

# Sidelights on the Cleveland Conference

By ISRAEL AMTER

## THE CHAIRMAN

It was called a conference for "Progressive Political Action." William H. Johnston was the chairman. That should have told us what was going to happen. William H. Johnston—who used to beat the bass drum for the Salvation Army!

He talked, did William H. Johnston. He reported on the events since the last conference in Chicago, in February, 1922. He told of the plight of the workers, the greed of the bosses, the brutality of the government—

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# Some Strong Insights That Show Up the Labor Conference

(Continued from Page One)

...and, in one occasion, he spoke of the "progressive influence" that would give the workers the right to elect their representatives and direct labor's speech-writing and prepared for publication. Not a ripple of applause—only a "rolling of names and whistles." Would the stream of moonlight ever reach an end? It did when the man who bluffed that the workers would not be tyrannized by his government when Daugherty got his hands on the machine.

At last he stopped. Up jumped James O'Neal of the Socialist Party, editor of the notorious yellow sheet, the New York Call, breathless and excited.

"Mr. Chairman, is your speech to be had in printed form?"

Quite overcome with emotion that James O'Neal should have been so desirous of having his name in print, "Yes," he had no money, so we only got out 50 copies."

"Be sure to keep one for me!" replied Mr. O'Neal. The famous document will serve you as a sure guide to the illustrious editor of the New York Call, the vociferous proponent of a Labor Party of the toiling masses: the Labor Party that O'Neal and the yellow Socialists helped to turn yellow.

Yellow, oily, smirking, bowing to the representatives of the big unions, with the reactionaries and with the Socialist counter-revolutionary front, he joined the 245 International Hohnbonging with Keating, the ex-congressman from Colorado and present editor of "Labor," one of the most reactionary organs of the Conference.

Bombastically nominated as permanent chairman of the Conference, he represented the interests of the workers, for which reason I rise to place in nomination the name of William M. H. Johnston, the person who was nominated but who so overcame with the seriousness of his job, that he gave the already seriously handicapped chairman (mentally and morally) the further burden of another initial.

This was Johnston, greasy, slick and smooth, who had already sold out in Washington to the "progressive bloc"—sold his soul (if he had any) and his influence.

William H. Johnston chairman

structure means of doing work, it is the most constructive. In Moscow they operate on the same principle. The Soviet Republic inflect and take from any counter-revolutionary attack. In Washington, London and Paris there is a machine made up of diabolical schemers supported by the forces of the international diplomatic service, the influence of the moneyed interests and then such little things as the army and navy.

In Cleveland, there was also a machine—reaching from Jewell, the \$25,000 a year "worker" to the head of the Railway Craft Division of the A. F. of L. to Victor Berger, "Socialist" congressman from Wisconsin, the big baby of the conference.

The machine worked pretty smoothly. It was well oiled and only cracked a few times, when some delegates seemed to forget that this was a conference for "progressive political action." When, for instance, the delegates from the local labor unions declared to be seated and the secretary of the Credentials Committee tried to make the conference believe that it did not understand the English language. And when the speaker declared to be seated and the secretary of the Credentials Committee tried to make the conference believe that it did not understand the English language. And when the speaker declared to be seated and the secretary of the Credentials Committee tried to make the conference believe that it did not understand the English language.

The machine cracked a little and then went on—reporting the next morning the names of "fale" delegates who had been seated, and ignoring the others. Otto Branstetter, the loudest of the yellow Socialists, was a member of the same committee and recognized the names of several militant workers from Pittsburgh and Harrison of Cleveland, and others. These would be voted for a Labor Party. Forget it! Their names were not even reported!

The machine cracked again—a loud crack, a noisy, ominous crack when the Workers Party delegates asked about their credentials.

Ominous silence. The secretary replied that "no credentials had been received." It was a Farmer-Labor man... the reactionaries and Socialists had tricked him. He did not know that the betrayers of a Labor Party had hidden the Workers Party credentials. He did not know that when the credential of the Young Workers' League was found it had the word "held" across the face.

Then the vicious attack by Keating. The machine bellowed: "I read the sponsor of the attack: 'An American,' 'un-American,' 'against the flag and constitution,' 'disruptive,'

In the employ of the interests." The delegates of the railroad unions and for today. Never since the Labor Party machine will control America.

It is a peculiar kind of history that the great apostles of an idea are also its greatest betrayers. Indeed, the great betrayer of 1902 years ago has his disciples today.

In 1914 Social Democrats became the working class of the world. Ready to die for the idea, they were equally ready to traduce it. They did in Germany, France, England, Austria. In 1917, the Mensheviks in Russia; in 1918, the Socialists in Germany; in 1920 the Socialists in Italy and again in 1922 when they declared peace with Mussolini; from 1919 to 1922 in Yugoslavia, Austria, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Latvia, Germany, where they sold out the militant workers and the Communists, betrayed them into the hands of their enemies.

In 1922, the Socialists of America committed another of the basest crimes. These loud, boasting defenders of the working class! These valiant champions of a Labor Party!

How they boasted of it! They told the workers that the "American Labor Party" of New York would be the nucleus of the future Labor Party. A Labor Party alone would save the American working class from the further treachery of the capitalists and their parties. At last the Socialists saved the British workers had started more than a decade ago.

They, the Socialists, would fight for the Labor Party. Their best men would be present in Cleveland to save the Socialists, save the British workers had started more than a decade ago.

Yes, just like the Second and 245 Internationalist! Braggings of what they would do while the enemy isn't around!

But Cleveland was quite another matter. They used the avowed leaders of the Railroad Brotherhoods, enemies of a Labor Party. And some of the farmers, who had "tried out" the "rewarding" policy at the last election, were quite effective.

So the Socialists went in with the gang-of-the-leaders! Johnston to Hillgitt—the whole array of fakery and betrayers of the working class! The Socialists early gave evidence of their reactionary sentiment. They refused to seat the local union delegates. Again when the Workers Party came on the carpet. But it remained for James O'Neal to vote for the sponsor of the attack on the Workers Party because "the American workers are not yet ripe for independent political action!"

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## THE MACHINE

There is nothing more necessary than a machine. It is the most de-

## THE TRAITOR

Even the militants have their traitors.

## THE GREAT BETRAYERS

It is a peculiar kind of history that the great apostles of an idea are also its greatest betrayers.

## THE LOSS FIGHT

It was a valiant group—the Farmer-Laborites, the delegates of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Minnesota State Federation of Labor and scattering delegates.

## IN PROSPECT

The conference produced no Labor Party. But the Labor Party is in the process of being formed.

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