

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES, No. 9, July 3, 1970

PC Present: B. Barnes, J. Barnes, Breitman, Britton, DeBerry,
Dobbs, Halstead, A. Hansen, LaMont, F. Lovell, Novack,
Ring, Shaw, Waters

Visitors: C. Frank, Seigle

Chairman: A. Hansen

AGENDA: 1. Administrative Committee Personnel
 2. Chicago Rank-and-File Labor Conference
 3. World Movement
 4. Cleveland and Milwaukee Conferences
 5. Women's Liberation Work Director
 6. Membership

1. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE PERSONNEL

Shaw reported. A combination of medical and personal circumstances have made it impossible for him to regularly participate as a member of the Administrative Committee and other assignments in the national office. He requested that 1) he be relieved of his assignment to the Administrative Committee and other Political Committee assignments in New York and 2) he be granted a transfer to the Seattle branch for an indefinite period in order to hasten full and complete recovery which will enable him to again undertake national party assignments.

Motion: To concur with Comrade Shaw's request.

Carried.

2. CHICAGO RANK-AND-FILE LABOR CONFERENCE

F. Lovell reported. (See attached report)

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

3. WORLD MOVEMENT

J. Barnes reported.

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

4. CLEVELAND AND MILWAUKEE CONFERENCES

Halstead reported. Halstead will write analytical article for paper comparing Cleveland and Milwaukee conferences.

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

5. WOMEN'S LIBERATION WORK DIRECTOR

Waters reported. Our increasing opportunities and openings in the women's liberation movement in the last year have also brought an increasing volume of work for the national women's liberation steering committee. In order to adequately provide the kind of national leadership which our growing intervention requires, the national steering committee, in consultation with the Militant editors, has recommended to the Administrative Committee that Comrade B. Barnes be released from her full-time staff responsibilities on the paper and be assigned as national women's liberation work director.

Motion: B. Barnes be designated Director of Women's Liberation work.

Carried.

6. MEMBERSHIP

Britton reported recommendation of Houston Branch that K.S., a former member, be readmitted to the party.

Motion: To concur with the Houston Branch recommendation.

Carried.

Meeting Adjourned.

2nd floor south
873 Broadway
New York, N. Y. 10003
July 3, 1970

TO ALL NC MEMBERS AND ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

NATIONAL RANK-AND-FILE ACTION CONFERENCE

The attached report of the credentials committee of this Stalinist-called conference, held in Chicago June 27-8 in the Packinghouse Labor and Community Center, tells most of the story. However, the following information in addition to the Militant article (July 10 issue), will be useful to comrades in various sections of the country:

1) It is obvious that the "continuations committee" which was set-up at this conference will now speak in the name of the rank-and-file of the unions and as such will attempt to intervene in the antiwar movement.

2) Their most prominent spokesmen who were present and active participants in the conference are Al Evanoff, vice-president of Distributive Workers District 65 in New York; Dick Parrish and Charles Chang, prominent leaders in the AFT opposition caucuses; Jack White, president of Teamsters Local 614 in Pontiac, Michigan; Will Parry, secretary-treasurer, Northern Washington and Alaska, District Council, Western Association of Pulp and Paper Workers of America (independent); Jack Weintraub, a member of the Teamsters union in San Francisco.

- a) Evanoff was busy at the conference with a small group of Young Workers Liberation League members, apparently lining them up for work as District 65 organizers. One of their points of concentration where they expect to organize some shops is Madison, Wisconsin.
- b) Jack White of the Pontiac Teamsters local reported in the panel discussion on "how to advance peace and labor political action" (chaired by Evanoff) that Bobby Holmes, Teamsters union vice-president in the Detroit area, had pulled him off a truck and asked him to go to Washington, D.C., recently to attend a meeting of union leaders with Senators McGovern and Cranston. White said their discussion was about how organized labor can aid the peace movement. He did not report what came out of these discussions, if anything.
- c) Both Parrish and Chang of the Teachers Union were active participants in the organization of the conference (Chang was a member of the credential committee and Parrish

served as secretary of the panel How to Advance Peace and Labor Political Action), but neither gave reports on their activities in their union.

- d) Will Parry is prominent in the Seattle area. He was one of the keynote speakers at the conference, came down heavy on Nixon. He was one of the active organizers of the conference, stuck close to "trade union issues" and had nothing to say about the antiwar movement.
- e) Jack Weintraub from the San Francisco Teamsters served as "conference parliamentarian" during the sessions of the second day. His remarks throughout the conference were directed more to the antiwar movement than most others who took an active party.

3) The conference did nothing except elect the "continuations committee" to which all matters raised and discussed were referred for final decision and action. However, before adjourning, the conference did adopt a "strong statement" in support of the UAW in its current negotiations with the auto corporations. This is noteworthy only because it reveals how anxious these people are to curry favor with the UAW bureaucracy. There were 78 auto workers present from all parts of the country according to the credentials committee report, but a caucus meeting of auto workers failed to turn up more than 25 or 30. A fact sheet on auto workers says UAW officials "utilized the employers' favorite weapon of anti-Communism, driving from leadership the most militant and effective organizers. Despite these shortcomings, the UAW leadership is one of the better groups of American trade union leaders. It is presently engaged in trade union and political actions aimed at strengthening the position of labor nationally and internationally, in advancing the cause of peace."

4) Despite the Stalinists' obvious determination to organize support for the "good Democrats," such an aim was never openly submitted or discussed. There was a strong sentiment against support of capitalist politics. In the panel on "how to advance peace and labor political action," attended by probably 150 and the largest of the panel discussions, a motion to call for the organization of a Labor Party now was very popular. Even though Evanoff declared that in his opinion such an action "would be the worst thing this conference can do," the motion carried by one vote -- 22 to 23. Evanoff, as chairman, cast his vote against the motion and declared it a tie vote, but promised that the whole question would be discussed thoroughly at a full session of the conference. It wasn't.

5) In addition to the panel discussion already mentioned, there were four others: How to Defend Trade Union and Rank-and-File Rights, How to Combat Racism and Advance the Rights of Black and Minority Workers, How to Advance the Rights of Women Workers and How to Advance the Rights of Working Youth. None of these were as well

attended as the one on peace and political action, but the limited discussion in the conference was directed to these other questions.

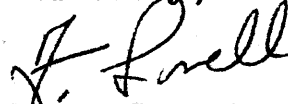
6) The full report by the organizers of the conference and what their purposes are will be carried in the forthcoming issue of the magazine Labor Today. This magazine will now be the voice of "the rank and file."

7) Not all those present were Stalinists by any means. Our comrades in the railroads reported that they made some useful contacts there. We will see how this works out.

8) Lorenzo Torres, of Mine Mill & Smelter Workers Union, was introduced the second day of the conference. He appeared in the film Salt of the Earth, and the chairman (Mooty) emphasized this fact. Torres spoke briefly about his "great disappointment." He said their union is not the same anymore under the Steel Workers and he would like to go back to former times when their union was independent. This is a common story among those who followed party advice and sought shelter in the "main stream" of the union movement during the 1950's when they were severely under attack. They have since learned that the bureaucrats in those unions where they sought shelter are not the kindly, protective type. There are sharp differences within the Stalinist trade union circles over this tactic and other questions.

9) Many of those present were disappointed because the conference failed to take any action. I don't think there were many who had any clear idea of what action they wanted the conference to take. But the general let-down feeling seemed to me quite well expressed by the wife of a young San Francisco Teamster who said to her husband (Harry Orr), "There goes our vacation money, and what did you get for it?"

Comradely,


Frank Lovell

Report of Credentials Committee, National Rank-and-File Action Conference

Credentials Committee chairmen: Charles Wilson - UAW
Charles Chang - AFT

556 delegates; 288 observers; 31 visitors (875)
628 men; 241 women (869)

Who they were:

26 officers of unions	157 R&F caucuses
10 representing women's caucuses	13 Black caucuses
14 from unorganized groups	115 miscellaneous caucuses
15 no category	5 unemployed
12 students	
	Total - (367)

Where they came from:

78 Auto	13 welfare & public aid workers
2 bakers	33 hospital workers
4 transportation	8 miners
29 building trades	4 rubber
6 hotel and restaurant	10 railroad workers
29 Local 65 distributive workers	14 shoe workers
11 ILGWU - garment	1 postal worker
1 hodcarrier	3 wood pulp workers
11 painters	13 I.T.U. Members
16 UE	10 Newspaper workers
12 IUE	16 Miscellaneous workers
26 farm workers	2 attorneys
13 longshoremen	5 machinists
32 teamsters	38 AFSCME
87 teachers	45 Meatcutters (furriers)
43 steel workers	
	Total - (604)

Break-down by States (26)

Alabama	10	Pennsylvania	49
California	52	Oregon	6
Connecticut	15	Ohio	24
Illinois	188	Virginia	1
Indiana	38	Washington	10
Kentucky	1	Washington, D.C.	2
Maryland	8	Louisiana	8
Massachusetts	19	Tennessee	9
Michigan	57	Georgia	1
Minnesota	9	West Virginia	8
Missouri	1	Wisconsin	55
New Jersey	16	Utah	2
New York	192	New Mexico	2
		Total - (655)	

Of those present, 70 per cent were from industry.

The reporter (Wilson) in his opening remarks noted that there were discrepancies in the statistics compiled, but "we did the best we could with the information available to us."

There was no break-down of age of delegates or average age of those attending. The number of black delegates and the number of black people present was not given.

The co-chairmen of the conference were Rayfield Mooty, a Black steel worker, and Marion Calligaris, president of Local 490, Brotherhood of Railroad and Airline Clerks. Both are veterans of the 1930 union organizing days and appear to be in their 60's. Charles Wilson, Black and a Stalinist functionary in Chicago, served as Secretary of the Conference. He appears to be in his late 40's (48, maybe 50).

Other comrades at the conference and I compared notes and guessed the average age of those present to be 40. The bulk of delegates were in the 38 to 45 age bracket. We think of all those present, there were less than 200 under 30.

There were fewer Black and third-world people there than we had expected, about 20 per cent, maybe 200. Most of the Blacks who were delegates were male and older. The average age of all Blacks present seemed to us to be 40. There were few young black workers present, maybe 25.