

Democrats Adopt Platform With Liberal Veneer

PLATFORM DODGES DEMAND FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Labor Clause Contains Loopholes To Avoid Any Commitment Of Party; Farley's Steamroller In Complete Control At Convention

By JAY LOVESTONE
(Special Correspondent Workers Age)

PHILADELPHIA.—For five days and nights Farley whipped his cohorts into the wildest and noisiest political convention ever held in this country. Cowbells kept the Democratic donkeys hopping, braying and doing everything but kicking. Sirens, pig-calling, crowing, light-flashing, organ-pealing, applause-meters, monopoly of the air, a furious brass band, Jack Dempsey, Gene Tunney, Dizzy Dean, Lilly Pons, One-eyed Connolly, an Indian princess (pure blood), a live mule, Major Bowes talent, Harry Hirschfield, more than forty Senators, at least twenty governors, a special Mummer's parade, prayers of all stripes, a battery of cabinet members, a horde of Yankee diplomats, and last but not most important—President Roosevelt himself—were all brought into play to perform in one way or another so as to sweep off their feet not only the eleven hundred odd delegates but the country as a whole listening on the air. It was to be a grand stampede.

Farley's Follies of 1936 had three tasks to perform, three stunts to put over, three grand notions to sell to the country in order to clinch the overwhelming re-election of President Roosevelt. These three jobs were:

1. To put over the idea that here was a living, virile, confident aggregation of Democrats in striking contrast to the sluggish, apathetic, floundering collection of Republicans steeped in passivism and panic.

2. To convince even the most

cynical skeptic that all was milk and honey, the completest of harmony and homogeneity, in the Democratic fold. Only "Five Blind Men" took a walk and landed. . . .

3. To sell the great mass of workers and farmers, the great numbers of the middle class folks in the cities and towns the idea that in these hours of stress and strain the Democratic Party was a genuinely progressive party dedicated to the social welfare of the overwhelming majority of the country, free from all big business taint, and above all led by a miracle-maker, a super-human, sort of gift of god. To say the least, of course, this giant among giants was none other than Franklin Delano Roosevelt, now occupying the White House and to continue to occupy it for the next four short years.

Every decision arrived at on the convention floor, every syllable uttered in the convention hall, every camera clicking countless, every Klieg light torturing incessantly, every type of noise put on the air was dedicated to the achievement of these three goals. This was Farley's strategy. And to this strategy the platform, the keynote speech, the speech of acceptance were all subordinated—at least in so far as Farley could help it. And it would be silly to think of Farley not being able to help himself to anything and everything at the Philadelphia convention. Farley was the firm hand, Roosevelt, the charming voice.

To what extent did this strategy work? How far did Farley get with his plans? What is the real significance of the Democratic convention? What is the election outlook? What is ahead for the Democratic Party? What's class-conscious labor to do in this situation?

The Convention At Work

If noise-making, howling, shrieking, jumping, dancing, walking, yelling Waahooo—Wahoo, hand-clapping, parading and literally going nuts are to be considered yardsticks of intelligence and industry, of vitality and confidence, then this convention of nearly three thousand delegates and alternates was the epitome of genius and joy. Actually, everything was

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STEEL BARONS USE TERROR

Boss terror swooped down on the striking steel workers at Portsmouth, Ohio, resulting in a pitched battle between the armed strike-breaking thugs of the employers and the strikers. The strike pulled out 5,000 workers under the banner of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers.

One strikebreaker was killed when the company attempted to transport food from one section of the mills to another on a freight car. The strikers refused to let the car pass, whereupon the scabs jumped out brandishing guns, and yelling "Let 'em have it."

The sheriff has arrested a picket, James Sexton, on charges of murder. This action is a deliberate frame-up, since it is admitted that the scabs opened fire, and since the Sheriff's "evidence" consist of his word that he saw Sexton with a gun.

KNITWEAR UNION PLANS STRIKE

The eventuality of a general strike in the knitgoods industry when the present collective agreement expires on July 15th was provided for at a special joint meeting of the executive boards of the three locals comprising the Joint Council Knitgoods Workers Union, at Union headquarters on Tuesday, June 23rd. At this meeting it was decided that a General Strike Committee be established.

The meeting decided to call a conference between the Union and the knitgoods manufacturers to take up the question of the renewal of the agreement with the additional demands of the Union.

Realizing that the present attitude of the employers might not permit for a settlement through negotiations, the Executive Committee stressed the importance of proceeding with preparations for a general strike. To keep the membership informed of whatever transpires at the conferences and to have them ready for any emergency, the Executives decided upon the following meetings:

June 25th—Meeting of all helper crafts comprising the younger and most exploited sections of the industry.

July 2nd—Membership meeting of locals 155 and 2085 U.T.W.A.

July 14—On the eve of the expiration of the agreement a general membership meeting to give instructions to the Union membership as to the course of action to be taken on July 16th, the day following the expiration of the agreement.

NO PRINCIPLE INVOLVED IN VOTE FOR ROOSEVELT, SAYS BROWDER

New Deal Platform Is "Progressive"; Minor In "Peace" Report Paves Way For National Defense; S.P. Hit As "Sectarian".

By M. S. MAUTNER
(Special Correspondent Workers Age)

The nominating convention of the Communist Party, assembled at Madison Square Garden, chose Earl Browder and James Ford as presidential and vice-presidential candidates respectively, running on the slogan of "A free, happy and prosperous America for all", emphasizing that this is possible under capitalism. The platform of the party includes demands for old age, and other security laws, unemployment insurance, the government's taking over and running closed factories and mines, nationalization of munitions, moratorium on mortgages and other immediate economic demands. On the field of foreign policy it calls for sanctions against nations that conduct a foreign war contrary to the provisions of the Kellogg Pact. The platform called upon the "people" to safeguard their "traditional" rights and demanded unconditional freedom of press, speech and assemblage. The issue of the election, it claimed, is democracy versus fascism, and therefore called for the defeat of Landon.

(A detailed analysis of the platform will appear in the next issue).

The ninth convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., met last week in New York, and delivered itself of a maze of contradictory analyses in most cases and glaring omissions of analysis in others. After seven years of crisis, seven years of "bolshvization", seven years of "liberation from Lovestonism", the Party finds itself being "Americanized" by making the most vulgar opportunist concessions to the Democratic Party in the elections, to American imperialism on the war question. The line of the Seventh Congress was amplified and applied to the American scene, with dangerous results, on every important question facing the class-conscious workers.

The organization of the convention was a perfect example of the "new democracy"—by which the leaders explain to the membership. No speaker could get the floor without first having received permission of his state chairman. The state chairman then applied to the speakers' committee, who had to be told what "experience" the comrade wished to relate. Then and then only could he get the floor. A few of the higher-ups, Stachel, Hudson, Childs, and state leaders, "elaborated on" Browder's report—that is, touched on none of the questions raised therein, but reviewed general activities of the party in the trade union field. Rank-and-file speakers stuck closely to their appointed tasks, a recounting of the most recent strike in their areas.

Discussion Divorced From Reports

No one discussed the report of Browder or of Minor on the "peace question." After Minor had spoken the delegates dealt with the progress of the "united front and people's front" in their localities just as they had done after Browder. So obvious was this sharp division between the reports and the discussion, and therefore between the "role of the leaders" to explain,

and that of the rank-and-filers to accept and discuss the success of a line in the past which was just being "decided" now, that Browder was forced to discuss the glorious "unanimity" of "his" party in the summary. After all, how can it be that a group of workers, recruited from various sections of the country, some new in the movement, some old (and knowing better), should all not only agree, but be so crystal clear as not to even raise a single question or express doubt? (Especially considering the

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OFFICE WORKERS WIN STRIKE

A signal victory was scored by the Bookkeepers', Stenographers' and Accountants' Union (Local 12646) after a one day strike against the Metropolitan News Co., distributors of newspapers in New York City. The agreement, signed Wednesday, June 24, provides for the following: (1) Closed Shop; (2) A \$21 week minimum; (3) A 10% increase for all workers who had not received increases within the past year; (4) Time and a half for overtime; (5) Seniority rights; (6) Reinstatement of workers discharged in the Oct. 1935 strike.

The agreement covers fifty workers and is to run for one year. This victory, following upon the successful conclusion of agreements with the Jewish Day and the Jewish Morning Journal, marks an auspicious beginning for the new president of the BS & AU, Samuel Baron. Brother Baron headed the union negotiating committee. The successful settlement of the strike shows what a militant, constructive, progressive leadership can do even in this most difficult field of white collar workers.

CHICAGO LABOR AGAINST SPLIT

The Chicago Federation of Labor has adopted a resolution demanding that the Executive Council withdraw its "ultimatum" to the Committee for Industrial Organization to disband.

This action swings into the camp of the industrialists the second largest city labor council in the country, and one which has a history of progressivism. It is today the basis of the soundest local labor party, the Chicago and Cook County Labor Party.

The resolution stresses the long existence of the problem of organization of the unorganized and states that "the action of the A. F. of L. . . . in serving an ultimatum . . . on the C.I.O. is provocative and gives the press of the enemies of labor basis for talk of 'split' and, . . . the entire approach to the problem thru emphasis on ultimatums is disruptive of labor solidarity."

Therefore the Chicago Federation called on the Council not to take action prior to the convention "which alone" has the right to settle the question.

THE "NEW DEAL" CONVENTION

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cut and dried, no decisions were really made by the delegates, all decisions were made for the delegates in smoke-filled rooms, no discussion of any sort was had from the floor, no committee reports were open to debate or amendment from the floor, no questions could be posed to the convention officers in public. There was in operation a juggernaut, not a steam roller. It was a devilishly efficient machine which Farley had oiled and greased for the occasion. Along side of it, the Republican steam-roller at Cleveland was really a horse and buggy—with the horse crippled and old and the buggy shaky and breaking down.

For example, when the Committee on Rules and Order reporting thru Senator Bennet Champ Clark of Missouri for the abolition of the two-thirds rule in selecting the presidential nominee, brought in this recommendation to abolish a practice in force for more than a hundred years, it also automatically and simultaneously included a motion to close the discussion, to shut off debate. First of all, the vote came on closing discussion. An aye and nay vote was taken. There was a considerable number yelling nay. Permanent Chairman Robinson decreed the discussion closed—tho it was really never opened. It was hard to tell whether the ayes or nays had it, without resorting to a show of hands. Robinson followed the same course in determining the vote on the proposition itself. Senator Wagner, reporting for the Resolutions Committee, followed the identical procedure in getting the convention's "approval" of the platform.

We cite these instances merely to illustrate procedure and not, at this time, to evaluate the specific proposal and platform adopted as such. There is no doubt that the results, even if there were debate, would have been unchanged. Yet,

and the method of occupying the factories has become the dominant form.

Meet The King!

The People's Front policy of the Communist International has had a confusing and demoralizing effect on the left wing of the Belgian Social Democracy. Despite the heavy defeat as a result of its coalition policy, the left wing of the Belgian Labor Party aware of the reason for the defeat and having called for a sharp fight against the right wing, is now proposing another coalition government with the Communist Party included—a People's Front. In reality, such a People's Front would mean nothing more than the present coalition of Social Democrats, Catholics and Liberals plus the Communist Party.

The right wing leader of the Belgian Labor Party, Vandervelde, who is called "Boss" by the Social Democratic workers of Belgium, has come out for the People's Front, that is, for the participation of the Communist Party in the government.

Thus the left wing, confused by the right opportunist line of the C.I., is aiming in the dark.

The leader of the C.P. of Belgium, Jacquemotte, has made a visit to the king. He declared among other things that he would not wear a soft hat so as not to offend the king, and that he would not wear a top hat so as not to offend the workers. He therefore chose a straw hat as a compromise. He claims to have told the king that the C.P. is opposed to the monarchy. It goes without saying that genuine champions of a soviet dictatorship fighting for power have no business with a monarch. This ridiculous action

Farley, as stage director, would not allow the performance to be put over in any other fashion. It was an iron hand with a golden smile. I doubt whether any stimulus to the confidence of the delegates or the radio listeners was engendered by these methods. It was a foregone conclusion that Roosevelt and Garner would be renominated. Certainly, the convention delegation consisting of a very large proportion of paid government officials or party corporals and sergeants have all the confidence in the world that Roosevelt and Garner will clean up in the coming elections. Their expectations are very much justified.

A Storm Is Brewing

Superficially, outwardly, all appears in harmony and peace, unity and homogeneity in the Democratic Party. In a large measure this is due to the desire of the crowd that's in, to stick together, to hold on to what they have. In a more basic sense this surface unanimity is due to the fact that the forces making for disruption of the Democratic Party, as we have known it, are not yet sufficiently matured. That is why it is still possible to band together such a heterogeneous collection as the reactionary crew from the Southern tier of states, the more liberal—yet only mildly liberal—forces around Roosevelt, the Tammany types in the industrial centers of the east and middle and far west, and the more recently recruited forces in the rural communities.

Nevertheless, the incongruities are there. Here we do not have in mind all the Smiths, the Elys, and the Colbys. They and their ilk have lost considerable influence in the Democratic Party ranks. In the coming election campaign they will play no significant role. Rather we have in mind types like Senator Carter Glass of Virginia. Even the slightest tinge of social

can have only one meaning. The C.P. of Belgium wants to show its ability to govern in present-day bourgeois Belgium which is headed by a king. "Audience at court" were the exclusive privilege of the revisionists before the war—of the right wing of Social Democracy, which thus tried to prove its fitness to govern under the monarchy.

Doing A Straddle

The Communist fraction in the Chamber of Deputies of the Czechoslovakian parliament abstained in a vote on a large military loan of about 6 billion Czech crowns. In the senate, the Communists voted against it. In this manner, the C.P. of Czech. is obviously trying to follow the new instructions of the C.I. and at the same time to placate the revolutionary sentiments of the workers.

Bauer Corrects C.P.

In line with the present international Communist policy based on the resolutions of the 7th World Congress of the C.I., the C.P. of Austria has called upon its members and upon all anti-fascists to enter the fascist organizations en masse and has made a disguised proposal for coalition to the Schuschnigg government—if the latter demoralizes the regime.

However, in a united front pact recently concluded between the C.P. and the S.P., the voluntary entrance into fascist organizations is expressly forbidden and any coalition proposals to the Schuschnigg government are ruled out. Thus, we are faced with the tragic spectacle of the Austrian Social Democrats rejecting the gross opportunism of the C.P. and correcting its line along a sound, communist viewpoint.

progressivism is anathema to him. Judging by the way Robinson delivered his address it would not be incorrect to conclude that he also has real misgivings. One should never forget that the permanent chairman of Roosevelt's convention was none other than Senator Robinson of flogging and share-cropper fame (Arkansas). The same evaluation must be made of the Governor of Alabama (Scottsboro).

In fact, no small part of the acting in these Follies of 1936 was in preparation for 1940 when Roosevelt will be out of the way and there will then be a free for all in the question of a Democratic nominee for the presidency. Thus, Governor Earle delivered a speech of a certain sort. It was amongst the best offered in any capitalist party conclave—relatively frank, vigorous, aggressively liberal. Not only the speech but also the demonstration organized for the Pennsylvania Governor was with an eye on 1940. Likewise, the comic opera performance of Governor Curley of Massachusetts entering the convention hall accompanied by his state military adjutants, soldiers, special band, and covered with a bevy of placards bearing the legend "Curley—Man of Destiny!"

The decision to abolish the two-thirds rule is of great historical significance. For the moment, the Southern delegations yielded on the basis of a meaningless promise to recommend to the convention of 1940 a plan for reapportioning the convention delegations on the basis of Democratic voting strength rather than population. However, this does not mean that the Southern reactionaries in whose domain the ground for fascism is most fertile will accept their loss of domination in the party convention. It does mean that the present party leaders are aware of the sharpening of antagonisms and are now taking steps to prevent another paralysis such as the 1924 McAdoo-Al Smith case. More than that, by 1940 the Democratic Party will be in a more difficult situation and the Southern crew will demand more than one pound of flesh in the reapportionment market in order to have and to hold as much as possible of its erstwhile position of virtual veto-power over presidential nominees.

How Liberal Is The Democratic Party of Roosevelt?

In comparison with the Republican outfit the Democratic coterie is in general decisively more liberal. When we say that, we do not overlook the variety of types herded in the donkey stable. We have in mind only the present dominant policies and persons. Historically, it is correct to say that the Roosevelt is no less anxious than Landon to perpetuate and strengthen the present capitalist system, yet they do differ over no unimportant items in the realm of methods and policies to be pursued to achieve the stabilization and perpetuation of the present system of capitalist exploitation and bourgeois oppression. Crassly these differences come to a head over the question of social legislation. Here Roosevelt on the whole symbolizes a more progressive section of capital despite his waverings, inconsistencies, and resort to stratagems supposedly as a matter of smart politics. Governor Lehman's struggle with the Republican majority in the New York State Legislature is illustrative. Lehman demanded only the most inadequate social legislation. But even this was too much for the Wadsworths.

While a point by point comparison of the Democratic and Republican platforms would not reveal clearly any unbridgeable differences, yet it must be said that on the whole the Roosevelt document is more liberal. Indeed it was lib-

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"New Deal" Convention

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eralized a bit in its last secret hours in order to counteract the possible effects of that illegitimate offspring of the GOP—the Lemke-Coughlin racket.

The Democratic platform is more skillfully formulated and is far more rubberized. In the hands of a Farley and in the mouth of a Roosevelt it can be of any number of uses. It is so flexible in many respects that it is very difficult to violate it. This is especially true of the handling of the question of a constitutional amendment to enable the federal government to deal with the problem of social legislation. The platform grants the theoretical possibility of a constitutional amendment being necessary for such purposes, but it does not advocate such an amendment. What is still worse, in speaking of this issue and its relation to so-called states' rights and federal rights, the platform refers to "*their respective spheres*" and thinks of an amendment possible to keep "*each within its proper jurisdiction*." This is hollow hypocrisy, befogged evasion, deliberate dodging.

And while Senator Wagner was reading the extremely putty-like labor plank of the platform, officers of the United Rubber Workers were being treated in a truly Democratic fashion in Alabama and workers were picketing the convention hall in protest against Robinson's role in the Arkansas flogging. From the angle of evasion and omission, this section of the platform is especially significant.

As was expected, the high light and climax of the big show was the address of the President at Franklin Field. The writer has not seen such a massing of people at a political meeting in years—except in Nazi Germany. More than a hundred thousand jammed the arena in the face of intermittent showers and not very comfortable arrangements. Here one could see as clearly as possible how much Roosevelt stands head and shoulders above his partners in politics. The speech was well constructed, superbly delivered, and put over with solemnity and a more than usual varnish of sincerity.

But let no worker fall for all this drama. Lloyd George performed even more ably in his

prime when he battled for far more substantial social legislation. Of course, Roosevelt thundered against the "economic royalists."

So what? Did he say a syllable about what he or his party did to remove the "economic royalists" and the causes making for them? Of course not. And there was good reason for this: The very NRA itself served to strengthen the trend towards monopolization inherent in capitalism, organic with the very system which Roosevelt is striving to serve and save. Furthermore, regulation and taxation of monopoly are not in themselves antidotes to monopoly. At best they disturb some individual monopolists in the interest of the maintenance of the monopolist system as such.

There is the slimmest likelihood of Landon winning. The Liberty League and Hearst are allies of doubtful value to the Republican Party in the coming campaign. The Lemke fabrication may influence some Congressional seats but at a too high price in cold cash. The election will be hard fought. In spots it will be spectacular. The resulting relationship of forces in the House, the vote in the electoral college will very likely be closer than in 1932. But just now it appears that Roosevelt's popular vote will be at least as big.

From Browder to Hutcheson, labor appears tied in various ways and in varying degrees to the Roosevelt chariot of the Democratic Party. With the CP it is less frank, concealed and distorted.

The direction, however, is very definite. For its failure to put up a united labor ticket on an elementary but fundamental class basis in the 1936 elections, for its adoration and support of Roosevelt and his program this year, the American labor movement will pay a heavy price in the not distant future.

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