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ALL FARMERS' EYES SET ON CHICAGO CONFERENCE

What Is the Position of the United Farmers League in a United Front Conference?

BY ALFRED TIALA

FRIENDS AND FELLOW FARMERS:

In view of the fact that there are more delegates present here from other farm organizations than from the United Farmers League, it is necessary, I think, that the position of the United Farmers League shall be made clear to all.

Collective Leadership

First of all, whatever we farmers want to do to better our conditions we will need for that purpose organized leadership. We have had some very sad experience in the past. The membership of the different organizations were seldom consulted when action was taken. The leaders acted autocentrically without any sense of responsibility toward the members. We must do away with this. In its place we must establish collective leadership that is responsible to and controlled by the rank and file of the farmers.

For the Poorest Farmers

Secondly, the United Farmers League is not interested in fighting in behalf of all farmers. We fight only in behalf of the poor, small and middle strata of farmers. We do not fight in behalf of the rich, gentleman, creditor farmers. Only actual dirt farmers or agricultural wage workers are admitted into our organizations. We have no welcome for the so-called farmers' friends—busted bankers, lawyers without clients, and politicians with or without offices—who have used the organizations of the farmers for the purpose of feathering their own nests.

If, in some cases, professional men or local business men want to help us, well and good, but their place is not within the ranks of our organization. If we were to allow them to come in they would soon acquire leadership, as has been shown in the past, and would divert the organization from its true purpose.

Mass Action

Our third principle in the United Farmers League is that we rely upon mass action. We do not believe in lobbying, as many farm organizations do. Lobbying only helps the lobbyists. Instead of influencing the politicians the lobbyist who is supposed to be serving the interests of the farmers, becomes influenced by the gentlemen with whom he has to deal, with the result that the interests of the impoverished farmers are overlooked at the round table conferences. Lobbying, therefore, is a futile and costly pastime as far as we are concerned.

The same is true in regard to elections. Time and again we have gone to the polls and elected "good men" into office. Before election time these "good men" promise us everything and after election time they serve the interests of the money men. Give the "good men" in office a chance, we are told, but the only ones to get help are the trusts and the banks. Give Roosevelt more time, is the cry now, but it took him only a few hours to give the banks a moratorium that enabled the banks to hold billions of dollars of workers and farmers deposits.

It is high time that we did something for ourselves, relying only upon ourselves, upon united mass action. How have we stopped foreclosures and evictions? Not by sending men to lobby for us. Not by relying on the politicians in office. We have stopped foreclosures and evictions by mass action. Oh, but it is illegal, cry the creditors—the banks and the insurance companies—in alarm.

What if it is! Who made the robber laws? We did not. They did. In this class struggle that we are waging, we even have to fight against the laws that were made for the purpose of binding us. The time has come when we, if we want to live, will have to raise human rights and our class rights above the class-interest laws of these who rob us.

The Farm Strike

We farmers are learning to use a new weapon. It is the mass strike. Unfortunately we have not learned to use it as effectively as it can be used. But I am sure that we are going to learn. There

Summary of a speech delivered at the Wausau Conference of the Wisconsin United Farmers League on Oct. 11, 1933.

is now a farm strike proposed; but the rank and file of us have not been consulted either in regard to the demands of the strike or in regard to the manner in which the strike is to be conducted. We are merely asked to await orders. Later we'll be ordered to stop striking, again without consulting our wishes.

I am quite sure that one of the reasons why this sort of strike is being called is to forestall the national wide rank and file movement of farmers which is to convene in Chicago on November 15 to the 18. The second reason for this sort of strike is to bring confusion and a feeling of weakness into the ranks of the farmers.

If this strike is going to be called, it will become the duty of every member of the United Farmers League to throw his energy into the strike. We will have to see to it that the strike becomes a genuine one. Rank-and-file strike committees will have to be set up. Picketing will have to be organized. A very necessary thing, if we want to win our strike, is unity with the city workers.

Unity With Workers

The boss class, through its control of the press, the radio, the movies and other organs of propaganda, has kept the farmers and the workers apart. By keeping us divided they manage to keep us weak and so they can rob both sections of the working class. We farmers are beginning to realize that something must be done by us quickly or we all will soon be migratory workers, homeless and jobless.

The present so-called farm relief plans are designed and executed with the purpose of creating a rift between the farmers and the city workers. When we go out to fight for higher prices for our products we must insist that it is not to be at the expense of the city workers but must come out of the profits of the monopolies and profiteers. It is of the utmost importance that we gain the help of the city workers in our struggles.

We have had examples already that the city workers will help us. They have come out and helped us stop foreclosures and evictions. They have marched with us in our demands for relief. The workers of Chicago have promised that they will look after the needs of the thousands of farmer delegates coming to the Second National Conference. In turn, farmers throughout the country have in many instances provided city workers, who were on strike, with food to enable the workers to fight for better pay and better living conditions.

Unity of All Farmers

The United Farmers League stands for the unity of all impoverished, toiling farmers and I am convinced that the correctness of our principles will mean finally that the United Farmers League will become the leader, even if not the only organization, of the farmers' movement in the country. We do not claim that we are perfect. But we are striving to do our best and we are striving for unity with other farm organizations.

However, we don't believe in fighting for useless issues. For instance we cannot agree to unite for a struggle for inflation. Inflation is a measure to help a dying system revive temporarily, just as strychnine is injected into a dying man to quicken the heart beat for a little while. Inflation means more profits for the profiteers and a lower standard of living for the farmers and workers.

Cancellation of Debts

We of the United Farmers League are proposing cancellation of all secured debts.

Some will object on the ground that it is dishonest to repudiate honestly contracted debts. Our answer is that in the first place

these debts were not "honestly" contracted. These debts were forced upon us because we could not get along at the time without mortgaging our future. In the second place, is it more honest than cancellation to cheapen the money until it is worthless and then "pay off" our debts with this worthless paper? Is this form of cheating more honest than repudiation of debts when we know that we are not able to pay these debts? I believe not.

We could not agree on a struggle to remove Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, because we believe that replacing one politician and master-class servant by another will do us no good.

We do not expect all the farmers as yet to agree on the full program of the United Farmers League. Many farmers possibly would not agree with us that it is actually beneficial for us farmers to go out and help organize the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union.

But there are issues upon which we can agree. We can agree upon a fight to save our homes; we can agree to fight for higher prices for our products, and I think we can agree on a fight for the cancellation of our debts. Let us get together into one solid fighting front on these issues upon which we can agree.

When we enter the United Front that does not mean that any organization needs to lose its identity or independent character, nor does it mean that we should hide our own particular program. In the course of the united front struggles the programs can be brought forward, analyzed and explained, and undoubtedly the program that best fulfills the requirements of the farmers will finally become the program of all.

Organization for Results

When we organize it must be for a purpose other than merely to have something big to look at and to admire. The purpose of organization must be to get results for the farmers—a better standard of living and safety from the worst features of the crisis.

A small organization that will fight will accomplish more than a large organization that remains inactive. An organization that will get out and fight will grow and become bigger and stronger as time goes on. And we'll have to get away from the idea that somebody must come and organize us.

The farmers themselves must become the organizers. The push must come from the rank and file. It is to the interest of the banker class to keep us thinking that we can't do the trick ourselves. The sooner we get that kind of old notions out of our heads the better it will be for us.

The boss class regards us as dumb beasts of the field. But we are ceasing to be dumb. We are learning to organize. Not only are we thinking, but we are even beginning to know how to talk, how to express our thoughts. Dirt farmers have been doing all the talking here this afternoon.

The Chicago Conference

Before I close I want to say one more word on the Chicago Conference. No farmer can afford to consider himself not interested in this momentous Conference. The decisions and plans that must be made and will be made in Chicago will involve, in one way or another, every farmer in America before very long. For that reason it is highly important that every locality of the country shall be well represented by delegates.

And now in conclusion, so that you may derive a correct idea of how the United Farmers League functions, I want to say that the ideas I have expressed here are not my personal opinions. They are the collective ideas of thousands of farmers in many states organized in the United Farmers League. These collective ideas have been hammered out after years of experience in struggles, after years of threatening these things out in mass meeting after mass meeting. It merely happens that I have been chosen as the spokesman to bring these collective experiences and the collective thought to new sections of the American farm masses for their consideration here today.



The Farmers Second National Conference will map a fight against the New Deal of Roosevelt—the N. R. A., and the A. A. A. which mean destruction of farm products and lower standards of living for farmers and workers.

STRIKING COTTON PICKERS WIN 25 P. C. WAGE RAISE

Wage Increase Will Add 2 Million Dollars to Workers' Income

TULARE, Calif.—After four weeks of heroic struggle against vigilante terror, murder, starvation, and mass arrests of leaders, the striking cotton pickers are within sight of victory.

The cotton ranchers and finance corporations have offered the strikers 75 cents a hundred pounds. All locals of the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union in the cotton fields have voted to accept this increase if the following conditions are met: 75 cents per hundred pounds to be the minimum wage, that hiring be done through the union, that armed force be withdrawn from the fields.

Almost 100 growers have thus far signed a contract to abide by this agreement, and their fields are now picked by workers sent by the union.

The granting of 75 cents per hundred pounds represents a wage increase of 25 percent. This will add one million dollars to the wages of the strikers for the 1933 season, and one million dollars to pickers not on strike.

The outstanding feature of the strike is the extraordinary unity of the Mexican, Negro, and white American workers. Despite repeated attempts of the ranchers to divide the cotton pickers on the basis of color and nationality, the workers have refused to be divided.

Olive Pickers Strike

LINDSAY, Calif.—One hundred olive pickers have walked out spontaneously against a cut in wages at olive groves here.

Farm Strike Rages as Pickets Tighten Hold on Roads; Moves of Reno Fail to Break Strike

Iowa Farmers Stop Train and Release 8 Carloads of Cattle; Wisconsin Farmers Blame Bombings on Milk Trust Seeking to Provoke Violence

DES MOINES, Iowa, Nov. 7.—Despite Milo Reno's orders to "suspend" the farm strike, rank and file farmers in several states went right on picketing and stopping the shipments of farm products to market.

Stop Train in Iowa
On Nov. 5 at Lawton, Iowa, farm pickets succeeded in stopping a train on the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. Eight carloads of cattle were turned loose. The train was stopped by heaping a large stack of ties on the tracks.

Governor Herring has declared that if the local authorities cannot prevent picketing, the state "would step in," meaning that he will send the militia against the farm pickets.

Another Picket Killed
Near Dakota City, Nebr., a car driven by Harry Jackson drove into a truck which was being unloaded by pickets. The truck was overturned and a picket, Frank Fletcher, was killed. Three other pickets, John Pallas, William Winget, and Jerry Phillip, were injured.

The driver and his companion are being held. Threatening the picket line at the Plattsmouth bridge over the Missouri river, Sheriff W. A. DeMoss said at Glenwood, Iowa: "A lot of farmers are going down to that bridge who won't come back." At this same bridge on Nov. 3, a "law and order league" organized by rich farmers battled the pickets in attempts to get through scab trucks.

On Nov. 3, two scabs who refused to stop were shot.

289 Boys Killed, 20,379 Injured Thus Far In Reforestation Camps

WASHINGTON, D. C.—In an interview given a reporter of the Washington bureau of the Daily Worker, an official at the headquarters of the Civilian Conservation Corps (reforestation camps) revealed that 289 boys have been killed and 20,379 injured in the first six months in these camps.

Roosevelt to Set Up New Concentration Camps for Homeless Unemployed

The death rate in the reforestation camps is about six times the rate reported last April by the Department of Labor for all industries. A prominent research engineer has warned that "at least 100 more lives will be wasted in the next six months if Fechner doesn't do more than to write letters."

Delegations Speed on Way to Opening Wednesday Nov. 15

750 DELEGATES FROM EVERY PART OF UNITED STATES EXPECTED TO ATTEND FARMERS SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

40 STATES WILL BE REPRESENTED

Militant Left-Wing Trade Union Center Endorses the Conference and Calls on All Organized and Unorganized Workers for Support

CHICAGO, Nov. 7.—As the trucks and cars carrying delegates to the Farmers Second National Conference speed on their way to this great mid-west industrial city where the Conference will be held Nov. 15 to 18, dirt farmers over the entire country are looking to the Conference to give an answer to their problems which become more pressing every day.

The fierce battles being waged by farm pickets in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, make more imperative than ever a united front of all small and middle farmers for struggle to win immediate relief from starvation, foreclosure and eviction, and the effects of disastrously low prices.

750 Delegates Expected
Reports coming into Conference headquarters up to Nov. 2 indicated that 600 delegates had already been elected. It is expected that 750 delegates will be here when the Conference opens.

The Montana delegation left this morning. Twenty-four delegates, five of them women, took off in two cars and a huge truck. The truck was built like a house, with windows and a stove inside. Three other delegates from Montana have left by other means.

Expect 50 From Iowa
Fifty delegates are expected from Iowa this year. Last year there were none from Iowa. Organizers have been in Kansas in the last two weeks, and it is expected that this state will also be represented in Chicago.

From darkest Dixie, where lynch terror is riding rampant against Negroes, there will be a delegation of 30 Negro and white farmers. Whereas only Alabama sent delegates last year, this year Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana and the Carolinas will join Alabama in sending delegates.

Last year, only the Philadelphia milk shed was represented. The Second Conference will see dairy farmers from the New York, Chicago, Baltimore, Milwaukee, and Sioux City milk sheds in addition to Philadelphia.

Support From T. U. U. L.
In the meantime, expressions of solidarity from workers' organizations continue to pour into the office of the Farmers Second National Conference. The National Executive Board of the Trade Union Unity League, nation-wide left-wing industrial union center, has issued a statement endorsing the Conference, as well as the farm strike.

"The National Executive Board of the Trade Union Unity League" says the statement, (printed in full on page 3), "calls upon its entire membership, the members of the American Federation of Labor, and the unorganized workers to rally to the support of the farmers who are fighting against the robbery inflicted upon them by the bankers and their Wall Street government."

"The Trade Union Unity League endorses the Farmers Second National Conference and calls upon all workers, organized and unorganized, and in the first place upon its own affiliated organizations, to give full support to the successful carrying through of the Farmers Second National Conference."

"We call upon all workers and workers' organizations in cities where the delegates will come through to hold meetings to greet the delegates, to support them with food and lodgings. We call upon all workers' organizations to elect fraternal delegates from the nearby centers as well as adopt resolutions of greetings to the Farmers Conference and send them to the Conference hall, 2457 West Chicago av., Chicago, Ill."

The statement concludes: "Forward to the solidarity and common struggle of the industrial workers, agricultural laborers, and poor and working farmers."

"National Executive Board, Trade Union Unity League, Wm. Z. Foster, Secretary."

CALIF. FARMERS STRIKE AGAINST POWER COMPANY

U. F. L. Leads Fight for Cut in Rates; Delegates Sent to Chi. Conf.

By a Farmer Reporter
CHOWCHILLA, Calif.—For the last month and a half, about 300 farmers in this section have been carrying on a strike against the electric company for a 50 percent reduction in power rates.

After struggling for years to pay their large power bills, these farmers have decided, through their militant organization, the United Farmers League, that they would declare their inability to pay more than half their electric bills and have a showdown with the power company.

When the electric company turns off the power on a farmer's ranch, he goes to a United Farmers League committee, elected by the farmers, and obtains a permit to turn his power back on, not as an individual, but as the organization. Should the power be cut off again, a meeting is called and if wires are cut or fuses pulled, they are replaced by an experienced electrician hired by the U. F. L.

Such a meeting was held Oct. 25 in Chowchilla on a farmer's ranch and the power was turned on. An impressive meeting was held with speeches and a little ceremony in which all present held a rope which was tied to the switch on the pump which was the only means this farmer had of obtaining any water. No representative of the power company was present.

Should this farmer's electricity be turned off again, the United Farmers League will turn it on again and picket his ranch. Let us back these farmers in the struggle with similar strikes in other parts of the United States.

We are sending a delegate to the Farmers Second National Conference.

STRIKING FARMERS EXTEND RELIEF TO STRIKING WORKERS

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.—A truckload of food has been donated by members of the Farm Holiday Assn. of Minnesota to striking holostery workers here. The truck was laden with potatoes, butter, cream, chickens, turnips, carrots, and other vegetables.

Wisconsin Program and Principles in Next Week's Issue

Next week's issue of the Producers News will contain the full Program and Principles of the Wisconsin United Farmers League, as adopted at the Wausau conference on Oct. 11. Order special bundles immediately for special distribution. For 100 copies or more, the cost is one cent each. For less than 100, two cents apiece.