PARTY NEWS

THE 1950 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY

The Conference was perhaps the most representative one held by the World Socialist Party in recent years. Present were comrades from Boston, New Jersey, Lansing, Mich., San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Detroit. A member of the Socialist Party of Canada likewise participated in the proceedings.

The Conference was called to order by the National Secretary, who, following completion of procedural requirements for the Conference, elaborated on a report sent out by the National Administrative Committee to the membership prior to the Conference, and dealing with the progress of the WSP since the transfer of the National Office to Detroit.

The report pointed out that the actual numerical membership of the Party had fallen off about 25% since the transfer, but since practically all of these members were dropped for non-payment of dues and general lack of interest in the socialist movement, this was only a loss of "paper" membership. On the positive side, the organization had co-ordinated its activities better, and the membership was more closely knit in socialist work.

The Foreign Secretary in his report to the Conference stated that correspondence and minutes are now exchanged regularly with the five other companion parties of socialism in Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Ireland, as well as with the Auckland Group of N. Z. He commented that progress in these parties has been very slow, but that they are holding their own surprisingly well in view of the world-wide anti-communist hysteria. The Socialist Party of Ireland, an extremely young party, has been carrying on effectively in the face of the dominant position occupied by the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Finances

A summary of finances for the national organization from December 15, 1949 to September 1, 1950 showed receipts of $1712.74 and expenditures of $1496.50. Altho a substantial payment was made on the debt to the printer for back issues of **The Western Socialist**, the Party still owes almost $400. Sympathizers and friends of **The Western Socialist** would help the socialist movement considerably by contributing to paying off this debt.

Decisions passed at the 1949 Annual Conference of the WSP were then reviewed. A committee was established to draw up the Party Constitution to include all the changes of recent years and place them in their proper place. A decision was also made that the question of revising the Declaration of Principles would be open to discussion among the membership between now and the next conference.

The political situation in the United States and the function of the World Socialist Party as a political organization occupied the close attention of the delegates. In view of this political situation, the delegates demanded greater participation by the members, and an amendment to the constitution was passed — subject to referendum approval — setting up minimum requirements to remain a member in the World Socialist Party.

Also, the delegates expressed added determination to continue as a political organization despite the "anti-subversive" acts now being passed in Congress and in the various state legislatures. Indeed, in Michigan, where the conference was held, a bill was pending at the time of the Conference, which would empower the State Police to set up a Gestapo to ferret out "Reds" (and this could be interpreted to include genuine socialists), and to permit private citizens to inform on any suspected "Communist" without their having

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ECONOMIC NOTES

REVOLUTION IN DETROIT?

"A revolution has taken place in Detroit." So writes Edwin Lahey from Washington in the **Detroit Free Press** on September 20. Not the revolution of which they used to talk about in the violent days of Detroit. It is a different kind of revolution, a complete turn about face for the union and the corporations in the auto industry. Now instead of the workers cursing and swearing at management, pulling sit-down strikes, everything is lovey-dovey. "The automobile industry and the UAW (CIO) are speaking well of each other. You can't find a recrimination anywhere. Dynamic Detroit is at peace, apparently for a long time to come."

"This is indeed a revolution."

So writes Lahey. According to him, the love-feast between the workers and the capitalists in the automobile industry makes the idyll of Tristan and Isolde look like a blind-pig romance by comparison.

A NEW DEPARTURE

What apparently gave Mr. Lahey the "lead" for his story was the new departure taken in this last round of wage increases, properly called now the Fourth Round, because in the last negotiations pensions and health insurance, but no wage increases, were gained by the union. First on May of this year General Motors signed a five year contract with the UAW. A four cents an hour increase was granted plus a four cents an hour "productivity" increase to be given each year for the next four years. Wages are again tied to the cost of living index figures issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in Washington. On September 1, under this escalator clause, an additional five cents an hour was granted because of the rise in the price index, thus bringing the production workers nine cents on hour total increase. Skilled workers, as a bribe because of the shortage of skilled labor, were given an additional five cents an hour. This 9-14 cents an hour became the pattern of the industry. After the GM contract was signed, UAW's Reuther and Johnstone were shown smiling and shaking hands, interlockingly, with GM's Anderson and Seaton.

But the real "new departure" in the auto industry began when the Chrysler Corporation, which employs over 100,000 workers, called in reporters and announced that it was granting 10 cents an hour to production workers and 15 cents an hour to skilled workers. It was a bombshell. Here last spring the Chrysler workers walked the bricks for 100 days and in the end received a pension-insurance plan not much