
Minutes of the National Left Wing Conference: New York City — June 21-24, 1919

by Fannie Horowitz
Secretary

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NATIONAL LEFT WING CONFERENCE
held June 21st, 1919 at 2 pm.

MANHATTAN LYCEUM,
66 East 4th Street, New York City.

First Session.

First session called to order at 2 pm.

[Louis] Fraina elected temporary chairman, Fannie Horowitz elected temporary secretary.

Fraina opened the conference, outlining briefly the cause and purpose of the conference.

Credentials Committee elected consisting of [Max] Cohen, [J.] Lasman, [Nick] Hourwich, [Jack] Carney, [Alfred] Wagenknecht, and [Joseph] Stilson.†

Pending report of the Credentials Committee, [Dennis] Batt on request reports for state of Michigan.

A message of greetings was received from the Political Prisoners of Leavenworth. *Motion carried* that the message be incorporated in the official minutes.

[Maurice] Paul reports for New York.

Glennon for No. Tonowanda, NY.
[Isaac] Ferguson reports for Chicago.
[W.E.] Kuehnel for Hartford, Conn.
[C.E.] Ruthenberg reports the vote for National and International delegates.

[John] Ballam reports for Massachusetts.
[Alexander] Stoklitsky reports for Russian Federation.

Key for California.

[Walter] Dillon for New Mexico.

[Harry] Hiltzik for the Jewish Federation.

Motion carried to admit all party members at the conference. Those not presenting party cards must be vouched for.

Report of Credentials Committee. Wagenknecht reports for majority, Cohen for minority.

Majority Report: That the 13 delegates from the Language Federations be seated with a voice and vote, and 66 other delegates from 14 states be seated.

Minority Report: That the 13 delegates from the Language Federations be seated with a voice but no vote, and the 66 other delegates from 14 states be seated.

Motion carried that uncontested part of Credentials Committee's report be accepted.

†- The account of the National Left Wing Conference in *The Revolutionary Age* does not include Hourwich in this list. As it is unlikely that a committee such as this would have an even number of members, the minutes are likely in error.

Dillon's credential questioned. *Motion carried* to seat him.

Motion carried to seat 3 delegates from Boston.

YPSL delegates seated with a voice but no vote.

Motion carried to accept Majority Report re: the seating of 13 delegates from the Language Federations with voice and vote.

[William] Bross Lloyd elected as permanent chairman. [Al] Renner elected as vice-chairman.

Fannie Horowitz elected as permanent secretary, and Rosenthal elected as assistant secretary.

Ruthenberg reports for Committee on Arrangements for conference re: rules of procedure and order of business. Report taken up seriatim.

Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 adopted on motion. Section 5 adopted with one change, to wit: "that the time for discussion be limited to 10 minutes instead of 15." Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 adopted on motion.

Motion carried that no speakers' list be kept and that only those rising and asking for the floor be recognized by the chairman.

On motion the committee's report on rules of procedure and order of business adopted as a whole.

Motion carried that Manifesto and Program Committee be elected consisting of Fraina, Batt, Stoklitsky, Ruthenberg, and Ferguson.

([Lawrence] Zitt objects to hand voting.)

Motion carried that an Organization, Finance, and Press Committee be elected which consists of Cohen, Wagenknecht, Hourwich, [Edward] Lindgren, and [Eadmonn] MacAlpine.

Motion carried that Committee on Labor be elected. [Ben] Gitlow, [Jack] Reed, [John] Anderson, Carney, and Jurgis elected.

Motion carried that Committee on Resolutions be elected. Ballam, Lloyd, [Oscar] Tyverovsky, Maurin, and Stilson elected.

Meeting adjourned till <illeg.>.

Second Session.

Sunday [June 22, 1919], 1:45 pm, Manhattan Lyceum, 66 East 4th Street, New York City.

Reading of minutes of previous session dispensed with on motion.

Communication read from SP of Springfield, Ill. extending greeting to Left Wing Conference.

Committee on Manifesto reports that the committee is divided. Fraina reports for the committee.

Motion carried that the report of the Manifesto Committee be taken up seriatim.

Amendment to refer the Manifesto to a new committee, *defeated*.

Original motion carried.

Report of Organization Committee is made on request, relating to the expenses of Conference. Report states that each delegate must be taxed \$50.00 to cover expenses.

Motion carried to refer back to committee to compute the actual expenses or cost of Conference.

On motion a collection was taken up towards the expenses of the Conference. Collection amounted to \$71.15.

Ukrainian delegates seated.

Committee [Fraina] proceeds with report on Manifesto.

First clause adopted on motion.

On motion the adoption was reconsidered.

On motion clauses 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 were adopted.

Motion carried to abandon mass meeting arranged for the evening and proceed with the Conference.

Motion carried that clause 8 be adopted.

Cohen reports expenses of Conference. States that there are 66 out of town delegates and their fare amounts to \$5,394.05 and that the delegates will have to be taxed \$50, as originally stated.

Motion carried to adopt the program as read by the Manifesto and Program Committee as a whole.

Motion carried that the committee print and distribute copies of the Manifesto to all delegates before end of Conference.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Third Session.

Sunday [June 22, 1919], 8 pm. Manhattan Lyceum, 66 East 4th Street, New York City.

Cohen requests that delegates pay over their \$50.00 or such part of it as they have with them.

Committee on Manifesto and Program continues its report.

*Second part of Program, sections 1, 2, 3 adopted.
Section 4 adopted.*

Committee retires for further work.

Fannie Horowitz, alternate, seated in place of [Harry] Waton.

Committee on Organization, Press, and Finance reports.

Wagenknecht reports for the Majority, Hourwich for the Minority.

Majority Report: That the name of this organization shall be known as the National Left Wing Section, Socialist Party.

Minority Report: That the name of this organization shall be known as the Communist Party of America.

Motion carried that Minority Report be ruled out of order.

Motion carried to suspend the rules.

Motion carried that a resolution be drawn for the formation of a new party by Ruthenberg and Hourwich and be submitted for discussion.

Such a resolution was drawn and submitted for discussion. *After a lengthy discussion the resolution was defeated.*

Meeting adjourned till Monday [June 23, 1919] 9 am.

Fourth Session.

Monday [June 23, 1919], 9:15 am at the 8th A.D. Headquarters, 122 Second Ave., NY.

Minutes of 2nd and 3rd sessions adopted on motion.

Report of Organization Committee accepted with correction by MacAlpine.

[Jay] Lovestone seated in place of Lindgren.

Dudarik seated in place of [George] Ashkenuzi.

Message of greetings received from the 2nd Branch City Central Committee Conference of Chicago.

Resolution read endorsing the formation of a new party September 1st [1919].

Amendment is made that in the event that the delegates of the suspended and expelled organizations of the party are not seated at the National Convention, August 30th, 1919, that we urge the Left Wing delegates to withdraw and join in the organization of a Communist Party on the basis of the call (issued by the Socialist Party of Michigan) and in the event that the National Convention be delayed that all delegates participate in the Michigan call convention; and further, that the National Council of the Left Wing send an invitation to the IWW, the WIU, and the SLP to send a committee to confer with the Committee of the Convention to devise a possible basis of common action.

Amendment to the amendment by Hiltzik, that it be resolved that this Conference endorse the call of the state of Michigan for a National Convention in Chicago for September 1st for the formation of a new Communist Party and that it recommend to its con-

stituents the election of delegates to the above mentioned convention.

The amendment to the amendment is ruled out of order.

The amendment is voted down 19-41, 24 not voting.

Motion carried to take up report of Organization Committee seriatim.

Meeting adjourned till 2 pm.

Fifth Session.

Monday [June 23, 1919], 2:15 pm at 8th A.D. Headquarters, 122 Second Ave., NY.

Motion carried that the meeting go into Executive Session.

Motion carried to elect an Emergency National Council. The following elected: Fraina, Ballam, Ferguson, [William] Rich, Wagenknecht, Cohen, Stoklitsky, O'Brien [???].

Regular session resumed.

Committee on Organization proceeded with its report.

Part 1 is adopted.

Part 2, **amendment** offered by Hourwich, that the Executive council shall consist of 9 elected by the Left Wing Conference, that [also be included] 1 additional delegate from the Central Executive Committee of each Foreign Language Federation.

Amendment to the amendment, that the amendment be decided by referendum.

Amendment to the amendment is ruled out of order.

Amendment is offered that this Conference agree to admit clause 2 of the majority report, adding that the joint federations be entitled to 3 additional delegates to the National Council.

That amendment is tabled.

Original clause 2 carried.

Motion carried to elect a regular National Executive Council. Following elected: Ruthenberg, Fraina, Ferguson, Ballam, [Bert] Wolfe, Cohen, Gitlow, [Jim] Larkin, and MacAlpine.

Motion carried that the Emergency National Council be dissolved.

Organization Committee continues its report.

Clauses 3, 4, 5 (5 has a, b, c, d, e) adopted.

Amendment made that in the event that if a, b, c, d, e are not realized, the National Council and Left Wing delegates proceed with the organization of a Communist Party at once.

Amendment is lost.

Batt resigns from the Manifesto Committee.

Motion carried to accept resignation.

Motion carried to dispense with filling vacancy until emergency arises.

Sections 6, 7, 8, and 9 of Program as reported by Manifesto Committee adopted on motion.

Section 10 adopted with amendment made by Larkin.

Meeting adjourned till 8 pm.

Sixth Session.

Monday [June 23, 1919], 8:10 pm. 8th A.D. Headquarters, 122 Second Ave., NYC.

Motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 11 pm.

Amendment offered in the form of Section 11 to the Program [providing] for the formation of a new party if the National Emergency Convention to be called August 30th [1919] is adjourned.

On motion, Section 11 was carried.

Hourwich offers resignation from Organization Committee.

Stoklitsky offers resignation from Organization Committee.

Motion carried to accept resignations.

Motion carried that vacancies be left open until such time as it becomes necessary to fill them.

Announcement made by one of the delegates from the Language Federations that 31 delegates decided to withhold their activities from the Conference until such time as they see fit to resume them.

Sections 12 and 13 of the report adopted on motion.

Report of Finance read.

Motion carried that report be adopted as a whole.

Press report.

Amendment, that papers endorsed by the Left Wing shall be subject to control as to editorial policy by National Council.

Amendment to the amendment, that the National Council endorses as Left Wing papers all such as are controlled by the Left Wing or any Federation, State, Local, or Branch, or Left Wing faction thereof, and that no other be endorsed.

Amendment to the amendment and amendment lost.

Motion carried to adopt the report as a whole.

On motion a vote of thanks was given to Local Boston for all property turned over in connection with *The Revolutionary Age*.

Committee on Labor Organization reports.

Reed reports for committee.

A message of greeting received from the Lithuanian branch of Worcester; greetings from Local New Bremen stating that they endorse the Left Wing Manifesto.

Meeting adjourned till Tuesday [June 24, 1919], 9 am.

Seventh Session.

Tuesday [June 24, 1919], 9 am at Hungarian Headquarters, 350 East 81st St., NY.

Gitlow elected chairman, Key vice-chairman. Paul and Key temporary secretaries.

Reed reporting.

McLeod seated for Rosenthal.

Anna Leve seated for Girsh.

Chairman of previous meetings reported ill.

Motion carried that report be taken up seriatim.

First paragraph adopted on motion.

Second paragraph adopted on motion.

Third paragraph adopted with following change, to wit: "that with legislative courts, police, armies under control of the Capitalists, the worker can only win the state power by extra-parliamentary mass action."

Fourth paragraph adopted.

Fifth clause stricken out on motion.

Sixth is adopted.

Motion to reconsider decision on paragraph 5. To delete the words "under the law."

Motion made by Fraina that on reconvening of next session, not motion, amendment, or resolution having for its object the reconsideration, rescinding, or nullifying of any previous measure adopted shall be received by the chairman or considered by the Conference.

Motion withdrawn.

Anderson resigns from Organization Committee.

Meeting adjourned.

Eighth Session.

Tuesday [June 24, 1919], 1:30 pm at Hungarian Headquarters, 350 East 81st St., NY.

Thompson requests privilege of the floor before leaving for home. Addresses delegates.

[Will] Weinstone seated in place of [Morris] Zucker.

Communication read from the 31 delegates withholding their activities in the Conference.

Paragraph 5 of the Labor Organization report carried with Larkin's amendment.

Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 adopted.

Program of Labor Committee report.

Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 adopted on motion.

Greetings received and read from Katterfeld.

Resolution from New Mexico condemning the NEC and endorsing the Left Wing.

Wagenknecht, who must leave for home, addresses the Conference.

On motion, report of Labor Committee adopted as whole.

Motion carried to elect Committee of 7 to act as permanent Labor Committee. Nine are nominated and on motion carried 9 stand as the Labor Committee. The following consists of the committee: [Jim] Cannon, [Pascal] Cosgrove, Carney, Reed, Stankowitz, Key, [Marion] Sproule, Gitlow, and Jurgis.

Committee on Resolutions reports, Lloyd reporting for same.

1. Resolution on whether elected Legislators should refuse to take office is rejected.

2. Resolution to start a movement to consolidate or effect unity among all radical and socialist organizations is adopted on motion.

3. To endorse Proletarian University, etc., referred

to National Council.

4. To extend greetings to YPSL, urging endorsement of the Left Wing Program and pledging them our financial and moral support. Unanimously adopted.

5. Endorsing the call for a strike July 4th. Adopted.

6. Sending of greetings to the Class War Prisoners with addition that we welcome all prisoners in Leavenworth into our ranks. Adopted.

7. To protest against deportation. Adopted.

8. On Mexican Intervention, expressing our opposition. Adopted.

9. Congratulating Russia and Hungary, and asking workers to refuse to handle all munitions. Adopted.

10. Participation in Workmen's, Soldiers', and Sailors' Councils. Referred to Executive Council.

Perpick addresses Conference before leaving for home.

Announcement made that all Western delegates will hold brief conference after final session.

11. On agrarian propaganda. Adopted.

12. On attitude legislators must take and orders they must comply with. Referred to National Executive Council.

On privileged motion greetings are extended to Canadian comrades.

Resolution submitted by Philadelphia delegation calling for the exclusion from membership in the party of all members who derive their income from rent, interest, and profit.

Resolution defeated.

Motion carried to terminate the Conference at 10 pm and that all unfinished business be turned over to National Council.

Committee on Manifesto and Program continues its report.

Section 4 of Platform adopted.

Section 5 including a and b adopted; section c is stricken out, and d is adopted as follows: "to win repre-

sentatives in public office, to serve as propagandists for the social revolution.” [Subsections] e and f adopted.

Section 6 including a, b, c adopted.

Section 7 adopted.

Section 8 including a, b, c, d, e, f, and g adopted.

Motion carried to adopt the report as a whole and referred to National Council.

Resolution to call a Conference in September of all revolutionary bodies to form a new party in NEC does not reinstate all suspended and expelled members. Adopted.

Final session of Conference adjourned.

Fannie Horowitz, Sec’y.

GRU NY

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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