

# The Anarchist Conference

**T**HE Second Anarchist Conference which was held September 11th and 12th, at Croton-on-Hudson, N. Y., reports as follows:

## FIRST SESSION—3 P. M.

The Conference was opened by the secretary of the Conference Committee, Anna L. Sosnovsky.

Comrade Blecher elected chairman of the first session.

Comrades Fanny Luchakovsky and Vera Hainert were elected secretaries for the Conference.

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

### Present Status of the Anarchist Movement

Hippolyte Havel opened the discussion briefly.

Expressed the opinion that Anarchism has not been made to appear attractive enough to the average workingman; that it is difficult to apply the philosophy of Anarchism to every-day life and that we should seek ways and means of approaching the youth and the workers of this country with a more concrete method of working out present-day difficulties. In making such an approach the sentiments must be appealed to. Advertising methods should never be ours, but a more fundamentally educational program should be adhered to.

General discussion followed.

Rose Pesotta outlined the reasons for the Anarchist movement being lacking in numbers. Many people were sadly disappointed at the results of the Russian Revolution and have turned from the movement to other fields of endeavor. The Anarchist movement is the only one today that offers anything worth while to the worker.

Discussion followed by Comrade Blecher:

The proper means of organization for us to follow out now should be towards Syndicalism. By this means the worker could be shown that Anarchism is not only a beautiful theory as is commonly supposed, but a practical and workable one.

Comrade Abe Winokour: Strongly feels the necessity for industrial organization, the only practical means of carrying out our propaganda. This idea should be fostered without compromise, so that the ideal of our philosophy remains clear.

Comrade Kulick: An able talk outlining the necessity of teaching Anarchism in a comprehensive way. Anarchists who have studied philosophy for many years do not seem to be able to clearly present their ideas, resulting in a failure to increase our ranks. We should take a definite and uncomprom-

ising stand against war, against the state and fight on the basis of organization. Desired results may be obtained by direct contact with the worker in the shops.

Comrade Anna Sosnovsky: Believes that past failures of the Anarchist movement was caused from lack of organization and too much reliance on the appeal to sentiment. Past methods of applying our propaganda must give way to new ways and means, if we are to reach the worker and have him accept our ideals.

Comrade Sh. Marcus: Lack of tolerance has been one of our faults. Syndicalism cannot be looked upon as a panacea. It has failed in Europe. The only thing for us to do is to apply our theory to life and live our ideals as Anarchists.

*End of first session. Adjourned until nine p. m.*

## SECOND SESSION

Abe Winokour elected chairman.

Nomination of resolutions committee. Havel, Ricco, Kulick, Rose Pesotta and Blecher were elected.

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

### Anarchist Position in the Labor Movement. What We Want It To Be.

Discussion opened by Ricco.

"Always in favor of Anarchists participating in the labor movement. There are many workers who are interested in the philosophy of Anarchism. We should never accept gratuities or salary-paying positions in the labor unions. Our work in the unions should be purely to broadcast the philosophy of Anarchism."

Havel took up the discussion:

The American labor movement was started mainly by Anarchists. Today the American working man has a capitalistic mind, because of higher and (greater) possibilities of having an easier life here.

When official duties are accepted in the trade unions certain social responsibilities go with them.

Anarchism is a human problem. How shall we go into the unions? As our comrades did in Europe? . . .

All our pathfinders went among the workers.

Comrade Kirtzman:

If we wish to do anything along organization lines in the labor movement, we must not try to stay on the safe side and let others take the initiative. Cites the American A. F. of L. as being in existence whether we like them or not. Why should we think Communist tactics in the trade unions are so successful. If we went into the shops in a nucleus with a proposition of

shorter hours and higher wages, we would get a large following too. Anarchists are the most responsible people in the trade unions today and if they see things to be done they do them. The trade unions as they are today have to be improved. Let us not propose things we cannot bring about. If we accept responsibilities we will get the following we desire.

Comrade Rose Pesotta:

Makes a distinction between European and American workers. In Europe they have a steady proletariat while here we have shifting classes. The social forces are different here than in other countries. Today the labor movement is stagnant. Our idea is to create a new society. However, we become lost when we take on the grievances of the trade unions, when we bargain with the bosses. We get too close a perspective and are not able to take the broader view. The Anarchist movement is counting on quality and not quantity and if Anarchists are not too skeptical and will keep in mind daily that our contact with the worker should be educational the way will be easier.

Comrade Becky:

Thinks we should take official positions in the unions if necessary in organization work, but always refrain from becoming petty and corrupt as other officials have. To prevent this, a good plan would be to organize ourselves, so that every Anarchist working in the labor movement would be obligated to an Anarchist group.

Comrade Sam Hartman:

Without organization we will never be able to carry on. . . . We should carry our Anarcho-Syndicalist opinions with us in the labor movement. We deny the use of a powerful weapon when we refuse paid jobs. How can one who has inspired Anarchism refuse a position (official) in the union. Revolutionary Syndicalism should be kept in mind. The Communists will be defeated. They came into power through falsehoods and false promises. They do not believe in the Shop Steward System, but used it to get into power as well as other such methods. If we as Anarchists cannot use different methods we fail. Every individual Anarchist in the union or in the shops cannot be told what to do by the unions but must carry out individually our idea. Unions based on the Syndicalist idea are much better than "boring from within." Does not fear accepting paid positions.

Comrade M. Metling:

Our Conference is most important this year because of forces from above, namely, A. F. of L. and Communist Party. They are gaining an influence

upon the masses. The present organizations are entirely corrupted. We cannot bring direct philosophy of Anarchism before the trade union meetings. It is not important to gain paid positions in unions. We should keep all our agreements and carry on our propaganda as best we can.

Comrade M. White:

Is very much against Anarchists accepting paid offices in unions but favors method of "boring from within."

Comrade A. Blecher:

Anarchist position in the trade union movement in general. We all seem to be in favor of participating in the trade unions. Anarchism stands for abolition of property and opposes exploitation. These things should be taught workers. Anarchists are no longer inspired with the words of Patrick Henry when he said, "Give me liberty or give me death." Our question is not whether we should participate in union problems alone, but is much bigger than that. We cannot run along as the A. F. of L. but must be more educational. We do not want compromises in order to gain power. The Amalgamated has carried on a magnificent propaganda but they have made the mistake of trying to establish friendly relations between the worker and the capitalist. Ours should not be a question of tactics or methods in the trade unions. We do not want paid positions nor privileges. Our responsibility is a higher one. There can be no peace while exploitation goes on. We should agitate for our ideas and aims of Anarchism in the unions. Our faith is in the working class and in our ideals and not in individuals. We cannot compromise with the Socialists or the trade unions, we must not make that mistake if we want any basis in the trade union movement.

Comrade Sasha Kulick:

We find Anarchists in the labor movement who have opportunistic tendencies and who are prone to accept positions as officials in the unions. They have become corrupt like the others. Workers' Councils should officiate in the unions, having meetings from each craft and shop. Shop committees are necessary. The Anarchists are primarily class-conscious and not opportunistic. A self-dominant consciousness should be ours. Shop delegates should be the foundation of anarchistic work in the unions. We must not centralize the movement, it must be controlled by the workers.

*This session adjourned until ten o'clock Sunday, A. M., September 12th.*

#### TO THE READERS

Do not fail to notify us of the change of your address. The paper is mailed regularly to all subscribers.

#### THIRD SESSION

M. Ricco nominated chairman.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

#### Reports of Activities, Press, and Ways and Means of Propaganda

Delegates of different groups present are: Road to Freedom group, Abe Blecher and L. Keyser; Eric, Pa., individual group represented by Lilly; International Anarchist group by Ricco, Jennie Baer and Vera Hainert. Letters were read from groups unable to participate, including Polish group, Youngstown, Ohio; Cultura Obrera Libertarian group, Los Angeles, Cal. Reports were given.

Jennie Baer on The International Anarchist Group of New York: Among our activities are the interesting discussions, started by English language-speaking comrades. These have been very effective in helping us to express our ideas in the English language and should be continued. We have had concerts each month last winter, a successful ball, and many dinners. As we could not carry on this work during the summer months we decided to carry on our educational work through the medium of this Camp. You see here the fruits of our idea. Our work here this summer has been delightful and from an educational point of view a happy thought. Many have become interested in our ideals who had never been reached before. For the activities of the coming winter months we have rented a good center where we expect to enlarge our activities considerably.

L. Keyser (Stelton group):

Not prepared to talk on all our activities. We have a small community composed mostly of comrades, but are not able to hold large mass meetings as they do in New York, so are not able to do any extensive work. However, without any interruption our colony has continued propaganda along constructive lines. THE ROAD TO FREEDOM was born in Stelton. Most of our financial assistance to papers has been given to ROAD TO FREEDOM, by preference. We have other responsibilities, our Modern School, the Passaic strike children and many others. House to house collection and money raised for the ROAD TO FREEDOM amounted to \$300.00. The Road to Freedom has been very active in assisting Stelton comrades in taking care of about twenty children of the Passaic strikers.

M. Ricco (International Anarchist group):

Our campaign to assist our comrades Sacco and Vanzetti has been constantly carried on and has worked in conjunction with the national committee for this work.

Comrade Busta:

Has been active for the past seven years in teaching the Ferrer ideals in

a Sunday school conducted by him in Yorkville, N. Y. His pupils are children, he believes all hope lies with them. After this school in Yorkville was started it grew rapidly to an attendance of about 300 children. There was some disagreement among comrades and a split which caused him to go elsewhere with his idea. Had a school of this type in the Bronx, Passaic and in Brunswick. Later the Yorkville people asked him to return and assist in rebuilding the school which had fallen down in attendance. It is his idea that we should take up this line of practical propaganda instead of discussing theory.

Rose Pesotta reports on activities of the camp:

The idea of a camp was proposed and discussed last winter by the International Anarchist Group. It was decided on as a valuable means of carrying on our propaganda during the summer months. Comrades volunteered their own salaries and even borrowed money to start the camp. We have carried on here for three months without a stop. People were asked to come here and deliver lectures on different philosophies. The subjects were of interest to all, and included literature, economics, and the labor movement in all its phases. Symposiums on the different philosophies were held, symposiums on the Anarchist movement, etc. They were most successful, as we drew people who were never before interested. This group would like to continue the work next summer, with perhaps the co-operation of other groups, on a much larger scale. We urge that this work be attempted in other parts of the country.

Comrade White, (Libertarian Group of Los Angeles):

Small but very active, mostly English-speaking. Jos. Spivak the most active comrade. Have sold many hundreds of copies of Emma Goldman's pamphlets. Their main idea and purpose was to spread the ROAD TO FREEDOM, get subscriptions and sell copies. Sold about 75 copies every month. Thinks there is a field for this work and is not discouraged.

Comrade Holtz reports on the different groups in Los Angeles:

Says there are three active Anarchist groups there, the Kropotkin Group is the largest (about 63 members). Lately there has been a split from this group. Many of the active members in all the groups are Jewish. Hard to get solidarity. Knows Anarchism, which means harmony and wishes to hear how things are done in Stelton.

Comrade Blecher answered:

If there is any disharmony in Stelton it is not based upon the Anarchist philosophy, but on the different con-

ceptions of child-education and how the school should be run.

The reports were accepted.

#### Press Reports

Comrade Havel:

Suggests we elect a general corresponding secretary to get in touch with other parts of the country. Financial reports are at present not very encouraging. There is difficulty in getting out a bi-monthly. The paper should either function as a weekly or monthly. If it functions as a weekly the office must move to New York City. Too much should not be depended upon from one man. It is not necessary to concentrate on the activities in one center alone but the scope should be widened. Open for suggestions on editorial policy.

Comrade Sasha Kulick:

We have the question of organization before us. Road to Freedom groups were organized in Chicago, Boston and other cities and then neglected. There must be some agreement on the work. There is no union among English-speaking Anarchists. Should be standing committee to carry on our work throughout the country. Should have a general secretary.

Comrade Kirtzman:

A press cannot represent the movement when the movement is not connected with the press. Havel's proposal should be carried out.

Comrade Holtz:

Criticizes paper, thinks it antiquated and that it does not dwell enough on the vital questions of the day.

Comrade L. Keyser:

As soon as our financial position in Stelton becomes a little stronger the ROAD TO FREEDOM will become a weekly paper. Havel should have an editorial staff to assist in the work; he should make personal requests for assistance.

Comrade Abe Blecher:

Our forces are not organized, we have no memberships and should establish a federalist idea of some kind, with initiative for spreading the paper. We do not depend on money entirely, but need other assistance, co-operation, etc.

Comrade Anna Sosnovsky:

We claim to be a movement composed of the working class and want them to understand our ideas. It is not in place to blame the editor for the present status of the paper, but we must seek some remedy for our plight. The editor is not himself satisfied. Thinks editorial staff would help.

Comrade S. Hartman:

Not in favor of editorial staff. It would simply mean a body of censorship. There should be a committee to get contributions, also labor problems and intellectual discussions should be given more prominence. Should be a committee formed to do the technical

work and the paper should be placed on the stands.

Comrade Lilly Sarnoff:

Agrees to proposal of having a general corresponding secretary and believes that a comrade should travel throughout the country getting backing for the ROAD TO FREEDOM, so that by January 1st, when a weekly is started it will have new impetus.

#### FOURTH SESSION

Comrade Ricco re-elected chairman.

Comrade Pesotta reports on Resolutions Committee. Resolutions read.

#### Discussion on Resolutions—Resolutions Accepted

Discussion of motion of whether this group should relinquish its control of the camp in favor of a larger and co-operative group for next year. Nothing decided except endorsement of the work of this camp.

Nominations for general secretary for the ROAD TO FREEDOM.

Rose Pesotta was elected.

Committee of three elected to choose some one to go out on the road for the ROAD TO FREEDOM.

Comrades Keyser and Abe Winkour were chosen.

Comrade Havel made the closing talk. Thinks committee could get the paper out and in that case he would be enabled to go out on a special appeal trip for the purpose of getting more financial assistance.

Ricco adjourned the Conference.

We have been engaged here for two days on the work of this Conference and if we can leave here resolved to make a living realism of the work, it will have been well worth our efforts.

VERA HAINERT,

Assisting Secretary of Conference.

#### RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE ANARCHIST CONFERENCE

##### Organization

The Second Anarchist Conference held September 11-12th at the Road to Freedom Camp, Croton-on-Hudson, reaffirms the decision of the last year conference to organize International Anarchist Groups which would serve as the active spirits in furthering Anarchist propaganda and spreading the ROAD TO FREEDOM publication.

##### General Secretary

Resolved, That the Conference elect a secretary whose function should be to carry on the general correspondence for the movement; who also should be able to establish greater cohesion among the existing Anarchist groups, and help to establish such groups wherever it will be possible.

#### Labor Movement

The Anarchists, assembled in a Conference at the Road to Freedom Camp, Croton-on-Hudson, N. Y., considering their position towards the labor movement, reaffirm their faith in the organization of the workers, insist on their right to propagate their ideas among the workers of all organizations, but repudiate most emphatically all dictatorship, dictatorship either on the part of the bureaucratic leadership or originating from political parties.

#### Sacco-Vanzetti

Resolved, That we pledge to work tirelessly for the liberation of our comrades Sacco and Vanzetti, whose only guilt is that they believe in the same idea of freedom as we believe, and be it further

Resolved, That the Conference sends fraternal greetings to all imprisoned political and class-war prisoners.

#### Resolution on the Camp

The Conference indorses the work on the International Group in establishing the camp activities. Such work ought to be encouraged by the Anarchists. Similar camps ought to be established by comrades in their own localities.

#### ENQUIRY

Initiated by the Group "Los Iconoclastas" of Steubenville, Ohio.

The Group "Iconoclastas" resolved to solicit from a number of comrades internationally well-known their opinion about the present situation in our movement, and the means to unify the libertarian efforts throughout the world.

We expect, therefore, from all these comrades who are able to say something about the subject to do so and to take part in this Enquiry, as it is going to be considered of great importance for the propagation of Anarchism internationally.

Taking in consideration the present reaction throughout the world, it is our opinion that a big united effort shall take place to stop the reactionary oppression.

All the answers will be published in Spanish by the Anarchist daily "La Protesta" weekly supplement, as this is the largest Anarchist publication of all the Spanish-speaking countries.

##### The Questions

1. The present problems of Anarchism and the means to create an international Anarchist movement against the authoritarian reaction.
2. Is Anarchism a revolutionary movement?
3. If it is an idea of whole humanity, is Anarchism a proletarian movement?
4. What education shall be given to the children, at the present time, so they will achieve their emancipation as quickly as possible?
5. What path shall be given to Art in America and Europe to spread Anarchism?
6. What do the comrades think about the individualist tendencies in the present labor movement?
7. What is the value of the tradition and up to what limit shall we follow it?

Send all communications to R. Lone, P. O. Box 256, Steubenville, Ohio.