

What the Party Members Say on National Convention Problems

In the Labor Unions

By B. J. WIDICK

Surprisingly little attention was paid in the press to the semi-annual meeting of the C.I.O. executive council in Washington, D.C., last week. Surprising because it reflected a serious underestimation of the C.I.O.

The attitude of John L. Lewis on the question of unity with the A.F.L. flows from a resurgence of the C.I.O. movement. The victory of the United Mine Workers of America in the nation-wide strike solved satisfactorily the acutest crisis of the C.I.O. movement.

The Briggs auto strike victory gave further impetus to the growth of confidence in the industrial union movement.

Encouraged by these developments, top C.I.O. leaders are returning to their forgotten perspective of building a C.I.O. movement so powerful and large that it would simply engulf the A.F.L.

That is why Lewis declared there could not be peace with the A.F.L. at the present time and with its present leadership. Unless unity came on C.I.O. terms, Lewis feels that the basic need of organizing millions of unorganized workers suffer. Certainly the entire record of the A.F.L. bureaucracy testifies to the charge that they would impede any such organizing drive.

What Will Happen?

Often in the New International and the Socialist Appeal we have written that it was a great tragedy to the American labor movement that the C.I.O. did not continue to advance and become the dominant and decisive stream of the labor movement, forcing the A.F.L. to submerge itself into the new movement which had industrial workers as its basis.

A victory over the A.F.L. would even now have this effect, although at a much greater cost.

Whether the C.I.O. proposal to remain independent of the A.F.L. is progressive or not, depends primarily on the kind of program it follows as a separate organization.

A continued organization drive, concentrating especially on the South, is vitally needed in America. Hints of independent political action, if carried out, would be a major step forward for the C.I.O.

What will happen on these two questions remains to be seen. But there is one thing which we happen to know the C.I.O. leadership is contemplating that definitely would not be progressive in character.

The C.I.O. is weighing the possibility, very seriously, of entering the building trades field as a rival of the A.F.L. Certain trusted lieutenants of Lewis are surveying the field. In some places, cautious attempts to sign up building trades members were made, but action of local progressive unionists squelched this tendency.

A jurisdictional war, and it would be a plenty bloody and bitter war, between the C.I.O. and the A.F.L. could and would create the worst sort of havoc. It would open the flood gates for more repressive legislation against the labor movement.

We know of a dozen important labor centers where there is a good working agreement between the C.I.O. and the A.F.L. Both sides benefit immensely from the united front they can present against the employers.

If the C.I.O. invades the building trades field, these united fronts would be broken in a minute. Bitter warfare, goon squads, crashing of picket lines, slugfests would result among union men who now work together against their common enemy, the bosses.

This would not be a question of industrial versus craft unions. The C.I.O. would be forced to organize craft unions. The proper tactic, in our opinion, is for the C.I.O. to help the progressives within the building trades by showing in action what a progressive program for labor can do.

It is as fatal for the C.I.O. leaders to think that the A.F.L. can be smashed as it has been for the A.F.L. leaders to hold that opinion of the C.I.O.

On Translating Party Program into Practice

Submitted by a group of Los Angeles comrades: Steve Roberts, Paula Aragon, Minna Everett, Edith Mann, Max Heinert.

(Continued from last issue)

It is needless to state that the leadership should have correctly analyzed the Ludlow Amendment from the start; it should have foreseen the anti-war movement and attempted to direct it into militant channels. In the light of the differences that existed in the N. C. surrounding this question, it should have been submitted for discussion throughout the party. Such a step would have probably forestalled the serious error that was made. During the past summer it should have exhausted the possibilities for having a better referendum introduced into congress. It should have instituted a program such as we now propose:

1. Formation of a National Dept. for anti-war work.
2. Initiation of a National War Referendum Petition campaign similar to the one recently started in Los Angeles.
3. Launching of a nationwide committee for the adoption of a War Referendum.

a. Dept. to supply directives on methods and propaganda to all sections of the party.

b. Neighborhood formation of Referendum groups.

4. Mass meetings, sticker campaigns, house-to-house work.

5. Extension of campaign into the trade unions.

6. Introduction and popularization of our slogans:

a. "All War Funds to the Unemployed."

b. "Nationalization of the War Industry."

c. "Abolition of Secret Diplomacy," etc.

7. Raising funds through these committees for purposes of a publicity campaign—news-papers, radio, etc.

8. Organization of militant action such as: demonstrations, strikes, with possible culmination in march on Washington and/or nationwide work stoppages.

9. Agitation around this campaign to be incorporated into a slogan for the Socialist Appeal and dealt with week by week. This to be supplemented by articles in the New International, popular pamphlets, etc.

The Trade Unions

The C.I.O. movement caught us entirely unprepared. The opportunities arising out of a new trade union movement and the possibility of entering into industry in this period, will not present itself again in the near future. It was not until the movement had crystallized and was needed for decline that our party leadership considered colonization in the different industries. Here and there comrades on their own volition entered industry but without direction from the leadership.

At this time our leadership should have given its main attention to this new and virile movement of industrial unionism. It should have made a survey of the possibilities of the various industries and considered the importance or ripeness of the various sections of the country on the basis of such a survey. It should have given instructions and directions to the local leaderships and individuals on how, why and where, to get into industry. National tours should have been mapped out to impress upon the comrades the importance of this work and how to accomplish it. Such a course would have resulted in a penitence of the C.I.O., giving us an influence which we do not have today.

Some comrades may argue that this orientation was impossible because of the fact that part of this period found us in the Socialist Party. Entry into the Socialist Party should not have hindered a correct revolutionary leadership from carrying out the most important task that faced it.

Our Previous Analysis
With the Founding Convention of the S.W.P. and the slogan "90% Trade Union Work," it was hoped that we would finally in actuality face toward the masses. The trade union resolution was an exhaustive analysis of the American labor movement, an appraisal of the A.F.L., C.I.O., the roles of the various political parties, and the tasks of the S.W.P. Under the section COMPLETE RE-ORIENTATION IS DEMAND-ED we quote the following:
"A complete reorientation of

our party from the membership up to the leadership and back again is absolutely imperative and unpostponable. No less drastic a reorientation is required of our weekly press. The attention of the party must be focused primarily upon the American labor movement. The energies of the party must be devoted mainly to rooting itself in the trade unions, becoming an inseparable part of the trade unions and their struggles. The bulk of the party work must be directed to this vital field of the class struggle. Unless this slogan is translated speedily into life, the party is doomed to vegetate as an impotent sect which will be washed away by the waves of the first serious social crisis."

In the light of this analysis, what happened? The national leadership failed entirely to carry out the decisions of the last convention. No attempt whatsoever was made on their part to gear the party to its tasks. A national trade union department does not exist to this very day! National fractions were not organized; utter disregard of the necessity for carrying on correspondence with fractions where they were organized.

The complete lack of trade union directives from our leadership culminated in the tragic events of the U.A.W.A. situation, where the Appeal held three different positions in the space of a few weeks. Different sections of the organization found themselves in opposing camps within the union at a time when the fate of one of the most important unions in the country was at stake. When the party leadership should have been most alert in analyzing the day-to-day events and in keeping in constant touch with all comrades in the U.A.W.A. throughout the country, it not only failed to do so but failed to acknowledge frantic letters, telegrams, from the comrades on the West Coast who were pleading for instructions. The final national auto policy was adopted in this crisis without consultation with the Oakland and Los Angeles fractions.

No excuses can be accepted for these woeful occurrences and failure to carry out the first simple organization task particularly in view of our leadership's own sharp posing of the question as quoted above. We demand that the coming convention take whatever steps are necessary to insure that the following be carried out at once:

1. The formation of a National Industrial Dept.
- a. The Dept. shall be headed by an Executive Secretary and a Field Organizer, both to be members of the National Committee, and full time functionaries.
2. Duties of Executive Secretary:

a. To organize national trade union fractions.

b. To maintain correspondence with all fractions.

Duties of Field Secretary:

a. Tours throughout the country setting up local fractions.

b. Consultations with existing fractions.

c. To be present in critical situations.

3. It shall be the duty of the Industrial Dept. to establish a regular bulletin which shall contain information on party work in the trade unions, analysis of trade union situations, and discussion articles on policy.

4. It shall be the duty of the Industrial Dept. to constantly survey the national industrial scene and convey information and directives to the comrades as to the best opportunities for colonization.

(Concluded in next issue)

REVOLUTIONARY FRENCH YOUTH UNITE FORCES

Stressing the necessity of unifying the revolutionary youth movement of France, the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Socialist Youth (J.S.R.—Fourth International) has called upon its membership to enter the ranks of the Workers and Peasants Socialist Youth (J.S.O.P.), thus effecting a unity between the two organizations.

The conditions upon which the unity was achieved were worked out by representatives of the two groups in a series of comprehensive discussions. These discussions and the fusion that resulted from them, were facilitated by the fact that the political program of the J.S.O.P. has come closer to that of the J.S.R. in the last few months.

Members of the J.S.R. who now become members of the J.S.O.P. will work in the latter on the basis of their own political program for the development and strengthening of the unified organization.

PRE-WAR CRISIS SHIFTS TO FAR EASTERN SCENE

Axis Powers Create New Front for Rivals to Worry About

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As the British displayed signs of fright and hesitation.

The Japanese apparently see their chance now to grab from Britain the rich concessions wrested by the British and French from the Chinese at bayonet-point nearly a century ago. The British, waiting desperately to see if their friend Roosevelt would step in to protect the swag, fingered around helplessly in search of a diplomatic loophole.

At Moscow, meanwhile, it was clear their diplomatic position was not exactly growing any stronger. William Strang, the special envoy sent to the Kremlin to talk Stalin into a deal, was cooling his heels and biting his fingernails, reading the dispatches from Tientsin.

Is it an accident that Soviet-Japanese friction burst for a moment into flame a fortnight ago and then died down when the Japanese embarked upon their offensive against the British?

Is it an accident that reports are beginning to be heard that Stalin has raised his price again by demanding that the Far East be included in the "guaranteed" zone?

Is it an accident that Mussolini's ambassador was reported a week ago to have given assurances in Moscow that the axis had no "territorial designs" on Russia?

Whatever the speculative possibilities, the facts are plain enough. The axis combination, following its well-established strategy, has created a new front for its rivals to worry about—the Far East—while planning at an early date to proceed with its appointed task of re-carving the map of Europe—and the Moscow government still stands cautiously on the sidelines in the hope of saving itself by having its enemies tear each other to pieces.

WANTED

Anti-Fascist Salesmen to sell "FATHER COUGHLIN—Fascist Demagogue" pamphlet
Liberal Commission
See Miller, Labor Bookshop, 116 University Place

At Your Service THE APPEAL POSTER SHOP

Joseph Hansen's series of articles on Coughlin will appear early next week as a low-priced pamphlet published in a large edition to allow for mass distribution. Publication of the pamphlet was made possible by a loan which must be repaid quickly through donations from our readers and by the following contributions which came in response to our appeal: a sympathizer in New York, \$5; in Chicago, \$1; a doctor in Detroit, \$5. Orders and additional donations should be rushed IMMEDIATELY to Pioneer Publishers, 116 University Place, New York City. If you want Pioneer Publishers to send the pamphlet to any person enclose a list of names and addresses with your contribution.

A Point of View on the Labor Party Question

By F. X. FERRY, ROGER B. CROSS, MYRON CARLSON and IRVING KAPLAN

It is becoming a habit with our party, or at least with some of its members, to preface their proposal for a turn into a direction hitherto opposed by the party with "the question of the attitude toward (here insert the new turn) has never been a question of principle for revolutionary Marxists." Such a statement, expressed in more or less good English, is a signal for the "hurry-boys and girls" to go out hell-bent for the new turn, in the present instance for a labor party.

It is obvious that a preface as given above, and now set before the Labor Party Resolution of the N.E.C. indicates some misgivings, if not a rather strong feeling of insecurity on the part of certain supporters of the labor party; but as a hearty gulp of "fire-water" gives courage if not foolhardiness to some of us when confronted by a crisis, so the talmudist classification of terms principled or otherwise gives some party members the right to hurl themselves forward on the road towards and into the labor party.

It may not be amiss to recall to ourselves that plain tactical turns may be ruinous to such an extent to the party and the working class, that workers must sooner or later inquire for themselves whether or not they can conscientiously favor such ruinous policies just because such policies are labelled in advance non-programmatic ones.

It may be useful to recall that the position taken by the C. I. in 1923 towards the German revolution was nothing but an incorrect tactic, but in its effect it had such a far-reaching importance as to determine the fatal direction taken by the German and European working class. The position taken by the C. I. in England prior to the general strike, in creating the British-Russian Trade Union Committee, represented but a tactical step, but one so incorrect that many revolutionaries justifiably felt compelled to leave the tactical misleaders. Those who were unable to follow the tactical leadership of the C. I. agreed with Trotsky who expressed the opinion succinctly and clearly that "nothing is so calculated to disintegrate the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat party as unprincipled maneuvering" (we hope that the expression "unprincipled maneuvering" will not cause any of the hooray-boys any headaches in understanding it).

To sum up this preliminary statement, we hope for a general agreement in saying that a revolutionary party may under no circumstances embark upon a questionable path and expect not to pay the price in the eyes of the working class, by simply declaring such a turn only a tactical one. Tactical mistakes may be just as ruinous as programmatic ones, sometimes even more so because of the apparent light-mindedness with which some party members are ready to make such simple tactical experiments.

The majority resolution on the labor party distinguishes itself by the light-mindedness with which it expects a total about-face in the party's attitude. It would be ridiculous, but for the tragic aspect of the thing, to read how certain we are today that we are right about our evaluation, which is directly contrary to our evaluation of yesterday (even though we were just as certain then as to the correctness of the contrary evaluation). The majority resolution is a confession of our tactical error of six months ago, but at the same time a command that we are not to doubt the infallibility of our present tactical proposal.

We all recall the scorn heaped by us upon the heads of the C. P., the Lovestonites, the S.P., and the Social Democratic Federation, when they—long before us—discovered their "duty to support the labor party." Then it was the shedding of their revolutionary mask and following up their reformist tendency; now, when proposed by us, it becomes inspired revolutionary tactics. We can still hear the ringing of our scornful voices castigating Waldman, then Thomas, then Lovestone and Browder, for their stinging in their reformist juice when they proposed a rapprochement with the labor party. Now, however, the Socialist Workers Party gives "positive and unambiguous support to the labor party movement in general, and to all its local manifestations," because we are "bold, decisive and resolute." Do you remember the guffaw emanating from our ranks when Browder, returning from Moscow, came out from the labor party and when he tried to explain away the C.P.'s changed attitude and stated that "we do not support a reformist labor party (being at all times against reformism)." We do not attempt to create a revolutionary labor party (since there is already a revolutionary party in the C.P.), but we want a class-labor party." Then guffaws, but now we declare (and with-out laughing ourselves in the face) that "while the Social Democrats, Lovestonites, etc., advocate a labor or farmer-labor party with a purely reformist program, and more or less confine themselves to unprincipled top combinations under cover of this slogan, the S.W.P. advances its program of transitional demands in order to fructify the mass movement in favor of a labor party and lead it in a revolutionary direction."

Here is the difference, if differences there is, between us and those who saw the rising sun of the labor party before us, that is, that we shall "fructify the mass movement in favor of a labor party and lead it in a revolutionary direction." We shall do so, even though Marxists recognize that the nature of the labor party is such that it cannot but stand in the path of the revolutionary movement. We shall support it, even though we know (or at least knew six months ago) that there are no short cuts to the building of the revolutionary movement, surely not through a reformist labor party which, if organized, is organized for the purpose of syphoning off the revolutionary tendencies which may appear among the masses.

(Continued in next issue)

APPEAL ARMY

BOSTON SETS THE PACE: "Enclosed find money order for \$15.00 for balance of our Appeal bill and for payment in advance on coming issues. I thought it best to send the money because I know the Appeal can use it."

"Increase our bundle by 25 copies each issue, beginning with the next issue. The comrades are selling the paper quite easily with Coughlin as the issue. Last night at a Jewish-American Congress meeting we sold 94 Appeals and 8 New Internationals. We are becoming the outstanding anti-Coughlinites!"—J. T., Boston literature agent.

OTHER BRANCHES AT WORK:

The Rochester branch in the past few weeks has made substantial payments and has practically paid up in full on its Appeal account.

"Please increase our order to 100 per issue regularly. I am positive we shall have no trouble in disposing of them."

"The Coughlinites sell their magazine downtown in Detroit. We station a comrade on either side of them and yell our slogan."

Martin's "Strike" Proves To Be Complete Dud

(Continued from Page 1)

There are no picket lines. As a matter of fact, Martin's desperate adventure is not at all a strike against General Motors. It is a union-busting action directed primarily at the only organization with any following at all in the G. M. plants, the U.A.W.—C.I.O.

Aim of Strike
This "strike" had as its main aim to vindicate Martin's fantastic claims to a majority following for the A.F.L. in the G. M. plants. It has, however, proved just the contrary. Acting as a vehicle for conservative and anti-militant sentiment among the non-union elements, Martin's gang soon found that it was impossible to mobilize this group for strike action. He might have led them through picket lines but he could never lead them onto picket lines.

Someone may have whispered in Martin's ear that G. M. would negotiate with him and grant a contract if he could tie up the plant. But G. M. didn't pay any attention when they found their assembly lines operating as usual and only a few goons on the outside maintaining the fiction of picketing.

"Get the Reds"
The principal activity of these plug-uglies and their few misguided followers has been to "get the C.I.O. reds." Since last night they have kept a group of C.I.O. workers bottled up in their hall which is located in an adjoining building from the Martin headquarters. Five times they provoked vicious assaults on the C.I.O. hall, smashing the plate glass store window and brutally beating C.I.O. members so they required hospitalization. As this is being written, they are still congregated in front of the C.I.O. hall on Saginaw Street facing the Fisher Body plant and preparing a new attack.

Influence Weakened
There is no doubt that Martin's influence will diminish to insignificance before this "strike" is over. Yet it is equally true that this episode has left a bad taste in the mouths of countless auto workers. The top C.I.O. leaders in Flint and their friends and advisors on the International Executive Board are largely responsible for this situation. Months of inactivity followed the Cleveland convention last April. Union organization disintegrated; grievances were neglected; the corporation destroyed union conditions without resistance. Despite the anxiety and demands of the militants, this leadership blithely continued its doing nothing policy.

Even the current critical situation has not served to shake them out of their indifference. Not a single leaflet or piece of propaganda has been circulated explaining the C.I.O. stand. Nothing has been done to counteract the inevitable impression among the workers—assisted of course by the yellow press—that the present conflict is "merely a squabble between two outside groups." Nothing has been done to correct the impression that Martin's gang

is cultivating; that there is a real picket line and a real strike and the men walking through are scabs. This lie left uncorrected will do tremendous harm to the C.I.O. when they get ready for real strike action, as they must, this fall.

Keeping "Public Opinion"
The desire of large sections of Flint's best militants in Chevrolet, Buick and even Fisher Body is to mobilize their forces and remove the Martin goons from a position where they can do damage to the C.I.O. forces and maintain their fiction of a strike. Over a thousand Buick and Chevrolet workers jammed the C.I.O. hall last night demanding action. But the top Flint U.A.W. leadership has poured cold water on their enthusiasm—all in the name of "keeping public opinion on our side."

This lack of organization is directly attributable to the disorganizing policies of the Stalinists and their supporters in the Flint leadership. The lack of adequate defense machinery in the union ranks is one of the most criminal neglects of the entire situation. The organization of union defense guards in Flint is a job of paramount importance. If a miserable gang of Martinites cannot be coped with now because of this disorganization, what will happen when the armed forces of the state are concentrated against the Flint auto union?

Indicative of the complete lack of confidence and respect prevailing in labor circles, even A.F.L., of Martin's phoney strike was the position taken today by international officials of the Teamsters Union who gave their drivers permission to cross the "picket lines" at their own risk. The Flint drivers union had previously adhered to the traditional teamsters attitude of not crossing picket lines. Aware of the spurious nature of this strike, they made the change on advice and consultation of their international officers.

Protests Headline On League for Cultural Freedom
Editor:

On behalf of the League for Cultural Freedom and Socialism, I must repudiate the headline description of our League which recently appeared in the Appeal. The League is "Anti-Stalinist" but by no means "Anti-Hook" by the same sense. There is no reference to the Dewey-Hook Committee in our entire manifesto. There are major differences of principle between the two manifestos, but certainly no such head-on collision as the fevered imagination of your headline writer conjured up. Thank you for printing this correction in an early issue.

Sincerely,
DWIGHT MACDONALD,
Acting Secretary,
League for Cultural Freedom & Socialism

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