil" within the trade unions. Stalinists are the main enemy in the present instance because of the deadly role of this cancerous force within the unions. In order to save the unions from destruction, we unite with all serious elements to exclude the agents of Stalinism from control of unions. It must be emphasized that our tactic of a "lesser evil" within the unions has nothing in common with its reactionary namesake on the parliamentary field. We are interested in preserving the unions from destruction and that is the basis for the "lesser evil" tactic in the unions. Even union conservatives have a common interest in this aim, at least to the extent of wishing to

preserve the unions—which are their own sole base—from actual destruction, and a united front with them on this basis is correct. But in the political field, we have no interest in preserving capitalism and its state. Quite the contrary, we seek to destroy it through revolutionary action.

Our action, for example, in supporting the Martin administration, as against the Stalinists, in the auto workers union was based on these considerations. It was correct to seek to preserve that union from the Stalinist disrupters. In our failure to give sufficiently clear criticism of certain reactionary maneuvers of the Martin forces, we did not, however, draw a sharp enough line between our program and the limited program of Martin and his allies. Our role in the auto struggle was tactically sound but incomplete as a result.

6. Nevertheless, in combating Stalinism in blocs with other tendencies, we must resist the swing of the workers, disillusioned by their experiences of Stalinism, toward syndicalist conceptions and against "politics" and political parties in general. These reactionary tendencies, which only disarm the workers in the struggle against capitalism, must be fought by the Marxist party.

Greater Concentration

7. While the most important and largest field of our trade union activity remains at present in the Minneapolis area, there have been other labor centers where modest but definite progress has been recorded. In Lynn, Mass. in the C.I.O. movement. In steel in New Jersey and elsewhere; the painters and maritime workers in New York City; the development of a cadre in auto; the activity in Akron; these are a few of the places where our work is integrating the movement with the trade unions and building the party.

8. Experience has shown the need for greater concentration of our work in those unions and centers where roots already have been established or concrete prospects are opened up. Intensification of our Party work around these areas rather than diffusion of our limited forces over the whole field must be the guiding system of organizing our trade union work in the future. Colonization of comrades into these places should be an integral part of this program of action, wherever possible.

National Labor Secretary

9. There has been an improved coordination of national trade union work in the past period despite the big obstacle presented by lack of finances for the trade union department which made it impossible for the labor secretary to function for four months during the summer in New York. A national steel fraction, covering New Jersey, Ohio, East Chicago and Connecticut has begun to function. Maritime work has been improved somewhat on a national scale. Exchange of information, advice and policy have been given in the field, to a greater or lesser degree. However, any really satisfactory trade union work on a national scale must be based on adequate support of this department. Means must be found to place the party labor secretary on a full-time basis.

10. Our advances in trade union work are reflected in the Party press. The increasing news and attention given to labor events in the Socialist Appeal are one manifestation of the progress made in the direction of a trade union orientation. Even greater attention of the Party must be devoted to this question. Activating the non-trade union comrades around this work; giving the Party a much stronger proletarian character; recruiting in the unions through the good work of the fractions; these are the problems which the Party must solve in the coming period.

NO MORE PIOUS TEARS!

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it is aroused. This will be democracy and anti-fascism in action, not mere democratic, "anti-fascist" phrase-mongering.

Our job is to raise this demand in every organization which we can reach, to bring it before every individual with whom we can come into contact, to circulate petitions embodying it, to make it the central focus of mass meetings and demonstrations everywhere.

Down with the attempt to pervert anti-Nazism into the band-aid of imperialist war and the war-mongers!

Grant asylum to the refugees!

Lift the quotas! Abolish the financial restrictions, the means test, and the red tape!

Welcome our persecuted brothers into the United States! Open the doors to the German Jews!

Plenum Endorses World Congress Decisions

The Plenary Session of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, having heard the report of its delegation to the World Conference of the Fourth International, declares its endorsement and approval of the theses and resolutions adopted by the Conference.

The National Committee considers the decision adopted by the Conference to found and organize the Fourth International (World Party of the Socialist Revolution) as an indispensable step of the highest political and historic significance for the revolutionary and labor movements of the world.

The National Committee further reaffirms its adherence to

the Fourth International and to the Executive Committee and Secretariat elected at the Conference, and declares formally that the Socialist Workers Party is the United States section of the Fourth International (World Party of the Socialist Revolution).

The National Committee declares, finally, in favor of the continuation of the maximum amount of support, financial, political and moral, and the closest collaboration in the regular work of the Executive Committee and Secretariat of the Fourth International and instructs the Political Committee to take all the necessary steps to realize this support and collaboration.

Plenary Session of N. C. Adopts Program of Action

Party To Be Geared To New Tempo To Apply Transitional Program In Trade Union Activity

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time party workers. The goal was set to have at least one full-time party organizer in every district of the party before the next S.W.P. convention in the Spring of 1939.

The Plenum took note of the failure of the Party to put up candidates in the recent elections—excluding Newark—and rapped the Political Committee for neglecting to provide any directives for effective participation in the state and local contests.

Report on C. I. O.

Significant in the changed orientation of the party was the opening of the Plenum with a report on the C.I.O. convention by comrade E. J. Widick, supplemented by two delegates to the Pittsburgh gathering. The report on the C.I.O. introduced the discussion on the trade union question, also led by comrade Widick. The experiences of six months' activity in the unions and the burning issue of unity occupied the center of discussion.

The new direction of the party in its practical activity was strikingly indicated in the discussion

CIO Convention Rubber- Stamps Lewis Machine

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Lewis to investigate unions, in the manner he did in auto. These are dangerous precedents for the labor movement.

Of course, a broader and more flexible interpretation of these vital clauses depends entirely on how much pressure the rank and file places on the executive board. It becomes a question of relationship of forces.

Stalinists Get Posts

Because the constitution provides for the executive board of the C.I.O. to be composed of one member from each affiliated national and international union and organizing committee—and Lewis insisted that the nominees be the president of each of the affiliates—fifteen Stalinists are on the board!

Joe Curran, of the National Maritime Union, was elected despite opposition from his own delegates, because Lewis personally interceded.

Bridges, Mervin Rathborne, Michael Quill, Lewis Merrill, are among the leading Stalinists who are on the board which is composed of 42 members.

But Lewis Controls

However, voting on the Board is on the basis of per capita payments of the union which the board member represents. This provision gives Lewis absolute control of the Board. He and Philip Murray and Sidney Hillman, alone have a majority of votes from coal, steel and textile and clothing! Besides, they are the executive officers whose actions are subject to review only twice a year by the Board which they control!

John Brophy, C.I.O. director, was dumped from the post of secretary which he temporarily occupied since the death of Charles P. Howard. James Carey, of the electrical and radio workers, was elected since he is considered "safer" than Brophy by the C.I.O. leaders. Carey is known as a "fellow traveler" of the Stalinist line. C.I.O. leaders expect to "win him over."

"Love-Feast" with Martin

In an effort to impress the public, Lewis approached Homer Martin, auto workers president, and

urged him to participate actively in the convention, to show that the C.I.O. was united.

So Martin spoke on the resolution for observing collective bargaining agreements. He blamed the employers for the sit-downs but was far too sharp in his own criticism of sit-downs. Later on, Martin talked on the resolution to organize Ford.

The final touch was a charming love feast arranged by the auto workers executive board which saw Martin presenting Murray, Hillman and Lewis with watches for their "great services to the auto workers," while the Stalinists cheered. Actually, neither Martin, nor Lewis nor the Stalinists believed the talk of unity and peace and the struggle behind the scenes is more bitter than ever.

This remarkable performance was followed by another event which, to put it mildly, was unusual. On a point of special privilege, Joe Curran arose and read a little speech prepared for him by Thomas Ray and Roy Hudson, Stalinist behind-the-scenes-men at the convention.

Curran pledged "undying loyalty," etc, etc, to Lewis and Lewis made a public endorsement of Harry Bridges. Tit-for-tat... while the workers suffer from the rule-or-ruin policies of the Stalinists.

No Politics at Convention

Conspicuous by its absence throughout the convention was talk on Labor's Non-Partisan League and its role in politics. The recent election defeats have demoralized the C.I.O. leaders and they didn't want to discuss politics.

Only one resolution endorsing the League was introduced. Before it was introduced, Eli L. Oliver, executive vice-president of the League spoke on the resolution, and was followed by Michael Quill. No discussion was called for, although various delegates wanted to speak, and the resolution was endorsed.

Another example of the caution of the C.I.O. leaders was their refusal to allow a Stalinist delegate to introduce a special resolution calling upon Roosevelt to run for a third term. The C.I.O. leaders ruled it out of order, not because they necessarily disagree with the idea, but because they are afraid Roosevelt won't run and they'll be

Organization to Be Re-Shaped On Fighting Campaign Lines

(Resolution of the Plenum of the National Committee)

In the period between the present plenum of the National Committee and the National Convention in the Spring we must bring about a decisive improvement in our methods of work. Determined efforts must be made to replace scattered and desultory activity in organization as well as in propaganda agitation—characteristic of Social Democratic organizations and propaganda circles—by systematic planned work and activity organized on the Bolshevik campaign principle. The membership must be activated on the basis of universal and individual responsibility for an organized series of separate actions flowing from our own general political positions and Leninist organization concepts. It is the responsibility of the party leadership to plan and direct these actions and to concentrate all party energy on them for a given period of time in each case. Special "weeks" or longer periods must be dedicated to specific tasks and the striking power of the entire membership brought to bear upon them.

TASKS FOR NEXT PERIOD

Particular attention in the next period should be concentrated on the following specific tasks:

1. The popularization of our program of transitional demands as a whole, and each item separately. Internal educational work along this line must be coordinated with editorial exposition, agitation, leaflet distribution, etc., in one comprehensive plan.

2. A special campaign against perfidious Stalinism, the greatest plague of the labor movement, directed especially to the Stalinist youth and trade unionists. The role of the Stalinists as undisguised agents of imperialism must be exposed and denounced far more vigorously than before by concrete illustrations, especially on questions of social patriotism, trade unionism and betrayal of the Latin American people (Cuba!).

PROFESSIONAL WORK

3. The party must strive to increase and strengthen its professional staff. The intensified work of a revolutionary political party is incompatible with amateurism and the sluggish routine that always goes with it. More and more qualified comrades, ready for sacrifice, must be encouraged to devote their full time to party

work. A party functionaries' wage fund, provided by special contributions from better-paid party members and sympathizers must be established to assure professional party workers a reliable minimum of support in their work. The party must come to its next convention with an increase in the number of full-time party workers in general, and at least one full-time party organizer in each district.

4. The party work in the trade unions, which has recorded a modest improvement since the party convention, must be organized more systematically. The work on a national scale must be directed and coordinated by a full time labor secretary. A part of the APPEAL staff should specialize in trade union matters. In general the convention orientation toward concentration on trade union work must be re-enforced by the necessary organizational and literary measures.

THE PARTY PRESS

5. Since the convention big strides have been made toward the financial stabilization of the party press, the prerequisite for its further expansion. The crux of this problem is the prompt payment of bundle order accounts by the branches. Carelessness and negligence in this respect, still prevailing in sections of the party, are the chief factors undermining the foundation of the APPEAL and the NEW INTERNATIONAL and, at times, threatening their existence. These intolerable practices must be ended, by drastic measures if necessary.

A workers' party, operating without subsidy, can publish papers only if they are paid for. Those who take a light-hearted attitude toward this question act as disorganizers of the party press. Particularly now, with the party steering toward a twice-a-week publication of the APPEAL, with its consequent doubled expense of production, the party must insist on a strict and responsible payment for bundle orders. The plenum endorses the previous decision of the Political Committee instructing the business managers of the party publications to cut off the bundle orders of branches violating this rule regardless of which branch may be effected or what excuses are offered. The party is determined to stabilize the financial structure of its press and to permit no disruption of it.

At least two national tours of prominent party speakers are to be organized before the Spring convention.

Sidelights on C.I.O. Convention

By B. J. W.

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—What is Homer Martin going to do at the convention? This was one of the most frequently asked questions. Best answer was that the auto workers' president was an unpredictable man. It was generally agreed, however, that if anyone would create a stir at the convention, Martin was the man. Perhaps on the war referendum issue.

John Brophy, C.I.O. director, pulled the first boner of the convention. He announced there would be a meeting of the "paper industrial unions" Monday night. Whereupon a newspaperman asked, "did he mean the Stalinist-controlled unions?"

John L. Lewis looked perplexed and tired during his opening remarks. Even his denunciation of the Nazi persecution of Jews was delivered in a mild tone.

The Star-Spangled Banner was played for an introduction to the sessions. Nothing like trying to whip up patriotism before a pro-war policy is announced.

After Lewis' plea for democracy and the bill of rights a rank and file member of the miners union told some visitors that his union had been trying to get that for fifteen years within the U.M.W.A. Many of the District officers are still appointed by Lewis. The rank and file wants to elect their own.

A little taste of what price the so-called socialists are going to pay for supporting the Stalinist-Lewis bloc in gaining control of the auto workers' union was given to none other than Walter Reuther, international executive board member, and president of the West Side Local. He was NOT elected a delegate by the executive board. And you can imagine how much sympathy he will get left high and dry.

Participation in another "war for democracy" was pledged in a resolution adopted by the convention.

A series of reports on organizing drives in the South, and elsewhere were approved and the C.I.O. executive board urged to plan a large campaign for new members.

Support of Roosevelt's war program was given in a special resolution. In fact, all political resolutions gave a pledge to American capitalism.

from the rank and file who saw him help the Stalinists in their "rule or ruin" tactics.

Mr. Tucker P. Smith, another bright luminary of the alleged Socialist Party was a visitor to the convention. He, too, has felt the axe, according to reports. He was dismissed from the educational department of the auto workers.

The cut-and-dried character of the convention so far would have been changed and a much more thorough discussion of the question of labor unity would have resulted from the presence of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. When a convention committee accidentally mentioned David Dubinsky's name in connection with a report, the delegates laughed. He is viewed by many C.I.O. unionists as a man who was afraid or too uncertain to fight for his position on unity within the C.I.O.

The International Woodworkers paper, passed out to all delegates, carried an interesting story about the charges placed against George H. Arns, treasurer of Harry Bridges' longshoremen's union. It was claimed he was a "red-baiter." The story revealed that Arns was recently re-elected to that post despite Bridges' opposition.

The official explanation for the 4,000,000 membership figure given in the Lewis report was that "of course, it means both employed and unemployed."

It was considered very unlikely that the Workers Alliance would be given a C.I.O. charter, despite the frantic under-cover efforts of the Stalinists who want to save themselves from complete exposure and bankruptcy in the unemployed field.

The notable absence of "outside" speakers of the LaGuardia, Murphy, and other "friends of labor" variety was explained by the desire of the C.I.O. top leadership to have less said about the bankruptcy of their "realistic" policy of working with the democratic and republican "progressives."

Mr. John Strachey, "The big Shot from England" (a Stalinist explained) was hanging around the convention autographing copies of his latest piece of Stalinist propaganda. Apparently the Stalinists had to go to England to get a "literary" name to impress their stooges at the C.I.O. convention.

Chief topic around the press table was "will the Stalinists take over the C.I.O.," and "why don't they pep this convention up so I have a hot story?"

Only Postal Telegraph messengers were allowed in the convention. Brophy explaining that a C.I.O. contract had been signed with that company while Western Union was fighting the C.I.O.

The importance of this convention was illustrated in one way by the presence of every well-known labor reporter. Over 50 journalists representing the world, labor and radical press were covering the sessions.

There is little direct rank and file representation at the convention. Executive boards of C.I.O. international unions, regional directors, and presidents of C.I.O. councils constitute the overwhelming majority of the delegates, who number 476.

The key men on every important committee are miners, devoted henchmen of the Lewis machine. The C.I.O. is certainly in his control, organizationally speaking, although the place is swarming with Stalinists. Of course, they do not seem to be worrying very much. The Lewis speech on democracy could have been given word for word by Browder. The only difference is that Lewis carries more weight.

In case any opposition should arise from the floor, the Lewis-miners machine alone controls over 2,500,000 votes. Add to that the Hillman votes (and he is an integral part of the Lewis bureaucracy) of 700,000, and the Stalinist votes of 500,000 (a good deal from paper unions) and you can see how much chance any opposition might have.

The Publication of FASCISM AND BIG BUSINESS By Daniel Guerin has been postponed until December 15th. Several hundred dollars are still required to cover the cost of publication. Everyone interested in assuring the publication of this important book without further delay is urged to send a contribution for this purpose to Pioneer Publishers 100 Fifth Ave., New York City Advance Orders still accepted at \$1.50. Price on Publication \$2.00.