

CRUCIBLE CRANEMEN WIN STRIKE FOR WAGE RISE

Exclusive to Socialist Appeal
HARRISON, N. J. Oct. 8.—The five-day strike of 150 cranimen at Crucible Steel was settled today when the company agreed to set the minimum wage for crane operators at 67½ cents an hour and to start conferences on upward revision of wages not later than October 16.

HARRISON, N. J. Oct. 7.—150 Cranimen at the Crucible Steel Co. are on strike for higher wages.

The SWOC membership had authorized the SWOC to strike all of the company's plants in February, 1940. The SWOC leadership, however, signed an agreement with the company, over the heads of the membership with no essential improvement in the wages or working conditions.

When Bethlehem Steel, under SWOC pressure, instituted a 62½ cent minimum wage rate in its plants Crucible followed suit. The cranimen in the Harrison plant, skilled men already receiving the minimum, demanded corresponding increases, in line with existing rates above the minimum being paid cranimen in the other plants of the Crucible Steel Co. in Pittsburgh and Syracuse. The negative answer of the management propelled the men into a spontaneous strike.

The strike is still unauthorized.

The official organizers in the area have been chosen as "individuals" by the strikers to represent them in negotiations.

New Company Scheme

In Jersey City, where the Crucible Steel has another plant, the men are demanding general increases in line with the increase—to the minimum—given to the laborers. The management there is pleading for time.

The reason is obvious to all the workers—time study men have been seen in and around the plant for the last week or so. The company plans to institute an incentive or bonus system instead of general increases. The membership will undoubtedly reject any attempt at piece work or bonus systems being introduced.

The rank and file steel worker in the Crucible are beginning to sense possible victory in a struggle for higher wages and better conditions—including a better form of union recognition.

Pleas from the management that the tie-up was interfering with National Defense orders met with no response. In desperation, the company threatened to bring other cranimen into the plant in order to move shell casings and begin adequate operations. The cranimen remain firm and laugh at this, for they know that crane operators are at a premium.

BREITMAN HITS BARBOUR ON NEGRO ISSUES

NEWARK, N. J., Oct. 12.—"Senator Barbour has been trying to make a little political capital out of the Anti-Lynch Bill," warned George Breitman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U. S. Senator.

"Barbour brought up the Anti-Lynch Bill in the Senate last week, not because he cared what happened to the bill, but because he knew nothing would come of it. That is the cheapest kind of maneuvering possible.

"I want to ask Barbour this: 'Why, if you are so concerned for the welfare of the colored people, have you never said a word about the bills against discrimination in private places and civil service introduced into the State Legislature? Why have you said nothing about it to your own party, which controls both houses of the Legislature, and which killed those bills in committee in the same way that the Democrats who control Congress are killing the Anti-Lynch Bill?'"

"What is important is not so much promises as action. Barbour talks big in the Senate where he knows the Democrats won't pass the bill. But he keeps as quiet as a mouse about the State Legislature, where his own party is in power."

Breitman is pledged to fight for the passage of the Anti-Lynch and Anti-Poll Tax Bills.

On the Ballot!



Dr. Grace Carlson, Socialist Workers Party Candidate for U. S. Senator in Minnesota and C. Johnson, campaign manager, are shown in the secretary of state's office as they filed petitions bearing over 2,600 names supporting the candidacy of Grace Carlson.

Signatures were obtained in working-class neighborhoods and union halls in the Twin Cities and included the signatures of several hundred Negro workers. Signed petitions also came in from the rural voters. Many more than the required number of voters signified their desire to place the Trotskyist Anti-war candidate on the ballot.

Breitman's Newark Election Campaign Stirs Negro Worker

NEWARK, N. J.—The Socialist Workers Party's campaign workers report that they are receiving the greatest response from Negro workers, in seeking support for the party's candidate for U. S. Senator, George Breitman.

The party's central demand, for workers' control of military training, meets the needs of the colored workers, who find themselves viciously discriminated against in the armed forces. The party's recent poll of Newark workers on their attitude toward conscription brought overwhelming majorities for workers' control of military training in the Third and Fourteenth Wards, heart of Newark's Negro population.

Why the SWP Runs Only One Candidate

The Socialist Workers Party of Minnesota runs only one candidate in this election because we lack the forces and finances to run an entire slate.

We ask all workers who agree with our platform and our policies and actions in the workers' movement to study our literature and join our party.

Why We Are Supporting No Candidate for President

One of the results of the capitalist preparations for the United States' entry into the war for "democracy and liberty" has been the further development of almost insurmountable restrictions against minority workers' parties securing places on the ballot. This is especially true for candidates for presidency.

The National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party surveyed this problem. It was compelled to recognize that our party is too small to expend the funds and legal forces necessary to fight for a place on the ballot for our own presidential candidate.

In such circumstances, our party might, under certain conditions, give critical support to the candidate of another party.

Such a candidate would never be that of a boss party. We would support a Winkie or Roosevelt no more than we would support a boss's agent in a union election, or endorse a company union.

The only candidate other than our own we could conceivably support is one of a party, representing a section of the working class, whose augmented vote would be generally understood to signify progress for the labor movement. Unfortunately, no such party is participating in the present election campaign.

The Socialist Party is a fading group living on a glory twenty years past. It is a lower-middle

class pacifist sect, with little influence in any section of the labor movement. Norman Thomas, its candidate, represents neither socialism nor the labor movement. Support for his candidacy cannot aid the labor movement in any way.

It is also impossible to give "critical support to the Communist Party. This party continues its union-smashing activities in its present pseudo-left period, just as it did in the days when it was pro-Roosevelt and pro-war. The role of the Communist Party as Stalin's agent; the Hitler-Stalin pact; the subordination of the various Communist Parties to the GPU (so glaringly revealed in the assassination of Comrade Leon Trotsky) all these facts make the Communist Party an object of legitimate hatred to enlightened workers.

So far as formal participation in the 1940 elections is concerned the Socialist Workers Party is participating through our state and local candidates. In addition to our own candidates, we will give critical support to certain local and state labor party and Farmer-Labor party candidates where votes for these candidates would be generally understood to signify progress toward the organization of an independent labor political party in the United States.

The Stalinists and the United Front

Speech of James P. Cannon At Chicago SWP Conference

(The following is the stenographic record of a speech by Comrade James P. Cannon, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, delivered at the Plenum-Conference of the party at Chicago, Sept. 27-29. This speech was a supplement to his main report, "The Military Policy of the Proletariat," which we published last week.)

It seems, comrades, that the discussion on the military policy is pretty well exhausted. The small points of difference which have been brought out can be answered in the summary speech. We can now discuss the secondary question of the Stalinists and our trade union tactics.

For some time we have been compelled to realize that the Communist Party remains the greatest obstacle to the development of the revolutionary movement in the United States. The Stalinists retain a powerful position in many trade unions and by their new turn have still further confused things to our detriment. The calculations that the Hitler-Stalin pact would result in the annihilation of the Communist Party were not quite realized. This new line gave its bureaucratic leadership the opportunity to put on the mask of pseudo-radicalism once again. That appealed more to the worker militants in the ranks than the old policy. To be sure, the cynical deal with Hitler repelled quite a large number of Stalinist workers. But the great bulk of the losses, both members and sympathizers, came from the petty-bourgeois elements whom the Communist Party had catered to in recent years. When the show-down came they were more devoted to the bourgeois-democratic regime of Roosevelt than to the regime of Stalin. The Stalinist workers, on the other hand, by and large, stayed with the party and stood up under a great deal of repression and persecution. These established facts must be taken as the point of departure in determining our tactical approach to this question.

TROTSKY'S VIEWS ON THIS QUESTION

We were aware for many months that we had not made sufficient inroads among the Stalinist workers. The Communist Party is an obstacle which the revolutionary workers must remove from their path. This cannot be done by frontal attacks alone. It is necessary to devise methods of flank attack to supplement our uncompromising and unceasing direct offensive against perfidious Stalinism. These thoughts were in our minds when we placed the question of the Communist Party on the agenda for a discussion with Comrade Trotsky on our last visit. He was also of the opinion that our policy toward the Communist Party for a long time has been too negative, that we haven't devised sufficiently flexible tactics for flank movements in order to win over to our side a number of Stalinist workers.

Trotsky posed the question on the issue of the election campaign and put forward a shocking proposal. He said the C. P. leadership is talking very loudly in opposition to imperialist war, etc. We know they are liars and fakers simply carrying out current instructions in Stalin's diplomatic game. Tomorrow they will betray the fight against war. We know that, said Trotsky, but thousands of misguided workers are not yet convinced of it. "We must find a way to reach these workers as they are, with their present mentality. Let us take up the leaders at their word and state: if the Communist Party will maintain the position of real opposition to imperialist war we will propose to them a united front, and even give critical support to their candidates in the election."

Nobody in the delegation agreed with the Old Man on this drastic proposal. We had a long and at times heated discussion with him on it. We took the position that such a drastic change in the middle of the election campaign would require too much explanation, and would encounter the danger of great misunderstanding and confusion which we would not be able to dissipate. While we might conceivably win over a couple of hundred Stalinist workers in the course of a drawn-out tactic of this kind, we felt that we would run the danger of losing more than we gained.

THE UNITED FRONT TACTIC

We argued back and forth on this ground for several days. Then Trotsky made a compromise proposal. He said that, after all, the main thing is the new military policy—the long-term strategic line—and not the short term minor problem of our tactics in relation to the C. P. in the current election campaign.

He said, if we would take his proposal as one possible maneuver, and would devise some method of united front approach which would really enable us to penetrate the Stalinist ranks, he would accept it as a compromise. We mulled over this a couple of days. I had a personal conversation with him before we left Coyoacan and restated my fears of misunderstanding and confusion from such a drastic policy as critical support to the C. P. in the coming election. He said he did not consider it of sufficient importance to make an issue; he did not want to provoke a party

discussion which might divert attention from the paramount question of the new military policy. But we should think over the thing seriously and devise an effective united front attack against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The united front tactics, as devised and perfected by Lenin, are in no sense the expression of a conciliatory attitude toward opponent organizations in the labor movement. The united front is designed to mobilize the masses—as they are—for common action against the class enemy on specific issues of the day. At the same time it is a method of struggle against alien currents and treacherous leaders. The tactic is not to be applied all the time, every day of the week, but only on suitable occasions. The main tactic of the Comintern under Lenin was the tactic of the united front. But Lenin knew when to employ it and when to put it aside. In the first years of the split of the Second International and the formation of the Comintern nothing was said about the united front. The Russians have a saying: "Every vegetable has its season." And the season of the war and the post-war period, following the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Comintern, was the season for head-on offensive against the international social democracy. The strategy was to complete the split in merciless warfare, and replace the reformist parties by revolutionary Communist parties.

That direct frontal attack was carried on from 1917, after the founding of the Comintern in 1919 and up until the Fall of 1921. Then the leaders of the Comintern—Lenin and Trotsky—drew a balance. Lenin pointed out that we had succeeded in our strategy to this extent, that we had constructed independent Communist Parties in all countries of considerable strength. But the Social Democrats still had big organizations of workers under their control; these workers were not as yet convinced of Communism. For the next period we must confront the reformist leaders with united front proposals as an approach to the rank and file under their influence.

WE MUST REPEAT LENIN'S TACTIC

You can observe the same general pattern in the work of constructing the Fourth International in the fight against Stalinism. We have been conducting a long drawn-out frontal attack. In the course of that attack we have selected and drawn to our side hardened cadres of the Fourth International. But we must recognize that the C. P. still remains a powerful organization, many times more powerful than ourselves. It contains in its ranks a great many misguided but class conscious workers. We are now obliged to resort to united front tactics as a means of approach to them.

Nobody in our Political Committee wanted to sponsor the policy of critical support to the Stalinists in the election campaign. I think this is one time we disagreed with Trotsky correctly. Nevertheless, we have all realized that we must devise a more flexible tactic towards the C. P. and look for suitable occasions, as long as they espouse this semi-radical line, to penetrate their ranks by means of united front proposals. And here also we don't want to jump over to the other extreme, from leaving the C. P. alone to united front proposals every day in the week. We should carefully discriminate, select occasions and incidents for approaches to the C. P. rank and file, through their organizations, for a limited, specific united front. That we have agreed upon, and I think the Conference should endorse it as a general policy.

It should be carried out, I repeat, in a most careful and discriminating manner. We already experimented, rather gingerly, with this tactic in New York at the time we were carrying out our struggle against the Bundists and Coughlinite organizations. We addressed a letter to the district organization of the C. P. proposing to them a united front against the Coughlin-Bund bands. This was not followed up. We merely sent a letter and published it. But just the simple facts that we were out fighting the fascists in New York City, and that we appealed to the rank and file of the C. P. to join us, had good results. We were informed by our contacts in the C. P. that we created quite a ripple in their ranks. It caused the bureaucrats quite a little "trouble". A good many rank and file Stalinists wanted to accept our united front offer and join us in the fight against the fascists. Out of that single experience we won over quite a number of rank and file Stalinists to our party.

At the present time you have a situation out in California where, if I understand the facts, Governor Olson has proposed to the State Legislature the passage of a constitutional amendment to remove the C. P. from the ballot. Our Los Angeles local organization jumped on this right away. They proposed to send an appeal to the C. P. and other organizations for a united front

action to fight this attempt to outlaw the C. P. The Political Committee unanimously approved the initiative of the Los Angeles comrades. As I understand it, they will push this action in the next few weeks.

PROBLEMS OF THE UNITED FRONT

It must be repeated all the time that the united front is a method of struggle. It does not mean friendship or conciliation. It simply means an approach to the rank and file of an opponent organization in the labor movement, through their official leadership, for a joint struggle for common immediate aims. Properly utilized, the united front creates the possibility to penetrate the ranks of organizations hitherto sealed against us. It is in this sense, and in this sense only, that we propose united fronts to the Stalinists in the next period. We are, and we shall remain, the most consistent and most implacable enemies of Stalinism.

The Old Man was quite optimistic about the possibilities. He said, suppose you go into this and repeat these experiments time and time again on suitable occasions; in the end if you win over 200 Stalinist workers to our party you have gained a lot. We raised the question of the enormous hatred of many honest workers in the labor movement against the Stalinists. There is a great grain of justice and sincerity in this hatred, although it is often confused with reactionary prejudices. We have to be very careful that we don't offend the sensibilities of these anti-Stalinist workers who are militant and partly class conscious in their attitude, but we must not let their feelings determine our political line. The moment we began to speak of a united front approach to the Stalinists, we heard from all of our fractions in the trade unions a cry to go slow! Those in the trade unions know how bitterly the Stalinists are hated. We must be very careful. If we allow ourselves to become confused and mixed up with the Stalinists, we will cut off our road of approach to the rank and file of the trade union movement, the anti-Stalinist rank and file, which, in my opinion, is a more important reservoir of the revolution than the Stalinist rank and file.

Here we had a little difference with Comrade Trotsky. He was inclined to dismiss the whole "progressive" movement as composed entirely of patriots and fakers. In fact he gave us quite an argument on Lewis and Browder. "What is the difference between Lewis and Browder? Is Browder a bigger scoundrel than Lewis? I don't think so. They are both scoundrels—of different types." One comrade there remarked, the Stalinists are very hostile to us. Trotsky said, "Yes, I know, sometimes they shoot at us." (This was shortly after the May 24 machine gun attack.) He said, "Do you think Lewis or Green wouldn't shoot at you? It is only a difference of circumstances, that is all."

We must classify the Stalinists and the reactionary and "progressive" patriotic labor fakers as simply two different varieties of enemies of the working class employing different methods because they have different bases under their feet. It brings us into a complicated problem in the trade union movement. It has been our general practice to combine in day to day trade union work with the progressives and even the conservative labor fakers against the Stalinists. We have been correct from this point of view, that while the conservative and traditional labor skates are no better than the Stalinists, are no less betrayers in the long run, they have different bases of existence. The Stalinist base is the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. They are perfectly willing to disrupt a trade union in defense of the foreign policy of Stalin. The traditional labor fakers have no roots in Russia nor any support in its powerful bureaucracy. Their only base of existence is the trade union; if the union is not preserved they have no further existence as trade union leaders. That tends to make them, from self-interest, a little more loyal to the unions than the Stalinists. That is why we have been correct in most cases in combining with them as against the Stalinists in purely union affairs.

THE NEW STAGE IN THE UNIONS

But our work in the trade unions up till now has been largely a day to day affair based upon the daily problems and has lacked a general political orientation and perspective. This has tended to blur the distinction between us and pure and simple trade unionists. In many cases, at times, they appeared to be one with us. It was fair weather and good fellows were together. The great issues raised by the war are rudely disrupting this idyl. Some of our comrades have already had revealing experiences of how a war situation puts an end to ambiguity and makes men show their real colors. Some people went hand in hand with us on almost every proposition we made to improve the union, get better contracts from the bosses, etc. Then all of a sudden, this

whole peaceful routine of the trade union movement is disrupted by overpowering issues of war, patriotism, the national election, etc. And these trade unionists, who looked so good in ordinary times, are all turning up as patriots and Rooseveltians. We now have a much narrower basis of cooperation with them. This new situation induces some of our comrades to say we should break off all relations with these patriotic trade unionists and progressive fakers. That is a very extreme position which we cannot endorse.

What we have got to do with our united front policy, in the unions and in general, is to make it more precise. The united front does not signify political collaboration but joint action on specific issues despite political differences. The united front is based on day to day problems. It is nothing resembling permanent collaboration but simply day to day agreements. Where we agree or half-agree with others we go along together; where we don't agree we go alone. Politically we have no ground for collaboration with the labor "progressives." We will have less and less as we go along, as the pressure of the war machine grows heavier.

A great number of our comrades in the unions have been working hand in hand with people who have been simply militant unionists and nothing else. In "normal" times they get along very well together. They will soon encounter the unpleasant experience of having many of these people, these fellows who have been co-workers, drinking companions and pals turn up as direct enemies and informers against our movement. There is only one thing that binds men together in times of great stress. That is agreement on great principles. Good fellowship and chumminess is a very poor substitute. Those who don't know this, will learn it in bitter experience.

All those comrades who think we have something, big or little, in the trade union movement should get out a magnifying glass in the next period and look at what we really have. You will find that what we have is our party fractions and the circle of sympathizers around them. That is what you can rely on. There may be cases where people who are united with us in principle will falter because of personal weakness. But those are the exceptions to the rule. There will be cases of men without broad political concepts who, because of exceptional personal qualities, will prove loyal to us in a pinch. They will also be the exceptions. The rule will be that the general run of pure and simple trade unionists, the non-political activists, the latent patriots—they will betray us at the most decisive moment. What we will have in the unions in the hour of test will be what we build in the form of firm fractions of convinced Bolsheviks.

WE WILL STAND ON OUR OWN FEET

This military policy that we are outlining here will be the main line of our activity. We will have today a united front with Smith or Jones, together with Brown. We will agree with one or the other that such and such should be the demands upon the bosses, such and such proposals in the internal situation of the union. But we are bound to none of them and none of them is bound to us. We will fight against the Stalinist disrupters in the union every day in the week. At the same time we will approach the Stalinists on the broad political field for a united front action, as, for example, in California, to fight the removal of minority parties from the ballot. Perhaps our progressive friends will say, "What are you doing? You are supposed to be working with us, and all of a sudden you come out against removing the C. P. from the ballot." We have a perfect right to reply: "You are supposed to be working with us 364 days of the year, but on one day you want to make an exception, to vote for Roosevelt, the agent of the bosses. And if you take that little privilege, you must give us one. We must have the same independence that you have." Maybe this will be a lesson in democracy to the democrats.

One point more on this and I will be finished. Many of our comrades in the unions who have become deeply integrated with this business of the progressive democrats flinch away from the idea of offending them. Our party in this isn't as courageous as it should be. We are afraid of offending people, that is, their stupid, petty-bourgeois prejudices. That is only another way of saying that we are not yet real Marxists. The great Marxists, beginning with Marx and Engels—and ending with the last great exponent of Marxism, Comrade Trotsky—they all had a common characteristic: a complete indifference to public opinion. They did not care what the rest of the world thought about them. They figured out their line of policy in every case according to their scientific ideas. Then they courageously applied it and took the consequences. They made their own motto of Dante: "Go your way and let the people talk." Perhaps this problem of the C. P. is a test for us. To the extent that we can deal with this problem correctly and carefully, but also courageously—disregarding Philistine opinion—we will take a step forward becoming genuine Marxists, genuine Trotskyists, who follow their own line and let the world make the best of it.