

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
June 27, 1972

To the Members of the Political Committee

Dear Comrades,

Attached for your information is a report from Fred Halstead about the Labor for Peace Conference held in St. Louis last weekend, as well as a copy of the resolution passed there, and a copy of the IS-sponsored resolution.

Comradely,



Bev Scott

Chicago
June 25, 1972

Dear Frank,

This is a report on the intervention of our fraction at the founding conference of Labor for Peace June 23-24 in St. Louis and my impressions of the conference itself. This should be shown to whom it may concern at the NO.

First, the bare statistics:

The conference was attended by some 950 registered delegates from 35 international unions and 32 states including Hawaii. The actual number of delegates may be larger in the final credentials report. There was no report on the number of observers. I estimate 200 plus 100 press, many of whom were from various radical or movement publications and media.

We had 18 persons there from outside St. Louis. 14 of these were recognized as delegates. The largest numbers were from AFSCME and the AFT. In addition, five YSAers or at largers from St. Louis attended as observers and helped distribute.

The organizers of the conference barred literature tables, and formally they barred distribution and sales on the property of the Teamster Joint Council Center. The public sidewalk was considerable distance away, so it at first made sales and distribution difficult. However, after a while we found we could distribute and sell on the property if we did it with a little discretion. If we had known at the beginning what we knew at the end about this, we could have sold much more, especially of the Dobbs book. But as it was we sold 93 Militants, 8 Dobbs books. We distributed several hundred Wonnac leaflets and brochures, 1,000 NPAC kits, and campaign platforms and brochures to the entire crowd. We also ~~distributed~~ distributed several hundred pathfinder brochures advertising the Dobbs book, etc., and there was considerable interest in this. The small sale of the book was due intirely to the physical situation and to the fact that we didn't develop quickly enough the technique for having supplies of ~~xxxx~~ books available where the delegates would know where to get them.

Who attended: Under seperate cover I'm sending a list of delegates. This is an incomplete list, but it will give you an idea of which unions were represented. The UAW had the largest single delegation. It is listed on a seperate list which is also enclosed under seperate cover.

A very large number of the original sponsors and endorsers of the call attended.

Distributive,

The international unions officially endorsing the affair were: UAW, AFSCME, Hsopital, Meat Cutters, Furniture Workers, UE, ILWU. AFT did not endorse by a narrow vote of its officers, but Simons of AFT was there. Gibbons and Mohn of Teamsters endorsed. There is no doubt ~~Gibbons~~ Gibbons played a central role. Mazey of UAW was announced from the platform as being the person who would play the central role in the future. He chaired the sessions.

The observers: Anyone was allowed to be an observer. The observers were generally younger, more radical, a ~~xxx~~ number were from the St. Louis area,

Antiwar groups: NPAC had Laferty as an abserver. PCPJ had Peck. In addition there were a number of delegates who had worked with NPAC. Neither peace group played any role in the formal proceedings. NPAC was mentioned only once on the floor, by Valdez, a delegate from John T. Williams' local in L.A. Valdez also mentioned the physical attack on John T. on the 3 floor and appealed for an opposition to "this violence." Several NPACers who were delegates planned to mention Hiroshima day and the convention, but none got the floor. PCPJ was not mentioned at all.

Political groups: Ours was the only campaign literature distributed. CP no doubt had a number of people there, but they weren't obvious, played no open role. A few Daily Workds were in evidence. A copy of the TUAD paper, Labor Today was enclosed in the delegated kits. Just how that came about, I don't know. In general, CP seemed to be laying very low. SWP-YSA was most obvious radical tendency there. No apparant hostility to us, except from CPers and ultra lefts.

Other radical ~~group~~ groups in evidence: IS, Workers League, * Spartacist, PL in the form of a small distribution of their magazine, and assorted local ultra left groups. New American Movement was there ~~xxx~~ through Staughton Lynd, but distributed nothing in its own name. Several ultra left groups from Madison were also there, and these called and chaired a "rank and file" caucus on Friday night. Representatives of all the radical groups attended this (about 75 in all). It was a disorganized meeting with most of the people drifting out before a motion was passed to try to get a call for a one day strike on the ~~floor~~^{1 floor} of the main conference. We simply observed this meeting and ~~x~~ distributed there. Of the radical groups, IS played main role on the floor. Was used as a foil by the sponsors.

No Democratic or Republican Party material was distributed. McGovern was mentioned only by Mrs. M.L. King. Referred to obliquely by one or two other speakers. Many speakers mentioned dump Nixon. This was obviously central in the heads of many of the sponsors.

~~The Formal Results~~

The Formal Results: The conference adopted two documents: 1) a statement of policy: a copy is enclosed. It establishes Labor For Peace as an ongoing organization and states an immediate withdrawal position. It is a good statement, in my opinion. It does not specify the types of activity to be carried out by Labor for Peace. It makes no mention of electoral or mass demonstration activity, but it does not exclude either type. 2) a structure: The organization is lead by a national steering committee composed of the leaders of the international unions and major regional union bodies which have formally endorsed. This ~~committee~~ members of this committee were read off and ~~was~~ adopted. (Dan R. has the list.) The steering committee must authorize any regional, state or local groups which are set up, and these ~~must~~ are open only to union bodies which have endorsed. This excludes such groups as TUAD and Washington Labor for Peace which are composed of individual union members from locals which have not endorsed.

Discussion at the conference on these documents: There was a very limited discussion from the ~~1~~ floor on each of these documents. ~~My~~ Danny has the details for the militant article. In essence, only one dissenting point was discussed under each of the documents. On the statement of policy the point discussed was the proposal for a one-day strike against the war. This was introduced on the floor by Steve Zelluck of IS, a delegate from the New Rochelle AFT local. In an attempt to dispose of it with the back of his hand, chairman Mazey called for a straw vote immediately after it was put on the floor, ~~and~~ before any floor discussion. Much to Mazey's embarrassment, the majority of those voting raised their hands for the proposal. Before it was further discussed there were speeches by notables and a break for ~~xx~~ lunch. Immediately after lunch, the big ~~1~~ guns, including Harry Bridges, were brought out to shoot down Zelluck's motion. A motion to proceed to a vote on the statement of policy, unammended, then passed by 95%. Then the motion to ~~was~~ adopt the statement of purpose ~~was~~ passed with only a small handful voting against. Incidentally, the only dissent on the immediate withdrawal position was voiced by Bridges who said he preferred having a statement about a cease fire first, but he said it was just his opinion and he wouldn't attempt "right now" to have the statement changed to that effect.

On the structure proposal, the only dissenting point discussed was raised by Marvin Rogoff of Washington Labor for Peace, a delegate from a D.C. AFT local. He wanted the wording ammended to allow individual~~x~~ union members whose locals hadn't endorsed as a whole to join Labor for Peace groups. Mazey said the sponsors had carefully considered that, and did not want it at the present and

then took a vote to proceed with the vote on the document. This passed overwhelmingly, and the document was then adopted, also overwhelmingly.

Our fraction played no role in either of these disputes. It was my view that we should not. Some of our people were trying to get the floor to raise the Hiroshima actions and the convention for informational purposes, but none were recognized. Previously we had spoken to Pollack and others about getting an endorsement of Hiroshima day actions. They thought it was impossible. Pollock did try to get Gorman to mention the actions, and he said he would "if possible," but he never took the floor after he was spoken to about this.

Analysis Analysis: My own view is that, except for not being able to get the Hiroshima day actions endorsed, or even mentioned, the results of the conference were as good as we could expect. First, the immediate withdrawal policy statement is a solid plus. It is correct, and it shoots down PCPJ's pretensions a little more.

The structural proposal as adopted eliminates the possibility of TUAD and the CP turning these Labor for Peace groups into their playthings. Of course, it leaves them entirely under the control of the bureaucrats, just as the unions themselves are. But that was to be expected and is not all bad. For one thing it ~~forgets the unions~~ means that the struggle to form Labor for Peace groups must take place within the union locals. This could offer important levers and elbow room for raising antiwar ideas within the unions. We have always known that the building of a left wing within the unions is not going to be done in formations outside the unions. This Labor for Peace development opens the possibility of campaigning within local unions to have the locals form Labor for Peace groups and to make them active, supportive of mass action, etc.

Of course caution must be exercised, particularly between now and the elections. It is not out of the question that the Labor For Peace might endorse the Democratic Party candidate and be used entirely as an electoral vehicle for that purpose. We will have to wait a bit and see what happens. However, there are several possibilities.

For one thing, what happens to this formation if Nixon actually is elected. With no election in the immediate offing, the Labor for Peace formations could flourish as educational and mass action vehicles against the war, ~~and~~ and the bureaucrats themselves could want to see that to a certain extent.

It is also possible that the Labor for Peace steering committee will not as such endorse a Presidential candidate, but simply use the organization for antiwar propaganda to keep the war a central issue during the election period. This can only hurt Nixon, and may be what the bureaucrats have uppermost in mind. This variant also ~~leaves~~ provides certain openings for us.

The fact that the conference did not itself call an action, is not bad either. It leaves the field to NPAC. If they had called one, as the PCPJ forces there, together with characters like Lynd, Spiegel, Lens, etc. lobbied for, it would have been used to subsume or box in NPAC. The Lynd et al proposal, incidentally, which was for a moratorium Oct. 13 called by Labor for Peace, never got to first base. Spiegel couldn't even get the floor to raise it. It was never mentioned except in the corridors.

After the conference Gibbons met briefly with several NPAC people as such. This was arranged by an NPAC person from St. Louis. We asked him to speak at the convention. He said we should send a request to Labor for Peace at his office and he would try to have a representative speak at the NPAC convention. We asked him about support for Hiroshima day. He said to send the material and request to the same place, but he said he couldn't promise anything on that. He said it would depend on whether regional and local groups were set up by August 5. He was friendly and said Labor for Peace intended to cooperate with

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existing peace groups. The NPAC people in this meeting were Laferty, & two women from St. Louis, Ed Heisler, Mackler and myself.

Ted Halstead

PROPOSED STATEMENT OF POLICY

We, _____ representatives of organized labor, who count in our ranks millions of members, have been brought together in St. Louis, Missouri out of our common concern and a sense of frustration and anger over the failure of our government to end the war in Vietnam.

We hold these facts to be self-evident:

- It is self-evident that this nightmare of killing and destruction has gone on far too long, and that this war is illegal and not in our national interest.

- It is self-evident that this war has exacted an intolerable toll in the divisions among our people, in the alienation of our youth, the blighting of our cities and the distortion of our national priorities -- and that it has triggered unprecedented strife, racism and violence.

- It is self-evident that this war has undermined the economy of our country, lengthened the rolls of the unemployed and placed greater hardships on the backs of the working poor. It has created tremendous inflationary pressures, increased our tax burdens, and robbed working people of the value of their paychecks. Wage controls have made a mockery of collective bargaining and threaten to become a permanent straitjacket on the labor movement.

- It is self-evident that this war has severely tarnished the good name and moral leadership of our country in the arena of world opinion.

And finally,

- It is self-evident that the overwhelming majority of Americans agree that this war is not worth one more life, one more prisoner, one more hard-earned tax dollar, or one more devastated city, whether here or in Indo-China.

We are therefore resolved that the voice of American labor, which has been raised in every struggle for justice and decency in our nation's history, shall not remain silent during this critical period. As men and women of labor, who treasure our country's heritage and future, we proclaim our responsibility to harness every effort to end the war NOW.

We demand the immediate withdrawal from Indo-China of every American soldier, every gun, every plane, every tank, every warship and every dollar. This would end the fighting and bring about the return of our prisoners of war. It would also free our energies and our resources for the tremendous task of repairing the ravages of this war, both in Vietnam and in our own land.

We accept our responsibility for the crucial task of reconverting to an economy of peace. Our swords must be converted into ploughshares -- our immense industrial technology must be directed into peaceful, constructive channels -- our people must be put to work to fulfill the pressing social and economic needs of our nation.

To achieve this goal, and to insure that there will be no more Vietnams, we here today establish LABOR FOR PEACE as a national organization. We declare our intention to bring into our midst ever-broader sections of the trade union movement in this effort to turn our country from the path of killing and destruction to the path of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness through peace, dignity and full employment.

A RANK AND FILE PROPOSAL
Presented by 80 Delegates and Observers

We believe that this conference has the potential to begin to rejuvenate the labor movement and make it a fighting movement for social progress. In order to do so it will have to mobilize the rank and file of labor. Workers have the power to end the war and could have done so long ago.

However, union leadership has been largely unresponsive to rank and file discontent with the war and failed to lead a struggle against it, or mobilize the real power of the working people to end the war -- the power to strike.

We have no confidence that the officials who have belatedly called this conference intend to mobilize the rank and file or to take the kind of actions necessary to end the war, wage controls, and unemployment. The same officials who have spoken out in the past against the war have been equally opposed to the idea of mobilizing the rank and file of their own unions.

We criticize the organizers of this conference for making it inaccessible to the rank and file through prohibitive registration fees, the Friday beginning, and through rules for attendance that prohibit rather than encourage rank and file participation.

We call for the formation of a caucus that will clearly state that the war was not, as liberal politicians say, a mistake. Rather it is a war which is being fought in the interests of the owners of large corporations to preserve their access to cheap labor in runaway shops, cheap natural resources, monopoly of the world market, and the domination of the world by U.S. business.

We object to the fact that the costs of this war in lives and military spending is being borne by working people while big business profits from it.

We believe that the economic crisis is caused by those same corporations who are using the government to maintain profits at home through the wage freeze and the use of courts and legislation to deny workers the right strike.

THEREFORE we are calling upon rank and file workers who are attending the LABOR FOR PEACE Conference to join together in a rank and file caucus around the following demands. BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the LABOR FOR PEACE Conference be open to all rank and file workers and that it immediately set up state and local conferences which allow full, democratic participation by the rank and file;
2. That these conferences begin immediately to educate and organize for a ONE DAY WORK STOPPAGE against the war and the wage controls, to be held within three months, and that the demands of this body and its actions be:
 - a. End the wage controls.
 - b. Immediate and complete withdrawal of all U.S. troops from S.E. Asia. End all support for the Thieu government.
 - c. End all U.S. involvement to protect and expand American corporations such as that in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
 - d. End all oppression of Blacks, Chicanos, Asian-Americans and Native Americans.
3. That this conference denounce and not endorse the Democratic and Republican parties as representing only the interests of big corporations, those same interests whose profit-seeking at home and abroad are the cause of the war, the economic crisis and the wage freeze, policies for which both parties bear responsibility.

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
June 29, 1972

TO MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

Attached is a supplementary report from Fred Halstead concerning the St. Louis Labor for Peace Conference. This information will be useful for the discussion on the conference in the PC Friday.

Comradely,

Bev
Bev Scott

Chicago
June 27, 1972

JUN 29 1972

To SWP N.O.
Attention Wendy Reisner
from Fred Halstead

This is the supplement which you requested to my letter to Frank reporting on the founding conference of Labor For Peace.

First one fact which I left out of the previous report. 25 ~~NPAC~~ endorsements were obtained for the Hiroshima actions and the ~~convention~~ NPAC convention. ~~These~~ These were of unionists who had not previously endorsed. All were from delegates, 14 from elected officials, 8 from staff officials like business agents. The remainder just ~~big~~ delegates.

Some thoughts on the motivations of the bureaucrats involved in setting up Labor for Peace: It was very clear from the conference itself, from the corridor talk, and from the speeches, that "dump Nixon" is a chief preoccupation of these officials and that this ~~convention~~ convention and the organization it founded is expected to play a role in that. It was also clear that there was no intention whatsoever to endorse a candidate at this time. It is possible that after the Democratic Party convention, the Democratic candidate may be endorsed by Labor for Peace and the organization used mainly for the electoral game this fall. However, this is by no means assured, in my opinion.

There are several reasons why a number of these officials want to see Labor for Peace as more than a ploy in the fall elections. For one thing, even after the convention in Miami, significant sections of the labor bureaucracy might still not want to endorse, say McGovern. But ~~the~~ those involved in this convention want to make the war issue central for ~~the~~ as much of the labor leadership -- and for that matter the rank and file -- as they can influence.

One reason for this is that they are sincerely concerned about the war itself. That is, about its economic effects. They really are being pressed in collective bargaining by the inflation and they can't solve it in collective bargaining. They see the labor movement at present as very weak politically, not ~~only~~ only because the Republicans are in -- though that is key in their minds -- but also because under Johnson they weren't listened to on international and foreign policy matters. Jerry Wurf made a very interesting statement, to paraphrase: "The American labor movement is different from labor movements in the rest of the world, on both sides of the iron curtain. Elsewhere the labor movements are ideological, they at least in theory challenge the establishment, seek to change the system fundamentally. But here, the labor leadership seeks only a share in the ~~the~~ status quo for the membership, and even seeks to be part of the establishment. In that ~~the~~ regard the American labor leadership has been the most patriotic of all social formations. It has automatically supported the government in its wars, almost uncritically. But this stance by the American labor leadership has been sorely abused and manipulated, both by this administration and by the previous one. That is why this stance must change."

The UAW is particularly sensitive on this point. And they have added impetus, flowing from the fiasco for them of the Wallace vote in Michigan, where they are supposed to be the political leaders of the working class. They can't even get the workers not to vote for Wallace. They know they are in trouble. They know they have to have procedures for appealing to the rank and file politically, and the war is a ~~key~~ key to that. That, in my opinion, is one reason for their insistence on an immediate withdrawal statement of purpose. How else answer

the psuedo populist right wing demagogy of Wallace? The signs and slogans posted around the hall were all very much to the point on this. Danny has them written down. They tied all the economic issues to the war. For example: "The war is responsible for inflation, not workers." They were very good slogans, could have been written by us, and probably were, since they probably took them out of an NFAC leaflet.

Of course all of this could mean simply that they want to make the war a central issue for this election campaign to help defeat Nixon, and then if the Democrats are ~~ix~~ elected, they'll just forget about Labor for Peace. But there indications that they have more in ~~ix~~ mind than that. It is quite possible that they want to keep such a formation in existance and even make it a powerful force, even after the election, in order to have some effective politcal power to use as pressure on the Democrats. They gave the distinct impression of ~~ix~~ being extremely ~~ix~~ uncomfortable in the situation of powerlessness they have been in for the last decade. They need a little leverage against the government, and they need some form to get a handle on their own rank and file politically, and some handle on the youth.

All of this is just speculation, of course, but being there, and seeing the faces, and listening, I got the distinct feel that the UAW bureaucracy sees this as an important development and is putting some eggs in this basket. They brought 200 delegates, and they weren't just bodies. They were some of their political heavies.

Gibbons, in my ~~ix~~ opinion, has an additional axe to grind with this formation. And there is no doubt he played a key role in getting this going and intends to play a key role in it in the future. As you know, Fitzsimmons dissassociated the International IBT from this conference, saying that the President knows best and we have to go along with ~~ix~~ him. This is just typical of several actions by Fitzsimmons in the recent past since his deal with Nixon. Fitzsimmons' support to the wage-price freeze still makes a lot of Teamster officials wince. Fitzsimmons isn't a very effective representative of the interests of the Teamster bureaucracy, from their own point of view. In addition, as far as talent, power base, experience in the real world, everyone knows that Fitzsimmons is a real bumner and isn't even an office boy compared to Gibbons. What is more, Gibbons knows it and is not without ambition. But to take the Teamsters he has to have machinery far beyond the Central Conference of Teamsters and St. Louis. Now along comes Labor For Peace, an official labor political organization -- albiet on a single issue for the nonce -- with a ~~ix~~ "franchise" to set up an organization in any state, city or local union body that wants to oppose the war. And here's good old Hal Gibbons willing to pop around the country to lend a helping hand, and ~~ix~~ throwing his own considerable staff into this national process. If you wanted to build influence -- in the IBT and elsewhere -- nationally, you could think of less effective ways.

You are all familiar with the tensions ~~ix~~ between Reuther and Meany over Lovestone's international AFL-CIO policies, tensions which contributed mightily to the exit of the UAW from the AFL-CIO. Well, they are still there, and this new development fits in to that whole struggle, which won't be resolved ~~ix~~ with the election of a Democrat as president.

Of course, it remains to be seen. But these are some thoughts which were evoked by the actual scene at the conference.

In any case, in the present world context, with the Nixon-Breshnev-Mao deal defusing the antiwar movement internationally, or trying to, and with the CP knifing the antiwar movement in line with giving the deal a chance, and with the Vietnamese under extreme pressure, the fact that the largest gathering of union officials in the U.S. yet to take a stand against the war comes out with a demand for immediate U.S. withdrawal, is a very positive act in itself and should

be reported as such.