The Third Conference of the British Minority Movement
By Earl Browder and Hans Stum

The Third Annual Conference of the National Minority Movement of Great Britain gathered in Battersea Towers, Battersea, London, on August 23 and 24. There were 892 delegates, including 244 delegates from the provinces, representing a membership of 506,000, in 201 organizations.

The important items on the agenda of the conference were: Aid to the Miners; the General Strike and its Lessons; the Reorganization of the Trade Union Movement; International Unity; Anti-Labor Legislation; and Organization of the Minority Movement. On each question, comprehensive resolutions were presented, debated, and adopted unanimously.

Aid to the Miners.

The whole character of the conference was determined by the circumstance that it met in the midst of an extremely acute class struggle in Great Britain. The situation at this moment became most critical, dominated the first and last note of the conference.

At the meeting of the 110 miners' delegates, this important resolution said in part: "The first has been the unimpeded import of foreign coal and its transport over the British railways. Together with that of stocks accumulated here before the lockout. In this way the capitalists have succeeded in keeping industry and transport going, and have, therefore, been in a position to deny the miners food. The general council has been absolutely nothing to stop this, whether by making definite recommendations to the unions concerned, by launching a national campaign, or by appealing to the Amsterdam International and its affiliated international secretaries."

"The second weapon of the capitalists has been to use the slogan of relief even when starving, boards of guardians have cut down relief to women and children below starvation level, the N. B. P. is about to report that "no starvation exists," scores of newborn babies have died of hunger, while at home the capitalists are doing all in their power to refuse permission to collect for relief purposes. Abroad there has been Baldwin's dastardly appeal to Americans to give the lead on practical proposals for the immediate help of the miners. They were told that of starvation. Single miners have been denied relief, babies have died of hunger, while millions of dollars have been given away in relief."

"The general council has thereby been interpreted by the government and coal owners as retreats, permitting them to increase their demands and to intensify their ruthless attempts to smash the Federation and its policy."

"The conference declares itself still prepared to fight for the retention of Hours, Wages and National Agreement, as obtained on April 30, and under no circumstances must any settlement be agreed upon without first being submitted to the whole membership for ratification."

The general council has been responsible for permitting desertions by District Federation officials, and calls upon the Miners' Federation, of Great Britain, the miners, to hold an extraordinary congress. After a militant, fighting speech from Arthur Homer, leader of the Miners' Minority Movement, whose name is known throughout the world for his work on the general strike, tried to force wage reductions on the miners. This conference declares itself still prepared to fight for the retention of Hours, Wages and National Agreement, as obtained on April 30, and under no circumstances must any settlement be agreed upon without first being submitted to the whole membership for ratification.

"This conference of miners' delegates, meeting under the auspices of the Minority Movement, warns the British public of the necessity of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, that the defeatist utterances for which they have been recently responsible, are being interpreted by the government and coal owners as retreats, permitting them to increase their demands and to intensify their ruthless attempts to smash the Federation and its policy."

"This conference of the Minority Movement declares that the failure of the general strike was primarily a failure of leadership. The leadership failed in the following ways:

1. To make preparations during the period of truce between Red Friday and the general strike.
2. In accepting the Coal Commission Report which means the reduction of the miners' wages.
3. In its refusal after the issue of the Coal Report to reform the provision of the miners' wage policy, which was also the policy of the miners and the working class, of no reductions in wages.
4. In trying to get the miners to accept reductions in wages after the general strike.
5. In general, not to carry the general strike to the logical conclusion of challenging the wage-cutting government.

This Minority Conference further declares that the general strike was forced upon the leaders by the rank and file and the only way to have intended to lead it to a victorious conclusion, because from the beginning they played with the idea of accepting a reduction in wages and never believed in the efficiency of the general strike. In these circumstances the government called the bluff of the general council. Feded with the demand for an extension of the strike, and afraid to accept the responsibility, the government made the Bermondsey Memorandum. This was an act of treachery which stimulated the capitalists to attack the workers all around. Only the steadfastness of the miners and the rank and file workers saved the workers from a more crushing defeat.
ment must be rebuilt on the basis of industrial union-
union reorganization, that the entire trade union move-
tion in the present conference points out that "the future
The general strike, it declares, signaled the end of the
strike, of even a deeper, more intense and more for-
treatment, as they completely capitulated to
The 'left' leaders, however, share
with a fighting working class policy. To this end the
conference pledges itself to strengthen the campaign
for the policy of the Minority Movement in the trade
unions, not only by securing trade union affiliations,
but also by developing a mass individual member-
ship."
The conference reiterated its previous policy on trade
union reorganization, that the entire trade union move-
ment must be rebuilt on the basis of industrial union-
unions in place of the present industrial groups of the
"The conference declares that no 'Left' leadership
can be trusted for the future, unless it breaks with the
flight wing policy and allies itself with the left
wing trade unionists organized in the Minority Move-
movement, and especially of the so-called left wing lead-
ers. Before the working masses of Great Britain is
now placed by the development of history the slogan
of 'change your leaders.' It is the function of the
leadership in the
civil council, the official leadership of the existing un-
ions, and especially of the so-called left wing lead-
ers, must be protected."
workers for workers at the
struggle for control of the unions, "must be representa-
tive of every section, of every group, that is actually
preparing for arbitration.
"Speaking for the executive bureau of the R. I. U.
E. Browder briefly addressed the conference.
"The Red International of Labor Unions, repre-
senting the revolutionary workers of the world, from
the beginning of the future, has been and
will be behind the miners with all its forces . . ."
Further he declared:
"Your problem is no longer only that of winning
the majority; it is now above all that of organizing
the power of that majority so that you can take con-
trol of the unions. The time has arrived when these
principles for which you are fighting must be tran-
scended into deeds, must be translated into active poli-
cies, must be translated into organization; from be-
ing the policies of the unofficial movement, they can
be put into effect as the official policy of the Trade
Unions of Britain."
The Problem of Anti-Labor Legislation.
The conference expressed deep regret at the current
situation of the working class, and its resolve to
strengthen the leadership of the Minority Move-
ment.
It was expressed that the Minority Move-
ment was entering upon a new phase of its work. The
initial period, when the dominant characteristic of its
activity was the practical side of its work; the sec-
ond period is that of political development, leading it
from defeat to defeat. The
British trade union movement from the traitors,
and especially of the so-called left wing lead-
ers who committed suicide in defence of free
speech;
the working masses of Great Britain must be
protected. The governmental proposals regarding
organized strike, railroad workers, and others who work
the object we aim at." It was pointed out that the pro-
posed regulations were an attempt to prevent unity
between clerical and manual workers, and an attempt to
enforce thoroughly reactionary elements in the gov-
ernmental service. The resolution concluded with the
following paragraph:
"The conference notes the statements of Mr.
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The health condition of the Minority Movement is shown not only by the steady growth noted above, but also by the character of the delegations, which come from all sections of the labor movement, and include the leaders as well as the young revolutionaries, and women as well as men. In addition to the veteran chairman, Tom Mann, who has spent 45 of his 70 years as an active worker and leader in the British unions, half the delegates were women and had been militant unionists before the war, including such well-known figures as Alan Gooch and others. That this was not a Communist conference was shown not only by these facts, but especially by the circumstance that only about 150 of the 902 delegates were members of the Communist Party.

Characteristic of the conference was the high degree of discipline displayed; for such a large conference to complete an agenda of dozens of important items in two days' time was surely a remarkable performance, and reflects the specific trade union tradition of the British working class. This was also shown in the extremely practical and realistic character of the discussion of all questions before the conference.

Meeting just one week before the Trade Union Congress at Bournemouth, the decisions of the Minority Movement Conference, expressing the demands of militant membership upon the leaders of the trade unions, have assumed great importance. Even the entire capitalist press has given it an unusual amount of attention at least and has not found it possible to ignore the expenditure of such sums sent to them by them: it was for this reason, because at this time the unions have been drained of their money by the general strike and miners' lockout, that it was expected that the Third Annual Conference, just concluded, would show a falling off in the number of delegates present. This, however, did not materialize. In spite of all handicaps, the conference showed the already an unexpectedly large in- crease. In addition, 43 unions wrote letters to the con- ference, declaring that they were unable to send dele- gates on account of lack of finances, but supporting its program and wishing it success. These are not included in the figures given above. It is estimated that unions with full 100,000 membership would have sent delegates if they had enough money in their treasuries.

Comparisons of the figures of the Second Conference in 1925, the Socialist Labor Congress in March, 1926, and the Third Conference just ended, give the following results:

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LENIN IS NO MORE. BUT THAT WHICH WAS CREATED BY HIM IS INESTRUCTRUCTABLE AND CONTINUES ON THE RIGHT LINES AND IN THE RIGHT HANDS.

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