

DIGEST OF PROCEEDINGS

National Emergency Conference
October 27th, 28th, 29th, 1939
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The full report of the proceedings of the conference will be issued to the branches as soon as possible.

This material is presented so that every delegate and branch may have the essential outline of the conference, which gives the League a clear and energetic direction. The conference deliberately focused its attention on the immediate tasks presented by the war in Europe and its use by reactionaries, under the leadership at present of Martin Dies, to limit and destroy American rights.

The following material is a summary containing:

- 1) A precis of Dr. Ward's speech on Friday night, October 27th, 1939
- 2) A summary of the conference dinner meeting on Saturday, October 28th, 1939
 - a) Commission on Domestic Policy
 - b) Commission on Foreign Policy
 - c) Dr. Ward's address
 - d) Summary report of the Credentials Committee
- 3) The Purpose and Program (in full)

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ABSTRACT OF DR. HARRY F. WARD'S SPEECH - OCTOBER 27TH, 1939

Mr. Chairman, fellow members: - This is the first opportunity I have had to be among friends since I met the enemy - the Dies Committee. Let us understand clearly what the job is here. The task before us is not to approve, or reject, or amend the statement of the National Board of September 23rd, which you all have been discussing. What this membership conference has to do is to decide on the program of the League for the winter of 1939-40, and what you decide here then has to go to the National Committee for its approval.

The issue of neutrality is almost settled by the course of events, and the Board recommends that the statement of September 23rd on this point remain. Our really practical and vital job in relation to war trade legislation is to watch the administration of cash-and-carry legislation to prevent evasions and any attempts to change it which may later involve us in war. Our job is to be the watch-dog of the country on the war trade and to see that it does not carry this country into war. (APPLAUSE)

In this situation every eye is fastened upon Europe, and China is forgotten. But we cannot forget China. We are vitally concerned with the securing of an embargo upon Japan.

I hear people saying that this is a "phony" war. But is there any day that men are not killed, women widowed and children left fatherless? The trouble is that in our safety here we ignore these things. For that reason let us remember our duty to do what lies within us to get a negotiated peace at the earliest possible moment. Furthermore, the longer the war lasts, the greater the pressure to get us in. And the United States has a heavy obligation to see that we get neither a Munich nor a Versailles. This obligation is all the more imperative since we are putting, under certain conditions, our economic resources at the disposal of the Allies.

Now we come to the field of democratic rights in our country. The mere threat of war is being used to arouse the emotions and passions that enable the destruction of our democratic rights. I call your attention to the fact that it was after our actual engagement in the last ^{war} before you could get the Palmer Raids. Now we get the war spirit before the war. And the Dies Committee is in the forefront of the war-mongers. You know what the objectives of the Dies Committee are. You don't think, do you, that Dies is spilling all this stuff just on account of us? As I told the reporters, he is using us as a stick to beat the Administration. He doesn't seize our membership list anywhere else but Washington. Now, why did he want them in Washington? (LAUGHTER) Simply to accuse the New Deal of having "communists" or "fellow travelers" in offices in Washington. A great many people are beginning to find that we are fighting in their behalf, and they will be fighting along with us before the winter is through on this front line against the Dies Committee. (APPLAUSE)

When I was down before the Dies Committee, they kept me there for seven hours, and I had to fight for all those seven hours to get into the record the things they were supposed to investigate, namely, our activities. They didn't want that. They wanted to keep that out. All they wanted was to get into the newspaper headlines repeated charges that we were a "communist-controlled" organization, which is a lie.

The Dies Committee's records are full of inquiries into the opinions and beliefs of American citizens. It is a long time since we had the Star Chamber in the English-speaking world; and it is a longer time since they had the Inquisition in the Spanish-speaking world. In the Dies Committee, you have dictatorial government by committee, something unknown and unprovided for in American procedure. Mr. Dies attempts to intimidate government workers, and to inquire into the thoughts of American citizens. What then becomes of the secrecy of the ballot? I asked the Committee where in the Constitution they got the power to ask questions concerning private opinions and beliefs of American citizens.

Once you start out limiting the opinions of Americans on political issues, you start restricting the rights of the American people. And once you have done that, you have cut out the heart of our democracy. Our fight for this winter is to stop Dies and the forces behind him. It is time to launch the counter-attack. And remember this, that you cannot fight successfully unless you build our organization. Our job is to launch immediately such a **big** and effective campaign against the menace of **the** Dies Committee to all civil liberties that the country will respond to it, and he will not be able to continue his "sordid procedure" of character assassination through the headlines. (APPLAUSE)

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REPORT ON DOMESTIC POLICY

Miss Alice Barrows, of Washington, D.C., reported that the four main issues in domestic policy are:

1. Dies Committee
2. Wagner Act
3. Wages and Hours
4. The anti-alien and sedition bills

The fundamental fight must be on civil rights and labor's rights. The Dies Committee is attacking civil rights in order to smear the New Deal. The newly-formed Smith Committee is attacking labor's rights through a vicious smearing of the National Labor Relations Board.

Miss Barrows emphasized: "We have been the one organization in the country that stood up to Dies and said, 'You shall not do this thing'. We have taken the leadership and we are going on, but let us go on with power, with strength, with enthusiasm, and with discipline, and we will wipe out this man and his works, and all other reactionary and fascist forces."

The commission insisted on the need for discipline and close-knit organization within each branch, and among the branches, in order "to move as a unit in a steady march to preserve the civil rights of this country". (APPLAUSE)

REPORT ON FOREIGN POLICY

The chairman of this commission, Dr. Max Yergan of New York City, reported: "Gave unanimous approval to the objective -- 'prevent the involvement of the United States in war' -- ". (APPLAUSE) The commission also overwhelmingly voted to support the position taken by the Board on September 23rd on the German-Soviet Pact, in which it neither approved or disapproved the Pact. A motion was made and carried that the Board consider a proposal for a peace conference made up of representatives of different organizations. "The League is determined more than ever to achieve its ends for peace and democracy in the face of existing war and the threat to democratic liberties by reactionaries, such as Dies." (APPLAUSE)

SUMMARY OF ADDRESS BY DR. HARRY F. WARD
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28TH, 1939

We are out in the front ranks of the war, taking the brunt of the enemy's first major assault upon democracy in this country.

We will send a copy of this program to Mr. Dies, and ask him to tell the American public whether this has in it any shadow of un-American activity, whether this isn't --

measured both by the historic traditions of this country from the days of the Declaration of Independence, until now, measured again by the needs of this country in the present hour -- whether this is not a thoroughly American program and whether, therefore, those who attempt to denounce, discredit, and lie about it are not themselves the un-American people.

Mr. Dies' technique is very simple. One of the major tricks of propaganda to catch the unthinking is to keep reiterating a lie over and over again, and that is what Mr. Dies is doing in the headlines. The test of our Americanism is this program and the record of our activities, and this is what Dies will not investigate.

I have looked very carefully at the analysis of recent controversies made in the various branches. Individual members will have their own opinions of these matters and they will express and implement them outside the American League.

I want to call your attention to one or two things that you will need to emphasize in explaining the program and statement of objectives. There is no change of policy. This entire situation brings about a shift of emphasis in our objectives in the field of foreign policy. We are trying to prevent the involvement of the United States in the war by exposing and stopping all attempts to evade or change the restrictions in war trade legislation, so that the same economic pressure may not develop that put us into the last war. We are also trying to uncover all war propaganda, and answer all incitement to war, which were also forces between 1914-1917 that involved us in the last war.

The reason we are working to keep the United States out of war and the reason we are working to get the war stopped on the basis of these demands of ours is because of the threat of this war, and our involvement in it, to American democracy and to the democracy of the world. That being true, we must remember that the changed situation has made necessary more emphasis defending and extending democracy in this country. That is why we put forward as the most urgent and immediate point of emphasis this campaign to defeat and dissolve the Dies Committee. Let us understand that this is something more than a war on us; it is a war on the New Deal and its policies through us, and beyond that, it is a war on the democracy of this country, which the New Deal has extended. There is no discharge in this war. You are enlisting for its duration. You have got to expect to suffer some losses. But remember this, that on our side we have not only the finest and best that is in the American spirit and the American tradition, but also the finest and best that is in the noblest tradition of the human race.

Abbreviated Report of Credentials Committee

Mrs. Ruth Gliokler, of Philadelphia, chairman of the Credentials Committee, reported the presence of 179 regular delegates from 33 cities, coming from the Eastern section of the country and part of the Middle West.

American League for Peace and Democracy
National Office - 79 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York
November, 1939

PURPOSE AND PROGRAM

The purpose of the American League for Peace and Democracy, adopted by the National Congress for Peace and Democracy at Washington, D.C., January 1939, is to:

Keep the United States out of war and help keep war out of the world;
Protect and extend democratic rights for all sections of the American people.

This joint purpose has been made even more imperative than it was last January by the outbreak of a major war in Europe and by the development in the United States of war-time fears and prejudices. This entirely different situation naturally brings about a shift of emphasis in our objectives in the field of foreign policy and a sharpening of focus in our program concerning democratic rights.

Foreign Policy

In the program adopted last January, we were trying to stop the aggression of the fascist powers -- and so to prevent the development of a general war -- by withholding from them our economic resources in such ways as would not involve us in war. We were seeking to secure concerted action to the same end with democratic forces in other nations.

Now our major objectives in foreign affairs are:

1. To prevent the involvement of the United States in the war,
2. To secure at the earliest possible moment a peace whose terms will make for the ending of Nazi and fascist aggression and all imperialist domination, thereby enabling the development of democracy the world around.

There must be neither another Munich nor another Versailles. We want a peace that will enable the people of the earth, working together, to remove the causes of war and to develop equal opportunity to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all nations and races. This means a peace whose terms are worked out not by deliverance, but by a conference of all interested powers; a conference which will make provision for:

The needs and rights of national and racial minorities.

Disarmament.

Meeting the economic needs of all nations by reciprocal arrangements.

Democratic Rights

The last war provided the opportunity for a powerful assault upon the Constitutional rights of minority groups. Already a similar attack is being launched. The people are being excited about the danger of "espionage and sabotage", before any war orders have been placed. Proposals are being made to outlaw lawful political organizations. The spirits of legal persecution and of mob action are beginning to rise in the land. If they are not driven away, the American people will soon stand in imminent danger of being deceived into the destruction of their own democracy. The spearhead of the attack upon the democratic rights is the Dies Committee with its witch-hunt in the headlines, its un-Constitutional inquisition into opinions and beliefs, the illegal actions of its agents, and the proposals of its chairman to restrict the right of American citizens to choose their own political organizations. If democratic rights are to be preserved and extended in this country, this committee must be abolished.

Rights of Labor

The preservation and extension of democracy depends upon a strong, united, democratically controlled labor movement, which seeks social, political, and economic objectives necessary for the development of the whole people. We, therefore, will defend the rights of labor wherever they are attacked.

We endorse the Federal Government's stand toward labor's rights as exemplified by the National Labor Relations Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act.

We will immediately oppose all attempts to diminish these rights under the plea of war-time necessity.

Democracy in any real sense must include the right to work at adequate wages under proper working conditions and with ample protection against the economic insecurity caused by illness, unemployment, and old age.

If fascism is to be prevented, all attempts to lower the standard of living of the people must be defeated.

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Therefore, the people must be aroused to fight and stop war-time profiteering the minute it begins.

Rights of Racial Groups

We recognize that the American people is a composite of many races derived from all parts of the world, and as such, can best make its contribution to the human race through the fullest development of its tradition of racial equality. Therefore, we pledge ourselves to work unceasingly to make the idea a reality, by fighting racial discrimination wherever it arises, whether in Jim Crowism, anti-Semitism, or any other manifestation of intolerance fomented to divide the people and defeat American democracy.

Cooperation

We desire the fullest cooperation with other organizations having similar objectives. We stand ready at all times to participate in joint action to reach similar aims that are held in common.

Initial Program for the Winter 1939-40

For Peace:

1. Expose and stop all attempts to evade or change the restrictions on war trade legislation that are designed to prevent our involvement in war.
2. Uncover all war propaganda and answer all incitements to war.
3. Secure at the earliest possible moment a peace whose terms will make for the ending of Nazi and fascist aggression and all imperialist domination, thereby enabling the development of democracy the world around.
4. End the partnership of the United States with Japan in the invasion of China by an embargo on all war supplies for Japan.
5. Promote the peoples' boycott of Japanese, Nazi and Italian goods.
6. Expose and oppose all attempts of our imperialist interests to use the war-time opportunity to extend their controls in Latin America, particularly any attempt to interfere with the right of the Mexican people to govern themselves in their own way.

For Democracy:

1. Arouse the American people to the menace of the Dies Committee and demand its abolition.
2. Defend the Wagner Act against all attempts to weaken it by amendment or to cripple its administration; and extend its principles to state labor acts.
3. Support the demand of the unemployed for government provision of socially useful work, under decent standards and the demand of the aged and all needy persons for genuine social security.
4. Fight and stop all war-time profiteering the minute it begins.
5. Oppose vigorously all anti-Semitic propaganda and acts; defend unrestricted religious liberty, and oppose racial discriminations.
6. Demand equality of political, economic and social opportunity for the Negro people, and specifically the enfranchisement of all Negroes and the passage of an anti-lynching law.

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In this program the most urgent points of emphasis are:

1. To defeat and abolish the Dies Committee.
2. To prevent the involvement of the United States in the war.
3. To secure at the earliest possible moment a peace whose terms will make for the ending of Nazi and fascist aggression and all imperialist domination, thereby enabling the development of democracy the world around.