

WORKERS' FORUM

Write to us—tell us what's going on in your part of the labor movement—what are the workers thinking about—tell us what the bosses are up to—and the G-men and the local cops—and the Stalinists—send us that story the capitalist press didn't print and that story they buried or distorted—our pages are open to you. Letters must carry name and address, but indicate if you do not want your name printed.

On The Ladies Who Now Own The 'Daily Worker'

EDITOR: So without a shot being fired or a command to surrender being uttered, the Daily Worker has gone underground—behind three skirts! And no ordinary skirts, either! I refer to the Daily Worker's announcement of its sale to three ladies. There's Ferdinanda, who's 63; and Susan, still going strong with a camera and lecture notes at 71; and Caro, delving daily deeper into research despite her 81 years. And lest you think that years be the most notable of their assets, be assured that these three venerable dames began collecting background decades before they popped into the world singing the Star Spangled Banner. Take Ferdinanda, for instance. Hers is a Wesselhoef skirt. Flouncing in and out of America, Europe and the USSR these six decades, sweeping in its wake a collection of artistic accomplishments covering sculpture, music and classical literature. Reeking with tradition, it walks in the noble memory of such names as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Martin Van Buren, John Calhoun, Horace Greeley and Carl Shurz, some of whom in their weaker moments put themselves trustingly in the hands of Grandpapa Wesselhoef and his "famed Brattle Sanatorium" Ferdinanda learned about the class struggle from a book called "Through the Eye of a Needle" by William Dean Howells. Susan is a D.A.R. and veteran of the back-to-the-land struggle. Her 71 years of historical reminiscence include the thrilling rescue of "two wagon-loads of priceless archives from the Navy Department and the White House" by her great grand-father who seems to have been around when Dolly Madison needed help. She was practically born into the staff of the Bankers Magazine. And Caro has had 81 years of Puritan inheritance complicated with a degree from Vassar. Most of her life has been spent in research. If she is responsible, not the least of her research contributions to the Communist Party has been the digging up of three such fossils as herself and her two associates in this democratic bingie they are out on—buying up

newspapers to insure "freedom of expression" in a cock-eyed and decaying society. It's only too bad they should right crack out of the box get stuck with the Daily Worker.

Imagine Earl Browder though, grooming himself for the historic moment when the forces of reaction pounce upon his erstwhile official organ. He is probably at this very moment standing before a pierglass declaiming with heroic gestures the lines which ring through the corridors of every little schoolhouse (out of consideration for his feelings, we left out the adjective "red") in this country:

"Who touches a hair of you gray head Dies like a dog! March on!"

Contemplate if you will the impenetrable bulwark of defense the brain trust of the Comintern has thrown around their press: three females; three almost or actual octogenarians; three members of the first families. One can see capitalism cringing before it!

We should like to be allowed a few friendly words of advice to the new owners of the Daily Worker. To Ferdinanda: If you want to know how really little the eye of a needle can be quit staring at the veracity record of the Daily Worker for a while and try smuggling a few copies of the Russian Bulletin of the Fourth International over the Russian borders. To Susan: Why not really emulate your illustrious ancestor and tear over to the Kremlin with a couple of wagons while there are still a few "priceless archives" of the Russian Revolution still undestroyed by Stalinite vandals.

And with Browder and company we should like a word too. If the Communist Party, trembling before the possibility of imminent illegality, wants to save its press by a legal transfer of ownership we have absolutely no objection. Even if it has in mind only the avoidance of payment on judgments against it for libelous statements we still say all right with us. But why the monkey-business with octogenarian skirts of good family? Who the hell do you think you're kidding—us, yourselves, the capitalists or the three old ladies? Chicago

LYDIA BEIDEL

Auto Convention Failed to Solve Any Of the Union's Pressing Problems

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—The delegates to the Auto Workers Union St. Louis convention have concluded their fifth convention without solving the pressing problems facing the automobile workers today and without giving any leadership to the rest of the industrial workers of the country.

The United Automobile Workers of America, like its parent body, the CIO, stands today without real leadership, without perspective and without program for the future. Harsh words, but true, unfortunately.

PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYED STILL UNTOUCHED

The convention delegates applauded John L. Lewis when he stated at the convention that "On the first of May, 1940, there were still 10,748,000 unemployed Americans in this country . . . and the unemployed question is still a major domestic question that confronts this nation."

Cleveland Local 88 proposed a resolution to help solve the unemployed problem, demanding: "That the UAW immediately launch a campaign through union and legislative action in order to establish a 30 hour week at 40 hours pay in the automobile industry."

The resolutions committee, however, completely nullified the meaning of this resolution when they declared the "30 hour week at 40 hours pay" program as the "ultimate goal" for the automobile industry.

The convention delegates, by supporting by approximately two thirds vote the stand of the Resolutions Committee, gave their approval to the do-nothing policies of the Thomas leadership since the Cleveland Convention and deprived the union of the only realistic, practical program to fight unemployment.

REPEAT SAME GESTURES FOR ORGANIZING FORD

The convention discussed at great length and passed numerous resolutions for the immediate organization of the unorganized workers of Ford's and of the aircraft industries. The convention went further and voted to recommend to the membership a \$1 assessment to put these organization drives across.

But resolutions and even assessments are no longer sufficient to guarantee results. The books and records of the UAW are literally cluttered already with dozens of resolutions of this kind. A \$1 assessment to organize Ford's was voted at the Milwaukee convention two and half years ago. Approximately one quarter of a million dollars was collected for this purpose. Yet there are about one quarter of the Ford workers in the UAW today as were in the union at the time of the Milwaukee convention.

AIRCRAFT HARDLY SURVEYED YET

The report of President Thomas on the aircraft industry states that the union has contracts with only three corporations, covering a total of less than 4,000 workers. It is a fact that the convention made absolutely no analysis, as to what was wrong in the past and what to do now to remedy the situation.

All Thomas proposed in his report, insofar as he proposed anything, is reliance on the National Labor Relations Board. But that is exactly what has been wrong in the past year.

Two great organizing jobs, like Ford's and the aircraft industry, cannot be accomplished by mere leg work or by reliance on the Labor Board. What is needed is a bold clear cut program of union demands, coupled with an aggressive, organization drive to sweep the thousands of unorganized workers into the union fold.

But that is precisely what the convention failed to do. Even the convention resolution which demanded "a militant organization campaign at Ford's" and called for "mass demonstrations at the Ford gates, huge picket lines, sound cars and the same militant tactics that succeeded in establishing unionism in General Motors" was—deleted by the Resolutions Committee!

CHEER LABOR PARTY HINT BUT VOTE ROOSEVELT

The convention delegates applauded John L. Lewis' attacks on the government's conscription bill and the granting of government contracts to violators of the Walsh-Healey Act. They gave Lewis a veritable ovation on his carefully vague suggestion that "Some day in this country the people are going to lose confidence in the existing political parties to a degree that they will form their own party."

Yet the Resolutions Committee disregarded the proposal of one local "that the UAW favors the calling of a great national conference of CIO and AFL unions to establish an independent party of Labor in the United States to fight for a militant program on behalf of the common people of this country," and later the convention voted by an overwhelming majority to back Roosevelt. By this action, the convention made a public declaration that the great UAW is going along with the war drive of the Roosevelt-Wall Street crowd, that this powerful union is supporting the Morgan-DuPont 'Defense Council'.

This support of Roosevelt rendered doubly meaningless the anti-conscription stand and the innocuous "anti-war" resolution of the convention, to the effect, "that this convention goes on record opposed to any involvement of the U. S. in any war on foreign soil!"

"SUBVERSIVE CLAUSE" A BLOW AT THE UNION

The convention definitely showed the union one big step backwards when it passed, by a slim majority, despite the energetic opposition of numerous rank and file militants, the "subversive clause" to the union constitution.

It provides that "No member of any local union, located in the U. S. of America shall be eligible to hold any elective or appointive position in this International Union or any local union, if he is a member of any organization which is declared illegal by the government of the U. S. of America through constitutional procedure."

One delegate asked a very appropriate question: "What is going to happen . . . if a reactionary Congress decides that the CIO is a subversive organization?"

The Chairman of the Constitution Committee seemed to think that was the same as the end of the world. "If we should happen to be declared illegal, then I say, what is the use of worrying about anything? If the CIO is declared illegal, where are we going?"

The adoption of this constitutional proposal signified nothing but that the majority of the convention delegates had buckled under the pressure of capitalist public opinion. Their action was, in the words of delegates Johnstone of the Pontiac Yellow Truck plant, a tip-off to the bosses here in America to move against many of our members."

Thus it is seen, the fifth convention approved in all major aspects the timid, conservative and even cowardly policies of the present union leadership and gave the go-ahead signal to the leadership to continue along the same lines.

Does this mean that the UAW membership and the convention delegates were satisfied with the progress of the union? No!

DELEGATE MEMBERS DISSATISFIED BUT DON'T KNOW WAY OUT

For months, large sections of the membership have been complaining and grumbling about the lack of progress, the lack of fighting spirit and militancy in the union, about the mounting number of unsolved grievances, the unemployment, the rotten GM contract, etc.

This dissatisfaction sharply came to the surface in many ways at the convention: the bitter, critical speeches on the Ford drive;

on the 30-hour week; the motions telling the International to hire some decent, competent organizers; the warning to the Regional Directors to stop wasting the union funds; the rejection with great irritability of Constitutional Committee recommendations on secondary questions, and peremptory instructions to the committee to have the International Executive Board send minutes of its proceedings to all local unions.

All of these actions testified to the suspicion of the membership about the leadership, a pale reflection of the widespread dissatisfaction of large sections of the union membership.

Why did the delegates, then, approve the policies of the leadership on all major questions?

That is a paradox of the St. Louis convention. It reflected the gap between the instinctive dissatisfaction of the majority of the auto workers to the present set-up and policies, and the political backwardness of the delegates which made them support the very policies and leadership responsible for the lack of progress.

The coming period in America with its rising prices, regimentation of labor and the attempted hamstringing of the labor unions will deepen the understanding of thousands of auto militants and will help them formulate more consciously the present dissatisfaction of the union membership.

There was a clear-cut program enunciated at St. Louis, but it was smothered in the gap between the delegates' dissatisfaction and their conscious understanding of the union's needs. But the small band of union militants who unflinchingly and fought for this program nevertheless left St. Louis confident of the future. They had seen with their own eyes that the delegates from throughout the industry were groping toward a solution.

Clear-cut indeed are the tasks to be achieved by the union:

- 1. Whirlwind organization drives at Ford's and the aircraft industries.
2. For the immediate launching of a campaign to establish the 30 hour week at 40 hours pay.
3. Fight against the war drive of the Roosevelt government. No support to the Morgan-DuPont 'Defense Council'—all union leaders, including Hillman and Lewis must cut loose from the Wall Street outfit.

TRADE UNION NOTES

by Farrell Dobbs

First Costs To Labor of 'National Defense'

The city of Buffalo has suspended five repair men on charge of "non-cooperation in the national defense program." Municipal employees at Niagara Falls are being "mugged" and finger-printed "to forestall possible sabotage." The National Association of Manufacturers is pressing harder than ever to emasculate the National Labor Relations Act "in the interests of the defense program."

Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins told the annual convention of the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor that strikes will not hamper the national defense program as they did in 1917 because "labor now has decent working conditions." Falling right into line with the Madame, the national AFL representative to the convention told the gathering that negotiations must be the process rather than strikes. "It is a legitimate strike" he said, "will have to be avoided by the self-discipline of labor unions."

A CIO union in Jamestown, New York, voted to send two of its members into a struck plant to crate 143 airplane struts for shipment at the request of the War Department. A taste demand a meal. The War Department will next claim that the strike itself is "against the interests of the national defense."

Boeing aircraft workers, AFL, have just been shunted away from strike action and into the morass of arbitration. Sidney Hillman did the job for the bosses.

Two regional directors of the UAW-CIO rushed into South Bend, Indiana to investigate reports of a slow-down demonstration at the Bendix Aviation Corporation plant. The company demands that the union rid its ranks of "a group of agitators." UAW secretary-treasurer, George M. Addes, has said that the International officials "will not tolerate such an interference with production." FBI agents swarmed through the plant, "investigating reports of sabotage."

The bosses and their government are moving rapidly in their campaign to curb trade union action and force the workers to submit helplessly to war regimentation. The trade union officialdom is making an inglorious retreat in the face of this attack.

What the bosses and their government really have in mind "in the interests of national defense" is made plain by recent dispatches from abroad. Agreements covering working hours and labor conditions in the metal trades in some industrial districts of New Zealand were suspended by government order on August 3. Six days later, a government decree was issued banning all strikes in Northern Ireland for the duration of the war.

The Philippine National Assembly has voted President Quezon authority to prohibit strikes. This latter action occurs on United States territory. Since the Philippine government is a puppet

Callup Poll Must Have Reached Scissor-bills

The Gallup poll has released statistics showing the results of a survey on the question, "Should the government forbid strikes in industries manufacturing material for our national defense?" 83% of the persons questioned in the upper income group are reported as favoring the prohibition of strikes. If anything, this is an understatement of the prevailing opinion in that group. It is also reported, however, that 73% of the persons questioned in the lower income group favored the strike prohibition. We have no way of knowing who was questioned to get this "sample" of public opinion. But we have every reason to doubt its accuracy.

It seems that the peregrinations of the Gallup inquirers led them to the door of three scissor-bills for every trade unionist that they interviewed. Stand up before any group of trade union workers, whether it be a meeting of a local union or a convention of an international union, and ask them this question. They will give you a quick and decisive answer. They do not favor the prohibition of strikes "in the interests of the national defense," or for any other reason. And there are about ten million organized workers.

Defense Council Deals Blow To CIO

The AFL building trades unions have been granted jurisdiction over all construction work under the gigantic armament program. The decision of the National Defense Council was handed down by its "labor coordinator" Sidney Hillman, a vice-president of the CIO. This action is a vital blow to the hopes of the CIO to organize in the construction industry through its United Construction Workers Organizing Committee.

The CIO has made very little headway in the industry and the methods which it employed in its organization efforts were some times not in the best interests of the construction workers. There has been, however, one positive side to the CIO campaign. It brought direct pressure on the AFL Building Trades Department to take a more reasonable attitude toward the question of labor unity.

The AFL Building Trades unions are in the best position to protect the interests of the construction workers in the rapidly expanding building program which can be anticipated in the next period. But this jurisdictional victory can only tend to stiffen the hard-nosed attitude of the AFL building trades craft unionists towards the industrial unions.

Seafarers Int'l Makes Gains

NEW YORK, Aug. 7.—More than ten coastwise shipping companies have granted increases ranging from \$10 to 7.50 per month to the Seafarers International Union (A. F. L.) and 10 cents per hour increases in overtime pay. Negotiations for similar increases are in process with the New England Steamship Company and the Robin Line, after flat refusals by the operators resulted in strikes by the union.

The S. I. U. tied up N. E. S. S. Co. ships plying between New Bedford and the fashionable summer resorts of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard for four days before the shipowners agreed to talk turkey. Similar action had recently been taken on the S. S. Algic, of the Robin Line. Both lines have now submitted the demands to arbitration, after reinstating the strikers under closed shop contract without any discrimination.

The gains made by the S. I. U. and the spirit of militancy attending the demands are in sharp contrast to the actions of the National Maritime Union's Stalinist leadership. The NMU officials proposed a demand of only \$2.50 monthly increases, in an effort to scab on the rival union, without any demands for an increase in the overtime rate. The firm insistence of the S. I. U. upon its demands, backed by a militant membership, defeated this scabby effort of the Stalinist stooges in the NMU, the shipowners granting a \$5 monthly raise even on NMU ships.

SIU Way Ahead

Wages on S. I. U. ships are anywhere from \$20 to \$17.50 higher per month than on NMU vessels. Overtime pay is 80 cents as against 70 cents on NMU ships. Working conditions are likewise beyond comparison.

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SELLING THE APPEAL

GOOD NEWS FROM THE WEST COAST

SAN FRANCISCO — "Circulation of the SOCIALIST APPEAL has been proceeding very thoroughly and systematically. We get out all the current issues weekly, and are rapidly disposing of a stack of old copies. For the first time now we are able to reach a sizeable number of trade unionists and from reliable sources we learn that many C. P. members surreptitiously take copies, carry them home and read them."

Even more indicative of the determined spirit of the Frisco comrades to make their Appeal work highly successfully (to the hard-headed business office), is the statement: "We do not think it optimistic to state that we shall probably be able to send in the sum of our back bill soon..." This branch, like the Reading, Pa. branch has undertaken this work entirely of its own volition, with no prodding whatsoever from the office. We are 100% agreeable to getting this work under way, Oakland, and are glad to cooperate with you. We look forward to your reports, and know now that with such determination, they are going to sound a lot like the live-wire communications from Frisco and L. A.

here. Workers read our paper carefully. Even at C. P. and Stalinist stooge organizations the paper is carefully read. We are covering three of the rubber plants. By next week almost all will be covered, union meetings primarily." Excellent work, comrades! And we might add, our gratitude and congratulations for your fine financial standing, with no back bill at all!

OAKLAND—"The only way to place our small branch on the political and trade union map of the industrial Oakland is to get out a minimum of between 100 to 125 copies of the APPEAL each week. This work is imperative. We owe it to our movement, and the branch has unanimously voted to start this work immediately."

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New Jersey in the 1940 Elections

III. Workers Need Their Own Party

The record has shown that the old parties in New Jersey are the tools of the banks, big business, corporations like Public Service and the railroads, and the large agricultural interests. This has been understood for some years now, not only by political students, but by large numbers of workers as well.

In the 1937 elections, when Hague's Moore defeated Clean Government's Cleo for Governor, this understanding, that whichever won, labor would lose, spread rapidly through the union movement into the demand for the formation of a labor party.

A month later a wildly cheering, enthusiastic convention of Labor's Non-Partisan League met in Newark and voted to set up a labor party. The rank-and-file unionist who took the floor expressed the views of the great majority of the delegates when he said:

"Bitter experience taught us we couldn't use company unions led by bosses' agents, but have to build our own unions, to fight the bosses in the factories and on the picket line. In the same way we've learned we can't use parties led and controlled by agents of big business, but have to build our own party, to fight the bosses in Congress and Legislature and City Hall."

Although no one spoke up, there were strong forces at the convention opposed to this viewpoint. They kept quiet so they could be elected to the important state committee picked by the convention to report back with a proposed constitution within six months. They were silent in the same way labor fakers sometimes "go along" with a militant strike so they will be placed at its head in a position where they can stifle it better later on.

The Communist Party at that time wanted above everything else a pact between the Soviet Union, this country and the Allies for a war against Germany. To show Roosevelt and the bosses they could be trusted if they got that pact, they played a conservative, disruptive role in the labor movement. At this LNPL convention they were therefore against the formation of an independent party because they were afraid it would get out of control, break cleanly with capitalist politics, and thus compromise them in the eyes of the bosses whose good will they were courting. Carl Holderman, LNPL state chairman, with many

friends in the old parties and no confidence in labor's strength, found the Stalinists' idea fitted in with his own, which he did not express at that convention. So an alliance to block the formation of a labor party was formed between Holderman and the Stalinists, who between them controlled a majority of the State committee.

"We're too weak to win any elections. . . We'll only make enemies of the 'liberal' politicians who are still in the old parties. . . We'll only show our weakness."

They spread these arguments throughout the movement, and by the May, 1938, convention, the ranks were thoroughly disheartened. With their own leadership telling them nothing could be done, what could they do? Many unions just stayed away in disgust, and the Holderman-Stalinist machine ran things their own way: they authorized the state committee to endorse "progressive candidates" (which meant: no labor candidates), and their constitution changed the name to "Labor's Non-Partisan League For The Formation Of A Labor Party" (which meant: some other time).

In the November U. S. Senate elections, Hague's Ely opposed Barbour. Hague was extremely unpopular that year, and Barbour had a poor labor record too. LNPL endorsed neither, did not run an independent candidate, and "compromised" by issuing the slogan "Defeat Hague—at all costs." How the workers were to defeat Ely without electing Barbour they did not say, and the WPA cutter, Barbour, was elected with this left-handed support.

This procedure, which brought labor no gains at all, so discredited the League that its membership dropped from the 150,000 claimed in 1937 to less than a fifth of that who pay dues today, and its influence fell to almost nothing. In 1939 it played no role at all.

Holderman broke with the Stalinists after the Stalin-Hitler Pact, and today Holderman, still state chairman, is still playing the same game: he is whooping it up now for Hague's candidate, Edison.

That is why labor is still unorganized politically this year, and why it feels helpless, with no program and no candidates to oppose to the program and candidates of big business.

The lesson is clear: labor needs its own candidates, but it can get them only by breaking sharply with the old parties and the practice of supporting so-called "friends of labor" and "lesser evils", and setting up its own party. (Another article next week)