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POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF THE CIO: AN HISTORICAL
EVALUATION OF THEIR POLITICAL ACTION
COMMITTEE FROM JULY, 1943
TO JULY, 1953

by
Norbert W. Steele, Jr.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Institute of Social
and Industrial Relations of Loyola University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of
Social and Industrial
Relations

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1954

LIFE

Norbert W. Steele, Jr. was born in St. Louis, Missouri, July 23, 1929.

He attended school there until the completion of his first year in high school. Later, moving to Chicago, Illinois, he graduated from St. Mel High School in that city, June, 1948, and from Loyola University of Chicago, June, 1952, with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Commerce.

He began his graduate studies at Loyola Universities' Institute of Social and Industrial Relations in September, 1952.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Labor's participation in politics is not something new. The first labor parties in the world appeared in the United States, and for almost a century and a quarter now, this participation has never ceased in one form of political activity or another. When the Workingmen's Parties began to form in the 1830's, they urged their members to nominate candidates for public office. When they did, the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations in Philadelphia broke fresh ground for labor and inaugurated what was to become a widespread political movement of workingmen's parties. It soon spread to other towns in Pennsylvania and New York. There, wide popular support developed not only for local parties in New York itself, but in many upstate localities and in Massachusetts and other parts of New England. Ultimately, workingmen's parties were established in approximately a dozen states. As far west as Ohio, as well as along the Atlantic seaboard, local groups of mechanics, artisans and farmers backed their own political candidates and in many instances elected them. For some time they held sway in the struggle for political power, and occasionally were the balance of power between the two major parties in local elections.

Out of these adventures into politics there developed three patterns of political behavior. One looks in the direction of establishing and main-

taining independent parties; local, state and national in scope, either alone or in conjunction with farmers or others. A majority of those who have tread this path have been doomed to failure. But it is interesting to note that a study on opinions of labor leaders here in the United States (one individual was from Canada) started in 1941 by C. Wright Mills with the assistance of Mildred Atkinson of the University of Maryland showed, among other things, that 13 per cent of the AFL and 23 per cent of the CIO wanted a National Labor Party then.

On the other hand, when they were asked the question if they wanted a labor party within the next ten years, 23 per cent of the AFL and 52 per cent of the CIO answered in the affirmative.¹

A second pattern of political action grows out of the support given by individual union members and labor organizations to revolutionary political parties, the vast majority of which have been influenced by the Marxian theory of Socialism and Communism. The essential core of their membership has come from the rank and file of workers, although a small element has been drawn from the middle-class strata.

The third pattern consists in what is traditionally called "non-partisan political action." That is, it politically favors those who favor labor.

A study of Labor's political history has shown the advocates of this third pattern that nonpartisan political action is the best one to follow. Union

1. J. B. S. Hardman and Maurice F. Neufeld, et al., The House Of Labor, New York, 1951, 42.

have at all times in the past been interested in legislation and hence in politics.

The formation of the CIO's Political Action Committee, the AFL's Labor's League for Political Education, and similar setups in the major independent unions, signifies not a novel departure in unionism, but a rising determination to make effective use of the franchise, and a disposition to streamline the older ways of doing things politically.²

This idea of political action by labor unions on the nonpartisan principle as exemplified by the CIO was predicted in 1931 by the future Senator Paul Douglas (D. Ill.) when he stated that a new labor organization and the political philosophy with which it would cloak itself was not far off:

Nor . . . will the American wage earners permanently content themselves with their present unorganized conditions. Sometime sooner or later the great mass-production industries of iron and steel, textiles, chemicals and automobiles will probably be faced with a labor movement which welfare capitalism will find it difficult to avert. When this organization starts, the workers will find that if the local, state, and national governments are in the hands of their opponents, their own efforts will tend to be defeated by the pressure which the state can and will tend to exert against them through the local and state police. In such a position they will naturally turn to political action.³

The history of labor political action has had two distinct trends and labor organizations have alternated between these trends spasmodically, seeking a path that would lead them to their goal. Either they plunged with fervor into the building of a separate labor or "third" party or else they religiously refrained from participation in the political processes and sought to exert their influence only in specific instances and on specific issues.

Abstention had certain serious drawbacks, the most obvious of which

2 Ibid., 75

3 Paul Douglas, The American Political Science Review, Menasha, Wisconsin, November, 1931, 55.

was that the political influence of a large group in the population was neutralized and other groups, less numerous but better-heeled and more active and vocal were able to influence elections and legislation to their own advantage. Without an effective method of enforcing their wishes, representatives of labor organizations could do little more than plead the justice of their cause in the state and national legislative halls. And justice was not always the compelling factor in legislation that was passed.

With this all a part of history, the CIO launched its PAC in 1943. Today the CIO-PAC Board consists of the presidents and secretary-treasurers of the CIO's six largest unions (United Steelworkers, United Auto Workers, Communications Workers, Textile Workers, Amalgamated Clothing Workers and United Rubber Workers) and a director. It is responsible to the CIO convention and, in the interim, to the CIO Executive Board.

The basis of the CIO-PAC, of course, is the men and women of the CIO. Operating through their unions, they are the people who do the political action work of CIO and the people who in the final analysis, determine the political direction of CIO-PAC.

In this factor lies a great deal of the strength of CIO-PAC, for its organizational base is the union, in which men and women are bound closely together by economic self-interest, rather than the looser party organization in which the cement is patronage or self-aggrandizement.

The men and women of CIO who engage in political action do so as a matter of principle rather than as a matter of self advancement. They are seeking the passage of a particular piece of legislation or the election of a particular candidate because they believe in the legislation or the candidate.

delegate body concerned primarily with the election of the congressional candidate from that district. It is in being principally in the large cities of the nation which are represented by a number of congressmen (such as Chicago, Philadelphia, ect.).

On the next higher level are the State Political Action Committees. These are often more formal in their nature than the city or county PACs or the Congressional Districts PACs in that they have constitutions and by-laws and procedures that are in accordance with a fixed pattern. Virtually all states now have Political Action Committees which are formally established and operate under constitutions and by-laws.

The national office of the CIO-PAC, now located in Washington, D. C. in a suite occupied in 1948 by the Dewey-Warren clubs, is the office of the Director and his staff.

In contrast to the 135 people employed in 1944, the CIO-PAC national staff now consists of the director and seven people, plus clerical staff, whose regular assignment is in the Washington office. Four additional people are on the CIO-PAC payroll as full time representatives and they cover the entire nation.

The Washington staff, all of whom perform field work, consists of the director, assistant director, a comptroller, two public relations people and three research people. The four regional representatives cover the New England and Middle Atlantic States, the South, the Middle West, the Far West and Mountain States, respectively.

From time to time, the staff is augmented by the addition of part-time representatives for specific tasks. In other instances, the national

office shares the salary and expenses of a political action worker with a state PAC.

Up until May of 1953, PAC headquarters still had not brought its organizational chart up to date. Even though Murray and Haywood had passed from the scene, their names were still listed on the national executive board. Philip Murray was listed as chairman, but he had been replaced by Walter Reuther. Along with Mr. Reuther, there are: David J. MacDonald, Secretary-treasurer; Jack Kroll, director, (he replaced Sidney Hillman upon his death); Joseph Beirne, J. S. Buckmaster, James B. Carey, Joseph Curran, O. A. Knight, Jacob Potofsky, Michael Quill, Emil Rieve, Al Hartnett, Emil Mazey, T. M. McCormick, William Pollock, Frank Rosenblum, Desmond Walder and Carlton Werkau.

PAC Financing

There are numerous legal requirements covering the financing of political organizations and with all of these the CIO-PAC rigidly complies.

All of the work of CIO-PAC in connection with a federal election is financed by voluntary contributions from the members of CIO and others who feel inclined to contribute. These contributions are recorded by means of receipts from numbered books.

The locals distribute the books to their collectors who receive the contributions and fill in the receipts which are in duplicate. The duplicate is furnished to the contributor while the original, together with the money, is forwarded through international union channels to the CIO-PAC. Half of all contributions remain within the state in which they were made for political action work in the state.

Quarterly reports are filed with the clerk of the House of Represent-

atives and such state reports as are required by state law are filed by the appropriate officials with the proper state office.

Using the basic contribution of one dollar, this is how the money is used:

1) State and local PAC - 50¢; This money goes to the State PAC for local use. Money may be spent for the following political activities:

- a) Salaries
- b) Travel
- c) Printing
- d) Radio
- e) Organization of
 - e-1) Wards
 - e-2) Neighborhoods

2) Field Work (State) - 38¢

- a) Salaries of PAC organizers - 18¢
- b) Travel - 17¢
- c) Educational - 3¢

3) National Office - 12¢

- a) Administrative salaries and travel - 2.5¢
- b) Rent, light, supplies - 3.3¢
- c) Postage, telegrams, telephone - 2.7¢
- d) Research - 1.9¢
- e) Education - 1.6¢⁵

Aims Of PAC

The CIO believes that they are in politics because the welfare and security of all Americans depend on good officials--good mayors, good congressmen, good presidents--and politics is the process by which they elect officials.

PAC reports the facts about the issues and the records of the candidates. An example of this is the PAC's Pamphlets of the Month which the PAC published to acquaint the people with the facts of the day. The first issue dealt with "Bretton Woods Is No Mystery". The author was Joseph Gaer. The purpose of this pamphlet was:

To bring to our people a clear and truthful explanation of the most important issues before the nation, the CIO-PAC has created PAC's Pamphlets of the Month, which will bring to the attention of the workers of the CIO each month the most important current issue before the public. This pamphlet, the first in the series, deals with an issue which has been deliberately confused by some bankers and reactionary congressmen.⁶

PAC block workers and shop stewards canvass their areas. They carry on registration drives and try to get out the vote on election day. The PAC appoints a precinct captain in each precinct. "He is given a card file of all union members in his precinct."⁷ His primary job is to carry on a constant campaign to make unregistered residents of his precinct a registered voter. He tries to know as many of the people in his precinct as possible.

The CIO seeks the direct election of the President by popular vote, the modernizing of Congress by abolishing the Senate filibuster and by the appointment of committee chairmen on the basis of merit. The CIO seeks fair

6 Joseph Gaer, "Bretton Woods Is No Mystery," PAC's Pamphlets of the Month, New York, 1944, 1.

7 Julian Brazelton, UE Guide to Political Action, 1944, 56.

registration laws free of red tape and complicated rules, and works for free and open primaries, equal legislative districts, and adequate pay for public officials.

The PAC, as such, is not a political party, but it does lean heavily toward the Democratic Party. There is, to be sure, a very good reason for this. The Democratic Party has generally favored labor in its legislative action. This trend goes back many years. The Democratic Party, starting with Jefferson, opposed the Federalist Party, which, in its own way "was the party of the rich man."

However, the CIO convention at Chicago on November 22, 1950, declared: "The CIO-PAC is directed to continue to act on an independent, nonpartisan basis, giving support to the progressive forces in the two major parties, basing its judgment of candidates upon their records and platforms."⁸

The PAC cooperates as broadly as possible with other labor groups, farmers, professional men, consumers " . . . and all other citizens of good will who have the same ideals of public welfare."⁹

To the CIO, the gains which labor wins through collective bargaining can be protected and extended only through a progressive legislative program and political action to back it up—local, state and national. Thus labor, in its forward movement, once more reverted to political action to supplement the economic consequences of our capitalistic system.

8 CIO Political Action Committee Pamphlet, This Is PAC, Washington D. C., 3.

9 Ibid.

Protection for the health and safety of workers--workmen's compensation, maximum hours for women and children, industrial safety codes--depend primarily on legislative action. The provision of adequate low-cost housing, assistance for the unemployed, minimum wages, expanded educational opportunities--all go beyond the scope of collective bargaining into the field of political action. Even maintaining steady employment for all workers and avoiding booms and busts, depends increasingly on the policies of government.

To the CIO the PAC is an organization of flesh and blood that cannot be compressed or explained by an organizational chart. It is an organization, the parts of which are interchangeable and equally well geared to fit, one with the other, to form the political organization of the CIO.

Within broad limits, the function of each of its parts is political action in its entirety and no part of the organization is able to refuse a particular task on the grounds that "it's not my job". What is lost by lack of specialization is more than gained in versatility. That is not to say that PAC does not have its specialists. It is rather that PAC specialists are required to have abilities over and above their specialties.

Only by maintaining this unity of purpose is the CIO-PAC able to fulfil its function with its small staff. Only this desire to achieve a common objective produces the enthusiasm and energy that makes tasks more than routine and, in the end, sometimes provides success when defeat seems the probable outcome as it so seemed in the 1948 presidential election.

The CIO-PAC claims that regeneration of the democratic faith is taking place in the nation. They feel that it may be the result, perhaps, of the war and of its consequent challenges to that faith. But it takes its expression

(they claim), if not its inspiration, from the CIO-PAC, from the feeling of union men and women that it is not politics that is a dirty business but sometimes the practitioners of politics. Through their union organization, the PAC claims, they can tackle and solve industrial and economic problems of more than individual magnitude and, now, through their political organizations they are learning that application of the same spirit will solve social and political problems and that all of these problems have common denominators.

Thus to CIO political actionists, the person who fouls the democratic nest by abandoning principles as a guiding rule in politics, is a person who is fouling the whole of the community and the community should be warned against him. In Philadelphia, for example, " . . . inter-party corruption was met by the simple expedient of replacing Democrats who were on the Republican machine payroll with CIO-PAC people who carried through the assignments that were made on election day."¹⁰

In the formulation and application of this political code of morals, the CIO-PAC feels it is contributing not only to its own welfare, which is understandable, but also to the welfare of the nation as a whole. It is replacing the cynicism and disrespect for democratic institutions and procedures that have in the past preceded the downfall of democracy with a healthy determination to maintain in good repair, that flexible system of democratic government which makes the best possible compromise between liberty and authority.

Operational Description Of PAC

Perhaps the simplest means of describing the operation of PAC is to

¹⁰ The CIO-PAC and How It Works, A report by the Republican Congressional Committee, March, 1950, 12.

picture an imaginary congressional district. This is the way the CIO describes it. This hypothetical district is in an industrial area and there are many labor voters who are concerned with the kind of representation they have in the national congress. They have a well organized PAC and they are actively engaged in politics.

The incumbent representative is a person whose voting record indicates that he is more concerned with the owners of industry in our hypothetical community than with the welfare of the workers and their families.

John Smith is a young attorney in town. He has held a few political offices and has established something of a record for himself. He believes he could represent the people of that incumbent and he has definite views on the particular issues of the day. He has, therefore, filed as a candidate for Congress. But he knows he lives in an industrial district and that his chances depend to a large extent upon the degree of backing he can get from organized labor, or so supposes the CIO in their thinking.

John Smith, therefore, calls up one of his friends who is a local union official. He tells him he is going to run for Congress and that he would like the active support of the PAC. His friend tells him to take the matter up with the local PAC committee and he gives Smith the name of the chairman. Smith and the PAC chairman make an appointment to talk things over.

When John Smith and the PAC chairman get together, Smith finds that in addition to the chairman there are four or five other people present. They are the screening committee and it is their function to make the preliminary decision as to whether Smith warrants their support.

Smith and the screening committee talk the whole matter over. They

discuss at great length Smith's views on current political questions to determine primarily how well informed Smith is and how closely their views coincide. There may be differences of opinion between Smith and the screening committee, but the main question in the committee's mind is whether Smith and the people they represent are both going in the same direction. They are more concerned with his general outlook than his specific views on the way in which to solve certain problems.

The committee and Smith may also discuss the question of finances, the other support that Smith has, the record he has made in the public office he has held, and his prospects of winning.

Following the talk, the steering committee makes up its mind and at the next meeting of the Political Action Committee they submit their report. They have talked to Smith, Brown and Jones, and they believe that John Smith is the man who should be endorsed. He is an able man, they say, and his record entitles him to a chance at higher office. The PAC concurs in the recommendation of the screening committee and votes an endorsement of John Smith.

This endorsement is reported to the constituent unions of the area PAC, to the state PAC and to CIO-PAC in Washington. It is also announced to the newspapers.

Having endorsed John Smith, the area PAC proceeds to back it up. It checks the membership files of all unions within the area to see if all members and their wives, adult children and in-laws are registered to vote. If they are not registered, machinery is set in motion to get them registered. Caravans from workshops to the Registrar's office are organized. Registrars are persuaded to keep late office hours. In some places union members may be deputized as

registrars.

Following the final registration day, the area PAC takes stock and lays plans for the coming election day. One of the most important jobs is that of educating the union membership and others in the community on the issues involved. Housing may be the important problem in the community. For arguments sake, let us suppose that John Smith supports federal housing legislation which is in tune with the CIO-PAC's point of view, while the incumbent believes such legislation is an unwarranted intrusion of the federal government into the domain of private enterprise.

The stage being set, the PAC will get all the information it can about housing and about the proposed legislation. It may make a survey to determine the existing housing conditions in the district, the amount of private housing being constructed and the amount of rental housing available, the scale of rents being charged, and the possibilities of erecting low cost projects.

Then it will print and distribute literature on the question. It may make available speakers who can discuss the subject of housing and its various aspects. It may purchase radio time for a discussion on this issue. It will get people talking about housing, such as the pros and cons of public low cost housing as opposed to privately financed housing, so that the voters will have some information on which to make up their minds about John Smith and his opponent.

Along with educational campaign on the issues and the records of the opposing candidates, the PAC outlines detailed plans for election day.

All of these activities, of course, cost money. The area PAC may have some that it has raised in local affairs. It may also receive some money

from the state PAC and from CIO-PAC. Because John Smith is running for federal office, all of this money is from voluntary contributions in accordance with Section 304 of the Taft-Hartley Act.

The big push comes on election day. Car pools are set up to transport people to the polls and dispatchers must be available to tell the drivers where to go. Mothers who cannot leave their homes unattended must be furnished the services of baby sitters while they go to the polls. At the polls themselves there must be watchers and challengers and after the polls close, someone must watch to make sure that votes in the ballot box are the only ones that are counted. These poll watchers must be fed and the drivers will need food so they can keep going throughout the day.

The object of all of this, of course, is to make sure that every eligible voter follows through and votes.

And sometime in the early morning the weary PAC people will learn that John Smith has been elected to Congress--maybe.¹¹

¹¹ Statement of John Alesia, Director of PAC, State of Illinois, personal interview.

CHAPTER II

A RISE TO PROMINENCE

The "reactionary" off-year election of 1942 led directly to the formation of the PAC. Particularly annoying to the CIO was the fact that Martin Dies was elected. The first year of the war, with its disappointments and military reverses, was the hardest. In the 1942 state and congressional election the Democratic Party met with heavy setbacks. Pro-administration congressmen were defeated by Republicans in one district after another, or lost ground in the primaries to conservative Democrats.

A contributing cause of these setbacks at the polls was the movement of almost six million young into the armed forces, with a resultant fall in registration among those who were most disposed to vote for the party of Roosevelt. It was not that the Republicans made any impressive gains in 1942, which Hillman (who was later to be the Director of the PAC) observed later, but that the progressive element stayed away from the polls; only, ¹ twenty-eight million actually voted, against some fifty million in 1940.

President Roosevelt himself was passionately engrossed in the affairs of war; particularly in the African landing operation scheduled for late in that year. His political advisers were somewhat maladroit in managing the 1942 campaign. For the New York governorship they named John J. Bennett of Tammany Hall fame. The price they paid was labor staying away from the polls. Instead

1 Matthew Josephson, Sidney Hillman: Statesman Of American Labor, Garden City, New York, 1952, 590.

of endorsing one of the major party candidates that year, the American Labor Party of New York State, led by the Dubinsky group, offered a third candidate in Dean Alfange.

From the administration standpoint, the election results were very sour; Mr. Thomas Dewey was voted into office by a decisive margin, since the ALP's independent candidate merely helped to cut down the Democratic vote.

That season was one of mental and political depression in the country. The National War Labor Board set up the "Little Steel" formula which tried to stabilize wages in July of 1942. This formula permitted a 15 per cent increase in wages, based on official estimates of the rise in the cost of living from January 1, 1941 to May 1, 1942. Labor showed its dissatisfaction over the "Little Steel" formula since it did not include the stabilization of prices. Therefore, the government pledged itself to combat inflation and stabilize prices under the President's directive of April 27, 1942.²

In the various war agencies, such as the War Manpower Commission, the OPA and WPB, AFL and CIO representatives sat as members of "advisory committees." Green and Murray also enjoyed an advisory capacity in the Economic Stabilization Board under James F. Byrnes, who had become Roosevelt's second-in-command on the civilian front. Despite all this, there was really no direct participation at top levels of government by representatives of organized labor after Hillman had left Washington because of his supposed illness in May of 1942. Spokesmen of the National Association of Manufacturers successfully opposed the introduction of joint labor-management committees in plants devoted to the production

2 Ibid., 592.

of war materials as "revolutionary experiments", the need for which, had not yet arisen. But still, prices were rising at a faster rate than controls could cope with them. The average wage of third of the nation's families was only \$1,500 a year in 1942, despite high wages in some fields.³

All of this caused unrest. But these were not the only causes for unrest. One consequence of the congressional campaign of 1942 was the election of enough anti-labor-minded members to assure the passage of the Smith-Connally Bill, called the War Labor Disputes Act, over President Roosevelt's veto in the late spring of 1943.

The act contained one interesting provision which restricted the payment of money contributions to political parties by labor organizations in federal elections.

By winter of 1942 and spring of 1943, the younger element in the CIO showed much concern at the so called New Deal's setbacks and seriously discussed measures to help Roosevelt. The Smith-Connally Act gave point to their discussion. At the time of its passage by Congress, certain emissaries came to Philip Murray with the proposal that Hillman's varied talents be pressed into service again in the political field. Meanwhile, others discreetly approached Hillman with the same idea.

He himself had been saying that the 1942 defeats showed that labor must make efforts to mobilize the country's voters during the war period.⁴

Hillman Takes The Helm

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., 594.

Political action was not something new to Hillman. He had been a political work horse for many years. Within a few days after President Murray of the CIO had chosen him, Hillman organized a meeting of 127 Eastern labor leaders who were associated not only with the CIO, but with various AFL and railway unions, and several state and city labor councils. There was also the strong hope of forming a united front with the AFL through a new political league. Hillman presided at this meeting, which was held in Philadelphia on July 11, 1943.

Following a full and frank discussion of the proposed program of the Political Action Committee, a public announcement was made of its formation. Its declared purpose was not only to mobilize the millions of the CIO's cohorts for active participation in state and national elections, but also church and women's groups as well as farmers, consumers and "community organizations" throughout the country.

A statement of policy worked out at this gathering was issued by Hillman and reflected the highly practical spirit with which the labor men approached their task. He stated that the country faced a political crisis. The election of many isolationists and conservative congressmen in November of 1942 was a dire warning of what might happen in the presidential contest of 1944. After all, the CIO had grown in an atmosphere of administrative favoritism, and Hillman, along with his followers, did not wish to see this end. He stated:

We are opposed to the organization of a third party at this time because it would divide the forces of the progressives throughout the nation. We are here to mobilize our power for political action now—not to wait

until a few months before the elections of 1944.⁵

The purpose of the committee, CIO President Philip Murray (now deceased) reported to the CIO convention on November 5, 1943, was to "conduct a broad and intensive program of education for the purpose of mobilizing the five million members of the CIO and enlisting the active support of all other trade unions, AFL, railroad brotherhoods and unaffiliated for effective labor action on the political front."⁶

It was definitely not, the report of President Murray said, the policy of the CIO to organize a third party, but rather to abstain from and discourage any move in that direction. The primary political task was to weld the unity of all workers, farmers, and other progressives behind candidates, regardless of party affiliations, who supported the war program of the commander-in-chief and enlightened domestic and foreign policies.⁷

Hillman Rejects Third Party Path

Since the days of LaFollette's Progressive Party movement in 1924, Hillman had often thought about the problem of building a third party for labor. But in many sections of the country, state primary laws made it well-nigh impossible to organize a real third party. Moreover, Hillman believed that labor's "investment" in Roosevelt and his political apparatus was worth while and that a friendly alliance with the Roosevelt Administration represented the best way in which the interests of labor could be advanced in the immediate sense. As

5 New York Times, July 12, 1943.

6 CIO Convention Proceedings, 1943, 201.

7 Ibid., 204

early as September 1943, he had sent up a few trial balloons in favor of a fourth term for Roosevelt, declaring that the CIO would support the wartime President if he ran again.⁸

To be sure, Hillman had the backing of President Murray, in this endeavor. For it was Murray's plan to have the industrial unions back Roosevelt while demanding new concessions from governmental agencies.

"But this week, while the CIO Political Action Committee handed Roosevelt what appeared to be a blank check, CIO's executive board demanded that the President lay it on the line and make some drastic changes in his agencies' handling of labor affairs."⁹

But not all labor leaders looked through the same rose colored glasses. Critics of CIO's President, Philip Murray—notably John L. Lewis—" . . . have charges that in pledging the labor vote to President Roosevelt, he had turned his back on collective bargaining. It has been said that he has forgotten the ancient union axiom! 'Get for what you give.'¹⁰

Hillman's improvisations took the form of a nationwide political league which, while representing labor primarily, was not to be an independent national political party, but was still to be autonomous. That is, it was to function as full partner in a coalition, mainly with the Roosevelt Democrats, but it would also lend its strength to progressive Republican candidates for Congress. This was the over-all plan and represented a sort of half way stage

8 Detroit Free Press, September 14, 1943.

9 Business Week, June 24, 1944, 84.

10 Ibid.

between a third party for labor and an auxiliary of the old professional parties. In its details, in its development of a "grass roots" organization affiliated with network of thousands of CIO local union offices dotting the map of the United States, the PAC reflected Hillman's highly imaginative and inventive spirit. The PAC, he insisted, was going to pay its own way. Large sums of money would be needed. In the preliminary conferences with the CIO executives, he asked that seven of the biggest unions donate at least one hundred thousand dollars each to the PAC treasury.

The CIO-PAC was being organized to see to it that the voice of labor and the common man was heard in the nation's political councils and in the determination of the peace and post-war plans. Hillman was for national economic planning in the interests of "full employment" after the war. In his fighting speech keynoting the PAC program, he moved to a position at the head of labor's advance guard, one that he had held for long years before. We were at the crossroads of history. "Make up your minds," he cried, "that we are either going to get a better world or we are going to be thrown backward. We will not stand still! . . . Make 1944 a year of decision for the common man here and everywhere."¹¹

The upshot of this enthusiastic gathering was that by vote of the delegates, Hillman got the seven hundred thousand dollars promised for the PAC. Not all the CIO chieftains were really eager to part with all that money, but Hillman was a hard man to stop when it came to fund raising. As news of this got around to the professional politicians in both parties, it forced them to

realize that here was something to be dealt with. The newspapers, magnifying Hillman's political "war chest" about tenfold, reported that he was being armed with a "slush" fund of seven million dollars.

Hillman Gains Control Of The American Labor Party

From the start of the Political Action Committee, Hillman had his eye on the New York State's American Labor Party as a pivotal local organization that conformed well into the frame of his larger plan. Thrown together hastily for the campaign of 1936, the ALP had lived a fairly troubled life since then, while trying to gather in the independent, labor, and leftwing voters who balked at the crooked Tammany tickets.

David Dubinsky had "Run Away" from the CIO, as Philip Murray had put it, and brought the ILGWU back into the fold of the AFL. His now powerful union competed with Hillman's Amalgamated Clothing Workers for local political influence in New York, and sometimes in Washington. Old rivalries and not a few jurisdictional quarrels lay at the bottom of the conflict between the two unions at this period. Yet in July, 1943, Hillman had gone to Dubinsky and to his lieutenant, Alex Rose, who was in charge of the ALP's State Executive Committee, to urge that they combine forces. What he had proposed specifically was that the ALP's controlling state committee be reorganized to permit a fairer representation of the different CIO and AFL groups, thus encouraging unity between the right and left-wing factions and ensuring victory for the New Deal in the event of a close election in New York. His proposal, however, was promptly rejected by Dubinsky.

But Hillman had not come as a mendicant in this case. Through his own influence that could reach tens of thousands of voters who were Amalgamated

union members and their "sisters and their cousins and their uncles and their aunts," he was, it is stated by some writers, in a position to bring about a decided shift in the composition of the ALP's state committee. This had to mean just one thing. That these people would vote the way he wanted them, which in this author's estimation was not the case. At any rate Hillman soon began to use public pressure, in the form of an open letter to the newspapers which stated:

My proposal, in brief, is that all the trade unionists in this state, CIO, AFL, Railway Brotherhoods and unaffiliated unions be invited to affiliate themselves with the party [ALP] and to pay to it a per capita tax based on their membership in the state All state and county committees will be made up primarily of representatives of the participating unions, with a composition fairly representative of the numerical strength of such unions.¹²

Hillman's plan resembled roughly that under which British labor unions were apportioned representations in the British Labor Party. It appealed to him as fair and democratic. Mr. Dubinsky and Mr. Rose assailed his proposal, however, on grounds set forth in vehement polemic articles, published in the ILFWU's newspaper, Justice and in the New Leader:

. . . It would result in placing "notorious" pro-Communists in control of the ALP. Hillman himself is not a Communist, yet for the sake of some momentary advantage, he coolly proposed to take over the American Labor Party by combining with the alleged Communists, who would doubtless wreck the organization when it suited the party line to do so.¹³

Thus with this cleavage, there now existed three parties to vie for New York's massive vote in the electoral college; the American Labor Party covering about 10 to 15 per cent of the state's voters, with the two older

12 New York Times, August 18, 1943.

13 New Leader, September 4, 1943.

parties in fairly even balance, owing to Mr. Dewey's great strength upstate. This prompted speculation that if the ALP were torn by dissension, and if the CIO left-wing union members were discouraged from making the most intense efforts for the ALP election canvass—as seemed inevitable under the leadership of Hillman's opponents—then the state might well be lost to the Republicans in November of that year.

Meanwhile, in the Hearst press, Westbrook Pegler revived the old canard of the Amalgamated union's alleged connections with racketeers. The article stated that at that time Louis Lepke languished in a Federal penitentiary. Westbrook Pegler asserted that Governor Dewey had been demanding that Lepke be turned over to the jurisdiction of the New York State Authorities for punishment but that Attorney General Francis Biddle had refused this request at the order of President Roosevelt himself. This, according to Mr. Pegler, was done in order to protect Roosevelt's friends in the labor movement.

Pegler then added that Governor Dewey's eagerness to have Lepke in his hands and hold him in terror of the death chair was inspired less by fear that justice might not be done than by the desire to induce Lepke to "sing" about his dealings with both Dubinsky and Hillman.¹⁴

Following the intervention of Mr. Pegler, Representative Martin Dies of Texas, chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee, entered the scene. On January 26, 1944, he announced that the PAC, its chairman and officers were under thorough investigation and would soon be called to Washington

14 New York Journal American, December 21, 1943.

to testify before his committee.¹⁵

After some days had passed, during which he deliberated over the problem raised by Dies, Hillman made a statement to the press declaring that the Un-American Activities Committee had no legal authority whatsoever to investigate the PAC or to call him for a hearing before it. His defiance of the powerful Dies, it was said at the time, won him great credit in the eyes of New Yorkers, many of whom thoroughly disliked the congressman from Texas. Hillman's actions were finally capped off with the CIO Political Action Committee's refusal to give up their records to the Dies Committee.¹⁶

By mid-January of 1944, the fight with Rose was going very well for the Hillman faction, when suddenly Hillman came forward with a proposal of a compromise plan which would offer assurance that neither the left- nor the right-wing groups would control the ALP's state executive committee. At a conference with Alex Rose on January 20, attended also by other CIO and AFL representatives, Hillman proposed that:

. . . a joint slate of candidates [for the state committee] be mutually agreed upon. I suggest that . . . all trade unions desiring to participate in the work of the ALP should be entitled to representation in the party leadership in proportion to their membership, with adequate provision for representation of the liberal and progressive forces who are without trade-union affiliation and who support the program of the ALP.¹⁷

After an exchange of letters between Hillman and Rose, published in the newspapers on January 22nd. and January 25th., efforts at an accommodation were finally abandoned by Hillman and his associates. Their opponents, Hill-

15 New York Times, January 27, 1944.

16 Commercial and Financial Chronical, February 24, 1944, 816.

17 New York Times, January 21, 1944.

man said, showed a desire only to perpetuate their "narrow leadership" at all costs and were determined to deny any system of fair representation to other groups. Therefore, he proposed to reorganize the ALP without the aid of Mr. Rose et al.¹⁸

In the final week of March of 1944, demonstrations were organized by the Hillman faction, while the war of words and pamphlets rose to its hottest pitch. On the next day, a huge turnout of more than eighty thousand went to the primaries and registered a thumping victory for the Hillman slate by a three to two margin. The right-wing faction, still spurning all offers of conciliation, seceded to form the new American Liberal Party, under ILGWU auspices, while Hillman, naturally, was elected state chairman of the American Labor Party.

The Defeat Of Martin Dies

By 1944, the American people were feeling many of the discomforts attendant upon by a great war in modern times. Wages were frozen, while great stores of consumer goods were passing into the black market. Millions of workers saw their earnings fixed by agreements written for them in a room in Washington under the procedures of the powerful National War Labor Board, an arrangement scarcely calculated to inspire them with a sense of participation in their own affairs. To them, it was "high finance," something they could not possibly hope to understand. Practical observers of the political scene reported that they felt themselves alienated from the Roosevelt Administration

¹⁸ Ibid., February 9, 1944.

and were of a good mind to stay away from the polls.¹⁹

Hillman particularly, it must be admitted, was instrumental in making labor a somewhat coherent, though not too highly effective force in the political field; for he did give some sort of a voice to the common people who were doing most of the producing and fighting. He raised issues which the former New Dealers, absorbed in military and supply problems, were neglecting. What kind of peace would we have after the fighting was over? Would there be full employment and security after the war? Above all, the PAC pounced upon the issue of the soldiers' ballot which the Republican-Dixie bloc in Congress had obstructed for a time. Soon the widespread discussion of human affairs inspired by the distribution of millions of bright little pamphlets by the PAC began to make itself felt in all parts of the country.

This PAC action in the political cage seemed different though.

Political organizations set up by labor in the past had sometimes been rather narrow in their objectives, which were usually limited to trade-union demands not of immediate interest to citizens outside the labor movement. Now, as Philip Murray himself declared, a nationwide organization was being set up not only to protect the political rights of the returning soldier and the workingman, but also "the rights of the farmer, the small businessman, and the so-called common man."²⁰

From the start, the PAC made a broad appeal to many different white-collar, farmer, and professional groups. Hillman said: "We are calling for a chief Executive and a Congress committed to full utilization of our economic resources. This is not a 'labor program.'"²¹

19 H. Fuller, New Republic, January 24, 1944.

20 Joseph Gaer, The First Round, New York, 1944, 60-61.

21 Chicago Daily News, July 17, 1944.

Regional offices for the PAC were located in large cities such as Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Cleveland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. One hundred and thirty-five persons were employed full time at the national headquarters in New York (located at 205 East 42nd Street), under the direction of Assistant Chairman Calvin B. Baldwin, who joined the PAC in November of 1943. Baldwin, a native of Virginia, had served under Henry Wallace in the Department of Agriculture and later, from 1940 to 1943, as head of the Farm Security Administration. Baldwin also worked in close liaison with seventy-five full time employees of the PAC at the different regional offices around the country. These men and women in the field, in turn, were in close touch with local union groups and other organizations affiliated with the PAC. As the PAC got under way, there were many mocking comments in the press to the effect that it might do more harm than good to the cause it hoped to serve.

Many months before the primary elections were to take place in the Southern states, CIO local unions and their officers, in contact with the PAC's regional and national headquarters, had begun to canvass all their union members and urge them to register and vote. "Every worker a voter" was the slogan. In Martin Dies' own district in Texas (Jefferson County), where the poll tax severely restricted voting, usually to about 10 per cent of the population, thousands of shipyard and oilfield workers in the towns of Port Arthur and Beaumont were rapidly lined up to pay their poll tax and register for the primaries.

No sooner did Mr. Dies hear of this than he began his attack on the PAC in a torrential speech before the House on January 26, 1944. He had at that time an enormous influence in Congress, most of whose members stood in

dread of his possible attacks on their "Americanism." Now he warned his fellow congressmen that "gigantic slush funds" were being raised by the CIO to defeat them. A few weeks later, agents of the Un-American Activities Committee appeared in New York and sought permission of the banks, used as depositories by the PAC, to examine the new organization's records and expenditures. This step was taken at the height of Hillman's struggle for control of the ALP in February of that year.²²

The Dies committee was armed with all the authority of Congress. Roosevelt himself had failed to terminate its career. The PAC did not know what to do. Some advisers urged Hillman to permit the PAC books to be examined while others argued strongly that the Un-American Activities Committee had no legal authority whatsoever to examine the PAC. There were, however, other standing committees of Congress empowered to investigate possible malpractice in election campaigns before whom the PAC could more properly appear. At length, Hillman resolved to "fight back at Dies" and try to make the affair a popular issue.

On February 24, 1944, in a statement to the press, Hillman announced that he had given orders denying access to the PAC's bank accounts by the agents of Dies, adding:

Mr. Dies has no right to any of our records. The PAC . . . will refuse any demands he may make on it for records, files, documents, or materials It is high time that someone challenged Martin Dies' abuses of Congressional power.²³

22 New York Times, February 14, 1944.

23 Commercial and Financial Chronical, February 24, 1944, 816.

The Political Action Committee, he held, was an "educational movement" characterized by a "profound Americanism." Far from advocating any subversive ideas, he argued that:

. . . it is mobilizing millions of Americans to do their duty as American citizens at the polls. It is a perversion of reason and common sense to hold that it is Un-American or subversive to ask these millions of American citizens to give their support to a program of political education.²⁴

But most were not taken in when Hillman declared that the PAC was an educational program as such. Hillman's old antagonist in Congress, Mr. Howard Smith, had also threatened to take action against the PAC, charging that it had violated the Smith-Connally Act in expending union funds for election purposes and should be cited before a Federal Grand Jury. To forestall this, Hillman and his lawyers went to Attorney General Biddle and this time voluntarily submitted the PAC's records for examination by FBI agents. On March 4, 1944, it was reported that the PAC would be "cleared." Under existing law, any labor organization could legally expend money in "educating" people on political issues or in persuading them to register and vote in the primaries. In this case, Biddle's report indicated, funds had not been paid out to politicians or their agents, but only for pamphlets and lectures. Once the candidates were nominated by their parties, however, different measures would be called for and the labor unions would have to step out of the picture. But the PAC had a means of "getting around" this issue which will be explained later on.

Within the Un-American Activities Committee of Congress, there was now much dissension between Dies and a minority group who held that he had not been

authorized to move against the Political Action Committee. Nevertheless, he rushed forth with a large 215 page report on the PAC which charged that Sidney Hillman aspired "to become the Red Chief" of America in place of Mr. Earl Browder. Hillman, the report admitted, had been "actively and effectively anti-Communist" in the past, but now, it was alleged, he was building up the CIO-PAC by entering into a coalition with the Communist.²⁵

PAC was now to defeat Dies at any cost. In his congressional district, embracing Orange and Beaumont, registration had risen 30 per cent higher than ever known before in that region. In a thousand precincts, local union officers who acted as field representatives for the PAC recorded exactly how many union members had voted in the last election, how many had moved from their homes, and how many held residence permitting them to register. Thus in Jefferson County, Texas, the registration of the union workers in the new war industries reached figures astonishing to hack politicians.

In May came news that seemed miraculous beyond belief to the PAC. Mr. Martin Dies had withdrawn from the Democratic primary contest for renomination in his old district, admitting openly that he had done this because of the jump in registration stimulated by the PAC. It showed, he said, that "the CIO had captured control of the Jefferson County, Texas, Democratic Convention." In quick succession, Representative Joe Starnes of Alabama and John Costello of California, two other members of the Un-American Activities Committee, were

²⁵ "After Extracts from the Report of the House Un-American Activities Committee on the PAC," New York Journal-American, March 29, 1944.

²⁶ New York Times, May 19, 1944.

also defeated in their primary election contests.

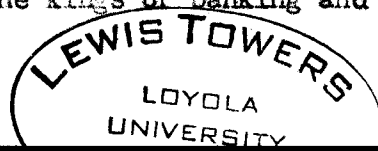
Roosevelt Accepts The PAC

Earlier, there had been some rumors in high Democratic Party circles that the PAC was "too hot," that Sidney Hillman was stirring up too many factional feuds which were likely to injure the chances of the ruling party in the coming elections, and that President Roosevelt would have to speak to Sidney Hillman about this. The ailing Roosevelt also was in a pessimistic humor at various periods during 1944, especially when a confidential poll made by the Democratic Party showed that he was losing favor with Catholic voters.

But by early June, when Hillman came to see him at the White House, the President had begun to cheer up and there was no more talk of "toning down" the PAC. This young organization was already showing some strength in strategic areas such as Ohio, Illinois, and California. The knockout of Congressman Dies was a feat whose importance the potent Roosevelt himself fully appreciated. Hillman's position was now wholly different from that of 1942, when he had been unceremoniously ushered out of the war-production organization. It was strong enough for him to be able to "change the President's mind on occasion."²⁷

Presumably what the two men talked about very confidentially at this meeting on June 9, 1944, was the selection of a running mate for Roosevelt in the approaching campaign for a fourth term. It was a subject of enormous interest, for the President had been very ill recently.

For generations in this country, president-making has been something like the "sport of kings." But usually it has been the kings of banking and



industry who enter the race to put their favorite contender in the White House, never trade unionists or laborites.

But public opinion polls in 1944 showed a 67 per cent majority of those interviewed favoring additional curbs upon labor and its activities, and newspaper comment was becoming increasingly hostile.²⁸

The PAC was attacked as radical, un-American and dominated by the Communists who in this wartime campaign were strongly supporting Roosevelt's re-election. A long report by the Dies Committee on Un-American Activities concluded with the charge that the whole movement was "a subversive Communist campaign to subvert the Congress of the United States to its totalitarian program." The president of the Union Pacific Railway solemnly warned that the PAC was "a pernicious innovation that has literally snaked its way into American politics," while Governor Bricker of Ohio declared that it was seeking "to dominate our government with radical and communistic schemes."²⁹

PAC Backs Wallace

In July 1944, as preparations were being made for the opening of the Democratic National Convention at Chicago, Sidney Hillman and Philip Murray arrived on the scene with a large and imposing party representing the CIO, and opened headquarters of their own at the Hotel Sherman. The CIO-PAC was reported to have some two hundred Democratic Party delegates in its pocket--though this was greatly exaggerated. Nevertheless, Hillman and Murray seemed determined that the spokesmen of organized labor should take a hand in the president-

28 Foster Rhea Dulles, Labor In America, New York, 1949, 349.

29 Ibid., 352.

making of that season, or rather the vice-president-making—which proved to be the same thing.

The war in Europe was in its climactic phase, for the invasion of France had been recently launched, namely, on June 6, 1944. But who could tell how soon the end would come? Roosevelt, with much less hesitation than in 1940, had resolved to run again for the presidency and thus see the war through. None in his party opposed him. The third-term taboo had already been broken, and many persons and organizations (including the Amalgamated at its May 1944 convention) had favored "drafting" Roosevelt once more.

But those who saw the President in the winter of 1943 and spring of 1944, were quite shocked at his changed appearance. It was not known to the public that in mid-April, he had gone to rest at Bernard M. Baruch's estate in South Carolina for two weeks during which he "looked like a case of walking pneumonia," and had been too weak and ill to return to Washington until four weeks had passed.³⁰ Roosevelt's intimates and the party leaders were aware that he might well die in office during his fourth term. This led to some ferocious intriguing among the Democrats interested in the vice-presidential choice, all of it very distressing to the weary President.

Mr. Baruch, an old hand at inside politics, used every opportunity while the President convalesced, to urge the cause of his old political alter ego, James F. Byrnes, former Senator from South Carolina and Supreme Court Justice, then serving as Director of War Mobilization. Vice-President Henry Wallace (at the time on a mission to China) should normally have been re-

30 E. J. Flynn, You're The Boss, New York, 1947, 178-179.

nominated, for he was supposed to hold great appeal for millions of liberal and labor voters. But powerful opposition to him had arisen among the Democratic Party's big city bosses, such as Edward J. Flynn of New York, Edward Kelly of Chicago, Frank Hague of Jersey City, and Robert Hannegan of St. Louis, the Democratic national chairman. The Southern politicians also were opposed to Wallace, and Roosevelt was "inundated" with advice from anti-Wallace Democrats that the incumbent Vice-President, if renominated, would "hurt the ticket" in a close election.³¹

Hillman strongly objected to the Byrnes movement. This writer wonders if this might not have stemmed from the fact that Hillman had been unceremoniously ushered out of the war-production organization in which Byrnes had extensive influence.

It was at this period, in an off-the-record visit with Roosevelt on June 9, 1944, that Hillman learned that the names of others being definitely considered for the vice-presidency included Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky, and Senator Harry S. Truman of Missouri. Philip Murray strongly favored the renomination of Wallace. Truman, on the other hand, in view of the sectional conflicts within the Democratic Party, was a more conciliatory figure coming as he did from a "border" state, and having an excellent record with regard to New Deal and labor legislation.

While in the OPM in 1941, Hillman had subjected to some searching inquiries on the part of the Truman committee. But a former associate of Hillman's, Max Lowenthal, once an attorney for the Amalgamated, had been closely

31 Washington Times-Herald, January 22, 1945.

associated with Truman for years as counsel to a Senate subcommittee investigating railroad finances, and knew him well. According to Jonathan Daniel's account, Lowenthal, in the spring of 1944, strongly urged Harry Truman to accept the vice-presidential nomination if it were offered to him.³² Although Lowenthal himself did not go to see Hillman at this time, his favorable appraisal of Mr. Truman certainly reached the chairman of the PAC.

Still, the PAC stressed the large part that it would play in the approaching campaign and pointed out that it had given the strongest endorsement to Henry Wallace for Vice-President. Hillman therefore, would give him full support as the CIO's first choice. What worried him most was the determination of the "Big Four" Democratic city bosses, Flynn, Hague, Kelly and Crump, to block Wallace. But in spite of this, plus the fact that it was rumored that Wallace had known disposition for mystical religious cults, the CIO-PAC continued in its backing for the Vice-President till the end.

By July 10, 1944, the situation (as far as it can be pieced together from the incomplete and conflicting recollections of all parties concerned) was as follows: Roosevelt had Edward J. Flynn's report from the field indicting that Wallace was unwanted by the Democratic Party bosses; he had meanwhile committed himself, in some measure, to sponsoring Byrnes, but had noted the vigorous objections of Hillman on behalf of the CIO and of Negro leaders and Catholics as well; and finally he had asked Flynn to get a group of the Democratic Party bosses together and "inject Truman into the picture" as the best possible alternative to Byrnes. On the evening of July 11, 1944, a committee

composed of Flynn, Hannegan, Kelly, George Allen, and Frank Walker came to dinner at the White House and discussed the whole affair with Roosevelt. Justice William O. Douglas was mentioned as a possibility by the President, though without evoking enthusiasm. In the end, Roosevelt is said to have handed Hannegan a little penciled note saying: "Bob, I think Truman is the right man."³³

On the day before this (July 10, 1944), Henry Wallace had at last returned from his mission to China and closeted himself with the President for two hours. The next day they had another long session, during which Wallace asked for Roosevelt's support for his nomination, saying he would not withdraw from the race unless Roosevelt wanted him to. The President then expressed doubts about Wallace's chances for success, but offered his friendly support. He went so far as to promise to write a letter to the permanent chairman of the Democratic convention, stating that he would vote for Wallace as Vice-President if he were a delegate to the convention.³⁴

Two days later, Wallace was back again at the White House, and Roosevelt is said to have written the letter for him on that occasion in the terms (more or less) that Wallace desired.

The Wallace supporters now showed increasing confidence, which was reflected in the newspapers on July 13, 1944. Hillman and Murray, who were at a press conference that day in Washington, declared they were standing firm for Wallace. When Hillman was asked if he had talked with the President about Wallace's candidacy, he said slyly: "I would say no; but if I had, I would

³³ Daniels, The Man From Independence, 240.

³⁴ Washington Times-Herald, January 22, 1945.

still say no."

Hillman and Murray both stated: "We have no second choice."³⁵

Truman Nominated

But Hillman did talk with Roosevelt the next day, July 14, 1944, about who would be nominated for the vice-presidency, according to Arthur Krock.³⁶ What Hillman was most worried about was the effort to nominate Byrnes, against which he entered the most vehement objections. But now he gathered that the President had come to the conclusion that Truman was the man who would "least hurt the ticket." True, Roosevelt had written a rather lukewarm letter in support of Henry Wallace, which he showed Hillman. But when Hillman went to the White House on July 14, he found that the President on that day had written still another letter, this time to Robert Hannegan, national chairman of the Democratic Party and soon to be Postmaster General and owner of the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team, in which he stated with much more positiveness that "Truman and Douglas" would also be acceptable as his running mates. The President's secretary, Grace Tully, has related that originally Douglas' name preceded Truman's, but that Mr. Hannegan had the order reversed with Roosevelt's approval to favor his friend from the "home-town state" of Missouri.

At this point, when the Democratic Party bosses were buzzing around the White House and the choice was really being made, Hillman reached a clear understanding with Roosevelt, according to which the PAC group was to continue to support Wallace, as it had committed itself to do; but when it became plain

³⁵ Philadelphia Inquirer, July 14, 1944.

³⁶ New York Times, July 14, 1944.

that Wallace could not get the nomination, then Hillman would do his best to keep the friends of the CIO at the Chicago convention from opposing the choice of Truman as an alternative.

On the night of Friday, July 14, the President boarded his private train for a destination on the West Coast, his movements being kept secret according to war time regulations. The next day the train halted at Chicago, where preparations for the opening of the Democratic Convention five days later were in full swing. Democratic chairman, Robert Hannegan, went on board the train and received his last instructions from Roosevelt, who did not show himself in Chicago. He is said to have related afterwards that Roosevelt said that as to the final choice of Byrnes, Wallace, or Truman, he and the other Democratic leaders must first "clear it with Sidney."³⁷ The phrase was quickly picked up by Arthur Krock of the New York Times. What it signified at the time was that a veto power was given to Hillman, as the CIO's political leader, over the final choice for Vice-President at the convention. Roosevelt apparently wanted labor's wholehearted support.

At Chicago the eyes and ears of all the press and radio were turned on Sidney Hillman and also Philip Murray, who nowadays cleaved to his side as closely as possible during the convention. From the day of his arrival, on Sunday, July 16, 1944, the chairman of the PAC gave out interviews hour by hour at crowded press conferences attended by as many as three hundred reporters from all over the United States, before whom he outlined the policies of the CIO-PAC; "We believe that Mr. Wallace will strengthen the Democratic ticket and

that any other candidate will weaken it. . . . We have no second candidate. We are not here to trade with anybody for any other vice-presidential candidate, but to put over Mr. Wallace."³⁸

Wallace, beginning with some 350 pledged delegates, appeared to be the leading contender. This was really illusory, since 589 delegates were needed for the nomination and various large blocks of delegates held by favorite sons, such as Bankhead of Alabama and McNutt of Indiana, were ready to be traded over to Truman as soon as clear orders came from the professional leaders.

At the early reports that Henry Wallace's chances appeared the strongest, the conservative press thundered against the PAC. The rumor that Hillman and Murray had doomed Mr. Byrnes' candidacy caused newspaper columnists to lament: "The shifting sources of power . . . have produced the anomalous situation wherein a James Farley is on the sidelines and Sidney Hillman is in the forefront of events."³⁹

The Chicago Tribune, knowing the PAC director since his youth, observed that this former clothing cutter had now returned to Chicago as a "king-maker," and that all the world wondered that "a man who was not even a delegate was consulted by everyone here." Yet he sat "tapping his hands together nervously," smiling, talking about all sorts of things, and saying little.⁴⁰

Westbrook Pegler, writing in the chain of Hearst newspapers, exclaimed as if in a paroxysm of passion: "Hillman! In God's Name! How came this

38 Chicago Daily News, July 17, 1944.

39 New York Times, July 17, 1944.

40 Chicago Tribune, July 20, 1944.

non-toiling sedentary conspirator who never held American office or worked in the Democratic organization to give orders to the Democrats of the United States.⁴¹

Other members of the press credited the CIO political action in Chicago with being "shrewed, intelligent and resourceful." Whereas labor leaders or reformers in the past had tried to insert themselves into political conventions in an idealistic spirit, Hillman's organization, as one paper put it, was no amateur outfit, but "had cash, skill, plus discipline."⁴²

On Tuesday, July 18, two days after his arrival in Chicago, Hillman, who was staying at the Ambassador East Hotel, had Senator Harry Truman as his guest for breakfast.

Mr. Truman, according to his recollections (as given later to Jonathan Daniels), said that he came to Hillman at that "fancy hotel" as a "Byrnes man". He therefore asked the Chairman of the PAC whether he could depend on his support for Byrnes.

"No," said Hillman He was serious that morning. "No. We're for Wallace, but we might accept two other men. Our second choice after Wallace would be Douglas. I'm looking at our first choice now."

Truman protested, "I'm not running. Byrnes is my man." Hillman smiled as he went with him to the door.⁴³

Mr. Truman's recollection of Hillman's attitude seems to be borne out by the account of another insider, George Allen, who later told of a con-

41 New York Journal-American, July 20, 1944.

42 New York Daily News, January 20, 1944.

43 Daniels, The Man From Independence, 245.

ference held early in the convention preliminaries between Sidney Hillman and the Harnegan-Flynn-Walker group. The CIO leader was told that Wallace's cause was hopeless and was "offered" Truman. However, Hillman said cautiously that "he had nothing against him."⁴⁴

By the evening of Tuesday, July 18, it was common knowledge that Hillman had been entertaining Harry Truman at breakfast, and guesses were being made that he was the CIO's next choice after Wallace. The wily Edward Flynn had thrown out hints also that the delegation from New York, though committed to Wallace, would shift to Truman after the first ballot. The whole South was solid against Wallace.

On the next day, Hillman was kept busy denying all these rumors that were true. A front-page cartoon in the Chicago Tribune showed him placing the vice-presidential crown on Mr. Truman's head. Another newspaper asked:

What had Mr. Hillman been doing having breakfast with Senator Truman? Mr. Hillman referred this question back to Senator Truman. He was most discreet about this strange breakfast right in the midst of the pro-Wallace crusade. Mr. Hillman could talk for hours without saying anything.⁴⁵

There was much confusion in everyone's mind by now, but on the night of July 18, 1944, Roosevelt's letter endorsing Wallace conditionally was released to the press. If anything can be said of the letter, its expression seemed decidedly cool and showed that no sanctions would be taken against those who opposed Wallace:

For these reasons, I personally would vote for his [Wallace's] re-nomination if I were a delegate to the convention. At the same time, I do not wish to appear in any way as dictating to the Convention. Ob-

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viously the convention . . . should—and I am sure it will—give great consideration to the pros and cons of its choice.⁴⁶

On July 19, 1944, the Hannegan-Flynn group announced that they would also release a letter from the disingenuous President, this time endorsing Truman and Douglas. There was alarm in the Wallace camp, and an emergency meeting was held at the Hotel Morrison. Wallace himself had arrived to lead his fight, but, as his own friends admitted, he had no real organization behind him in the Democratic Party save the PAC. He had not even a campaign chairman until the last hours. At the conference with Wallace were Hillman, Murray, Francis Biddle, Harold Ickes, C. B. Baldwin and James Carey. Ickes that afternoon raised the alarm in the press, declaring that the Democratic bosses were conspiring to defeat Wallace. Yet Ickes was said to be working for William O. Douglas!

That night, Roosevelt telephoned National Chairman Hannegan from the West Coast saying there was a war on and he was to "get the convention over with quickly" and nominate Harry Truman.⁴⁷

On Thursday night, July 20—after all these puzzling preliminaries (and the Democratic bosses decided to let the public know who they had already chosen)—the convention opened at the Chicago Stadium, where thirty-three thousand persons were gathered, and Roosevelt addressed them by radio. Henry Wallace himself nominated Roosevelt for President in a powerful speech. The stadium crowd said to have been packed with CIO followers, set up a mighty

⁴⁶ Daniels, The Man From Independence, 248-249.

⁴⁷ Arthur Krock, New York Times, July 25, 1944.

roar. "We want Wallace!" It continued for twenty minutes. Since the hour was late and the crowd seemed somewhat out of hand, the chairman chose not to proceed with the formal nominations of the numerous candidates for the vice-presidency and gaveled the meeting to a close.

The next morning, before a smaller gathering, made up mainly of convention delegates, the last act was played out swiftly. The names of Bankhead, McNutt, Lucas, Truman, and finally Wallace were put in nomination. Wallace made his strongest showing on the first ballot with 429½ votes, while Truman registered 319½ and Bankhead ninety-eight. On the second ballot Truman was even with Wallace at 473 votes. Then the Southern contingent swung to Truman, as did McNutt's following, making a majority. Whereupon the New York delegation, as well as that of Iowa, passed over to Truman. In the end, Hillman stated: "We were for Wallace always, but not against Truman."⁴⁸

It was said at the time that the labor group had permitted themselves to be "outgeneraled" by the professional politicians; and also that Hillman had in some way "dominated" the convention. Neither conclusion seems to be true. It was President Roosevelt who had chosen Truman. The left-wing element in the CIO in private, expressed much discontent at the way in which Hillman had accepted a protege of Boss Pendergast of Kansas City instead of trying to "ram Wallace down." But in reality, Roosevelt was quite uncertain about his election prospects in that year of war, and desired both to conciliate the South and to satisfy his party's professional workers.

PAC Financing

Early in the campaign of 1944, the question was raised as to whether the CIO-PAC was violating the provisions of the Federal Corrupt Practices Act as amended by the Smith-Connally War Labor Disputes Act of 1943, which made it unlawful for any labor organization to make any contributions in connection with a Presidential or Congressional election and for any "political committee" to accept or receive such unlawful contributions. The question was also raised as to whether the CIO Unions and Political Action Committee were acting in violation of the Hatch Act provisions limiting campaign contributions to five thousand dollars per person or organization, in connection with Federal elections.

To get around this obstacle, the CIO-PAC funds were frozen, and the leaders of the CIO-PAC set up a new organization called the National Citizens Political Action Committee. This NC-PAC, which was also headed by Sidney Hillman originally, was intended to attract non-CIO members as well as unionists, and was supposed to raise two separate campaign funds of three million dollars each (the legal limit) through voluntary contributions, not to exceed five thousand per individual. All of this effort and money was to be poured into the Roosevelt-Truman campaign, with the aid also going to congressional candidates of PAC's choice, principally Democrats.

Hillman protested at the manner in which labor was "singled out for attack" when it entered into primary contests, while the "royalist families," such as the DuPonts, who gave a rumored \$186,000 at one stroke to the Republican Party, in 1940, were passed over. The financing of the PAC, he added, was an open book which all could examine. Its records and bank accounts, presented before a House Committee subsequently, on August 28, showed that this

nationwide organization operated on a surprisingly modest budget, running under fifty thousand dollars a month. Nevertheless, one clause of the Smith-Connally Act forbade the use of funds of labor unions, as well as corporations, in political campaigns.⁴⁹

The Senate's Campaign Expenditures Committee had rendered no opinion on the PAC. But Hillman, at a meeting of the CIO's Executive Board in Washington on June 18, said that after the primary nominating contests and the national party conventions were over, the PAC's funds were to be frozen—that is, held in escrow—and a new organization would supplement it and take part directly in the election campaign itself. At the end of the Democratic Convention in Chicago, he made public announcement of the formation of the National Citizens' Political Action Committee (NC-PAC) as an auxiliary body which would draw its support from associations of farmers, consumers, professional groups, university people, and churchmen. As it was, the NC-PAC failed utterly.

The honorary chairman was Senator George W. Norris: James G. Patton, head of the National Farmers' Union, was named vice-president, together with Miss Freda Kirchwey, publisher of the Nation, and Bishop R. R. Wright, Jr. of the African Methodist Church; while Professor Clark Foreman, former president of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, was named secretary. The Executive Committee was an amalgam of wealthy philanthropists, progressive political figures, and Catholic and Protestant church leaders; its membership

⁴⁹ The PAC's legal counsel pointed out, at the June 13, 1944 hearings in the Senate, that a narrow interpretation of the law "would stop every newspaper and magazine in this country from spending money on editorials favoring a presidential or congressional candidate."

included Elmer A. Benson, former governor of Indiana, former Governor Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania, Mrs. Emmons Blaine of Chicago, Dr. Robert C. Weaver, a leader of Negro organizations, and A. F. Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen.⁵⁰

The objective of the National Citizens' body was to raise a fund of \$1,500,000 for the current campaign in support of Roosevelt and Truman as well as of certain "progressive" Republicans and most Democratic candidates for Congress. Not more than half the hoped for sum was raised that year, much of it by house- to-house canvassing of workers under the slogan: "A buck for PAC."⁵¹

The charges of huge "slush funds," or of the CIO's "squeezing the workers" to contribute money lest they lose their jobs--made by Thomas Dewey, the Republican candidate for President, and others as well--were answered by the PAC chairman when he opened the PAC's books to a committee of Congress on August 28, 1944 saying:

I think it apparent from these financial statements that the real assets of the two committees is not the money in their treasuries. If that were so, we would be poor indeed and would hardly have merited the interest and attention which our work has aroused. . . . What we have and what our opponents lack cannot be measured in money. It cannot be bought and paid for. It is the enthusiasm and energetic cooperation of millions of Americans.⁵²

On September 27, 1944, Robert E. Stripling, Chief Investigator for the

50 Joseph Gaer, The First Round, New York, 1942, 212.

51 The funds of the entire CIO-PAC contributed by the big unions also fell somewhat below their full quota of \$700,000; and of this only about \$371,000 was spent up to August 1944, when the balance of \$289,000 was placed in escrow.

52 Hearings, House Campaign Expenditures Committee, 78th Congress, 2nd Session, Pt. 1, 91-94.

House Committee on Un-American Activities, reported in Committee hearings the results of his staff's study of the new CIO-PAC from the date of its inception. Said Stripling: " . . . we are now prepared to present to the Committee evidence which makes it clear that the CIO-PAC is a by-product of the Communist Party of the United States and further that its program is now being directed and carried on in certain sections of the country by well-known communist leaders. . . . "53

Among other things, investigators found that of the 141 individuals named by Sidney Hillman as comprising the National Citizens Political Action Committee in June 1944, over 80 per cent had had affiliations with the Communist Party or its front organizations during the previous ten years. Some of them were well-known members of the Communist Party. Others were strict party-line followers. A majority had lent their names and sponsorship to most of the communist-front organizations established by the communists in recent years.

During the 1944 campaign, the two groups--CIO-PAC and its associate, NC-PAC--worked hand in glove. They didn't, however, as was already pointed out, succeed in raising the six million dollars originally intended.

At the national headquarters of the CIO-PAC on the fifteenth floor of 205 East 42nd Street, New York, in a small private office, Hillman as policy-maker presided over a beehive of political workers and volunteers. Assistant chairman, C. B. ("Beanie") Baldwin at the opposite end of the floor was actually in charge of the day-by-day administration. With the aid of J. Raymond Walsh, research director, a program of nationwide propaganda was mapped out, especially

for sections of the country found to be weak in local Democratic action. The main job, in the late summer, was to get millions of people registered in time, so that they could go to the polls on November 7. In New York, for example, Walsh reported that 900,000 young men had gone to the armed services, while 600,000 more workers had moved to other states in search of war industry jobs. It was imperative that every person eligible to vote be contacted, precinct by precinct, ward by ward and door by door. This grueling task was performed with the aid of the American Labor Party, Amalgamated, and other CIO unions as well as the Railway Brotherhoods.

In Ohio, Vice-President Jack Kroll of the Amalgamated Union headed the regional PAC organization. In the Chicago center, former Congressman Raymond McKeough worked effectively with officers of the Amalgamated Union and the United Steel Workers to speed the registration drive. In Michigan, where the Democrats had shown themselves extremely weak in 1942, many hundreds of United Auto Workers' volunteers went out to ring the doorbells of prospective voters and see to it that they registered in time. Thus an improvised "grassroots" organization was set in operation, based chiefly on the local union offices dotting the country from New England to California. One political reporter wrote:

The CIO-PAC has been hard at work since February and should play a big part in the November results. There are 328,000 members in Illinois with 250,000 concentrated in the Chicago area.

Raymond McKeough . . . has had a list of all CIO members in the state prepared and checked against lists of registered voters, in order to see that every CIO Man and woman votes. A tedious job is being carried out thoroughly. Test samples indicate that about 40 per cent of the potential CIO vote is not registered—135,000 voters-- who are the object of the PAC drive Roosevelt looks stronger in Illinois in 1944 than in

194054

Reports of record-breaking registration came to the PAC headquarters in New York from Chicago, Los Angeles, and St. Louis during the summer. In St. Louis, as many as thirty-six thousand were brought in for registration on a single day, and one early result was the defeat of the "isolationist" Senator Bennett C. Clark in the Democratic primaries. In Wayne County, Michigan (which embraces Detroit), only 722,000 persons had registered for the 1940 elections. But now one-hundred thousand or more of the younger workers were in the Army and less registration was expected. However, in a whirlwind campaign directed by the CIO leaders, one thousand canvassers went out day and night in early October, so that when registration closed on October 18, the record-breaking number of 800,000 had been enrolled as voters. Michigan "was stirred up as never before" in any election. The same was true of other populous states, such as California, Ohio and Illinois, whose votes counted heavily in the election results.⁵⁵

By October, Roosevelt's field surveys showed that the turnout of voters would be unusually heavy, and he felt easy about the November outcome.⁵⁶

Behind the political army working in the field, there came also a rolling barrage of pamphlets, leaflets, stickers, and throw-aways, produced mainly at the New York headquarters of the PAC. Dr. Raymond Walsh directed this propaganda with the aid of a small staff of writers and journalists, in-

54 New York Post, July 26, 1944.

55 Ibid.

56 Robert Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, New York, 1948, 820.

cluding Joseph Gaer and Wilbur Ferry, the pamphlets being illustrated by a group of artists under the direction of Ben Shahn. The titles of some of the pamphlets were: A Political Primer For All Americans; This Is Your America; The People's Program For 1944; The Negro In 1944; Catholic Press Supports PAC; Every Worker A Voter; Back To The Breadlines With Dewey; Jobs For All After The War; etc. In all, some eighty-three million pieces of literature were distributed throughout the country, their promotion among organizations of all kinds being pushed by Walsh's assistant, Dr. Frederick Palmer Weber. Time Magazine, though pro-Dewey, acknowledged that this part of the PAC job was "far and away the slickest political propaganda in a generation."⁵⁷

Literally a deluge of literature poured forth from the mouth of the CIO-PAC. Joseph Gaer was their main pen. He opened fire with his first article Bretton Woods Is No Mystery. Next came The People's Plan For Reconversion, which dealt with the CIO's idea of how it could be done. Some of these pamphlets were like comic books--each page or two with a cartoon.

During this presidential campaign of 1944, books, pamphlets, radio, speeches, and whatever else they could use were focused on getting Roosevelt, Truman and the rest of the democrats elected.

From the start of the campaign, the Republicans were advised by an old student of politics, Frank R. Kent, the Washington columnist of the Baltimore Sun, to focus their attack on Hillman and the "Reds." "The clearer it is made that Mr. Hillman and PAC are not only running but financing Mr. Roosevelt's campaign, the greater will be the reaction among the voters who resent

. . . the professional labor bosses."⁵⁸

Mr. Kent's advice to the Republicans proved to be of some worth. As the campaign lengthened its stride, more and more evidence was uncovered to raise suspicious questions concerning PAC affiliation with Communist organizations.

The Republican propagandists, commanding about 85 per cent of the country's newspapers, fastened on the phrase attributed by Arthur Krock of the New York Times to President Roosevelt in his orders to Hannegan on the vice-presidential choice: "Clear it with Sidney." But as such things happen, it soon came out as: "Clear Everything With Sidney," which was placarded all over the United States. A close study of the propaganda technique used by the Republican supporters of Dewey and John Bricker has shown that the idea they stressed mainly were:

- 1) the menace of labor's entrance into politics;
- 2) the use of "huge slush funds" by labor;
- 3) alleged communistic influences back of the CIO; and
- 4) the vague "irrational" appeal of anti-Semitism, directed against Sidney Hillman in particular.

On one occasion during this explosion of slander, Governor Earl Warren of California, one of the leading Republican speakers, admitted that he had censored one of the "Clear-it-with-Sidney" pamphlets used by Mr. Dewey's aides as being obviously libelous or defamatory.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Baltimore Sun, July 12, 1944.

⁵⁹ New York Times, August 30 and August 31, 1944.

Roosevelt had figured on a very close race. On November 7, 1944, forty-five million went to the polls. The populous states of Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and California were carried by the Democrats, though many soldiers serving abroad failed to vote despite the simplified soldiers' ballot. In New York the contest was close, with Roosevelt ahead by only 300,000 out of six million votes. Roosevelt's margin of victory was 3,100,000 in excess of Mr. Dewey's 21,300,000. Roosevelt had won again and was still the undefeated champion of the political world.

The Death Of Roosevelt And Its Results

On April 12, 1945, labor joined the rest of the Nation by dipping its flag to half-mast. The country had lost one of its greatest leaders, and labor had lost its eyes. In his stead rose labor's choice for vice-president-- Harry S. Truman. The first man from Missouri to become President of the United States. Political circles buzzed with intense speculation that April in 1945. Everyone wondered whether or not Harry S. Truman would continue the New Deal policies. Particularly concerned with the future were the CIO leaders who had built their powerful organization amid an administrative atmosphere of friendly benevolence. At the outset of his administration, Mr. Truman, in phrases of touching humility, expressed his sense of embarrassment at finding himself in the shoes of one who had been a master among politicians. To be sure, Mr. Truman had vowed to continue the Roosevelt program, which, however, he now re-defined as the Fair Deal, a term suggesting dilution.

Under Truman there was a relapse to the rather casual pre-Rooseveltian type of Democratic presidential leadership that switched unpredictably and jaggedly from efforts to feed the politicians, ever hungry for "patronage," to

spells of plumping for reform legislation, ineffectually enough, before a Congress that seemed ripe for "reaction."

For the post of Secretary of Labor, Truman appointed Louis Schwellenbach from the State of Washington in place of Miss Perkins, who, with other New Dealers, had resigned on Roosevelt's death. The President's chief assistant in the work of labor mediation was now Dr. John Steelman. This last appointment, it was claimed by labor, presaged the altered climate of relations with labor.

Thus spring of 1945 there was considerable debate over the future of the PAC; some of the CIO's radicals urged that it be adapted as the instrument of a third-party movement. PAC leaders, however, strongly opposed such a course as merely serving to ensure the victory of reactionary Republicans. Great stress was laid on what was called the proven vitality of the two-party system in our country. The PAC, at least for the present, was to be limited to "riding on the back" of one or the other of the two major parties (though this was, for all practical purposes, the democratic party). The other alternative, which was rejected was that of becoming the organization of a protesting minority group with out any office or bargaining power.

At this same time, fears were persistently expressed by certain CIO executives that the PAC would overshadow the CIO itself. There were those who urged that the National Citizen's PAC should have been wound up after the 1944 election, or turned over to some liberal group outside the labor movement. On May 11, 1945, Hillman, under pressure, resigned as chairman of the National Citizens' PAC (while retaining his post as chairman of the CIO-PAC), and ex-Governor Elmer Benson of Minnesota was elected in his place. C. E. Baldwin,

vice-chairman, remained the executive director. It is interesting to note that it was rumored that the professional politicians in the Democratic Party, from President Truman down to the old ward captains, heartily wished that the two Political Action Committees might be buried and forgotten.

Nevertheless, plans for the PAC's intervention in local and congressional elections in 1945 were laid out by the CIO leaders in the spring of that year on an ambitious scale.

CHAPTER III

THE NADIR OF THE PAC

The full-scale 1946 campaigning of the CIO's Political Action Committee got its official send-off in Atlantic City, when the fifteenth biennial convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (CIO) was turned into a political rally. When it was over, ten senators and twenty-three members of the House of Representatives had been listed for defeat.

Political significance of the convention was not long in shaping up. Hillman's keynote address was strongly critical of B. Carroll Reece, chairman of the Republican National Committee, and the party's policies. Floor speeches carried out the theme, and it was brought to a high pitch when Phillip Murray, CIO President, delivered an address denying that communistic aims and sympathies dominated the CIO's political wing and pointing out certain members of Congress that were slated for defeat. "High on the list of PAC hopes is the defeat of two Democratic senators, Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee and Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, who are spearheading the latest drive in Congress for new labor laws. Most are Democrats that the PAC considers in open and avowed coalition with the Republican bloc in Congress."¹

Activities this year were to be concentrated in one hundred congress-

1 Business Week, May 18, 1946, 103.

sional districts in seventeen states, particularly Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan. PAC then announced it would be represented in New York by the American Labor Party and "seek to defeat Governor Thomas E. Dewey in his race for re-election."²

As PAC's tom-toms were being heard at the Amalgamated Convention, its offices were receiving first reports on three primary tests, in Florida, Alabama, and Ohio. Results were far from conclusive but PAC reported that they were "generally favorable."

"Former Governor Spessard Holland of Florida, endorsed by labor, won nomination as Democratic nominee for the Senate. George A. Smathers won nomination over Representative Pat Cannon, whose re-election was opposed by labor. There was little evidence, however, that PAC votes had materially influenced either outcome."³

Simultaneously:

In Alabama, a PAC endorsed candidate topped the gubernatorial ballot, but faces a runoff for party nomination, and another PAC candidate, Representative Albert Rains, successfully overcame a challenge from Joe Starnes, a former Dies Committeeman. Odds favored both, even without PAC aid. More significantly, PAC failed to secure nomination of Representative Luther Patrick, Birmingham, over a political newcomer, and veteran, in a race it had considered certain.

And still: "PAC's candidate in the Ohio Democratic primary was badly beaten by Senator James W. Huffman, who carried strong backing from other labor organizations."⁴

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 104.

4 Ibid.

Despite much thunder on the left against President Truman's domestic and foreign policy, Hillman indicated clearly that the CIO-PAC would endorse the Truman Administration in 1946. But in May the primary elections in Ohio and New Jersey proved disappointing, several candidates espoused by the PAC being defeated--in one instance by Representative Fred A. Hartley of New Jersey, who was to be co-author of the Taft-Hartley Act. Then on July 10, 1946, Sidney Hillman suddenly died and was spared the trial of seeing his PAC go down to defeat in that off-year election.

PAC Defeat

The 1946 Congressional elections handed PAC what the CIO itself described as a "stunning defeat." For the first time in fourteen years, labor votes did not land together. Candidates endorsed by the PAC were buried under an avalanche of opposition ballots. Its constitutional amendment campaigns all ended in failures.

The landslide even swept over areas in which labor had been traditionally strong. In Wayne County, Michigan (wherein Detroit lies), where CIO's United Auto Workers claimed two hundred and fifty thousand members, PAC activities were only slightly more successful than in less organized sections of the country.⁵

The answer seemed belatedly obvious. PAC had swept through its early elections on the political coat-tails of the late President Roosevelt. At the same time it had the guidance and support plus the personal appeal of the late Sidney Hillman, master strategist in labor politics to guide them through.

But now both of these leaders had past from the scene and PAC lost its unifying force.

To one of its supporting groups CIO-PAC now seemed "little more than a paper organization, limited largely to speech-making." Thus said the National Maritime Union in its analysis of the "extent of the reactionary victory." And similar complaints from other unions studded the convention floor discussions of why labor political action had failed this time.⁶ But these same organizations and individuals were soon to learn that Jack Kroll, Hillman's successor as director of CIO-PAC, and the rest of the PAC force were a force to be reckoned with.

The official reply was that PAC "will intensify and expand its activity. There will be no halt in our work. There will be no retrenchment." For Jack Kroll the word was, "Get on with the job . . . for which we have just begun to fight."⁷

Calls for a third party—principally from the Socialist-minded segment of the CIO—were not yet taken seriously. Despite some talk of bitter disappointment with the Democratic party, criticism of the Truman Administration was deliberately avoided. Leaders cautiously said that, at least for the present, PAC and its allied groups should work within the framework of the existing parties.

There was little doubt that that meant "within the framework of the Democratic Party."

6 Ibid., 90.

7 Ibid.

While it attempted to amend its fences by "day-to-day activities in wards and precincts"—which was a job in itself, in the opinion of allied political leaders who faced the same sort of task in rebuilding battered party machines—PAC had set another big goal. It was heading for a defensive program in Congress to "preserve the rights won by labor and the people during the Roosevelt era."⁸ But even in the beginning, there was serious doubt in Washington that the program would get congressional approval.

A lot depended on the outcome of the government's struggle with John L. Lewis and on the strike situation. Congress was not expected to get excited about restrictive action unless some big and bad strikes developed. In this instance, Lewis forced the hand of Congress and the White House received a tough batch of labor bills from the legislators.

Up until Lewis' move, such proposals as that by Senator Joseph Ball for a closed-shop ban were believed to be moving toward a sidetrack.⁹

To the new congressional leaders, labor's voting strength was still important and, if again unified, might determine another presidential race.

So congressional advisers were urging upon the majority a firm, but conciliatory attitude toward labor, unless union militance forced a fight, which it did. They would, it was argued, give labor politicians the fewest possible crucial issues on which to rebuild the PAC for battle alongside the Democrats on the comeback trail in 1948.

Communism In The CIO-PAC

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Business Week, November 16, 1946, 5.

As Jack Kroll came on the scene, replacing Sidney Hillman as director of the PAC, other problems started to plague the CIO along with its political defeat.

There is no evidence that Kroll himself was ever a communist sympathizer, although many of his original staff on the PAC inherited from Hillman may have been.

On October 20, 1946, the Moscow Radio broadcast, a talk in English by commentator A. Ossipov, beamed at the United States, in which he urged Americans to back the PAC and its "progressive" candidates in order to prevent a reactionary Congress. Ossipov said, in part:

Let me repeat--election struggle is taking place in America between progressive forces of country and reaction. It is not accidental that CIO Political Action Committee supports Progressive candidates in elections, whatever their party affiliation and opposes reactionary candidates, Republican or Democratic, and has already contributed to defeat of Wheeler and other reactionaries in primaries.

Chicago convention of American Progressive Organizations took firm and correct stand by deciding to work to secure five million votes in elections. Decision was adopted by convention to mobilize half million people to push campaign for nomination and return of Progressive candidates¹⁰

This "kiss of death" was promptly repudiated by Jack Kroll on October 22nd. Said Kroll:

While the world press and radio are free to commend all elected candidates in all countries as has been the practice for generations, the CIO-PAC regards as completely unwarranted and thoroughly disavows any foreign influence or interference in our domestic election contests. I cannot state this too emphatically on behalf of our committee.

We repudiate and reject all efforts by our political enemies to tar us with an alien brush.

The record of the CIO-PAC since its inception in July, 1943, has been absolutely clear. It is an official committee of the Congress of Industrial Organizations representing over 6,000,000 workers with their families. CIO and CIO-PAC are the voice of over 14,000,000 Americans loyal to America and American institutions. Both in war and peace this has been amply demonstrated beyond a doubt¹¹

"The CIO, as an entity, is a delicate balance between communist and anti-communist elements. Its top leadership shudders at the thought that the balance may be upset and open warfare result. Keeping that was from breaking out is the CIO's biggest problem."¹²

But the communistic infiltration continued to persist until the 1948 "Red Purge." The increasing rank and file attack on left-wing power within the CIO developed a center of gravity early in 1947. Its locus, like the headquarters of the Communist movement that it opposed, was located in New York City.

Last week representatives of 68 locals in 13 CIO international unions functioning in and around New York formally organized the Trade Union Committee for Democracy. Its first objective is to get the leftish Greater New York (city) Industrial Union Council reorganized.

Its tactics call for its affiliates to do a better trade union job than the Communists, to label a Red a Red and make no mistakes in identification. Its ultimate purpose is to drive the Communists from positions of influence and control in the labor movement.¹³

Later on it was reported that: "Steadily mounting pressure against CIO's left-wing reached new peaks this week, after marked gains recently in state council elections."¹⁴

11 New York Herald Tribune, October 23, 1946.

12 Business Week, December 28, 1946, 114.

13 Business Week, March 15, 1947, 94.

14 Business Week, September 13, 1947, 94.

In New York, the U. S. Department of Justice sought deportation of John Santo, organizational director of the Transport Workers Union and chief aid to T. W. U. President, Mike Quill. Both were listed among CIO's leading leftists. However, Quill was later cleared of any such charges.

In Detroit, Walter Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers, and now also president of the CIO, was reported in his strongest position so far.

"Reuther completely subdued left-wing foes at the recent quarterly U. A. W. executive board meeting in Buffalo."¹⁵

Delegates to CIO's annual convention in Boston during that year debated endlessly. The new law (Taft-Hartley), the split in the labor movement and internal Communist troubles piled on top of its political defeat were giving CIO its biggest headaches since John L. Lewis deserted the "house of labor" which he had founded.

¹⁵ Business Week, September 20, 1947, 104.

CHAPTER IV

THE ZENITH OF THE POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

On January 24, 1948, the CIO-PAC's executive board voted seven to two for a resolution condemning the third party idea for 1948. Shortly thereafter, Jack Kroll announced that the CIO-PAC stood against Henry Wallace's third party.¹

After that, PAC groups all over the country began to oust left-wingers from their organization who had supported Wallace's third party. On August 3, 1948, a UP dispatch from Washington announced that:

The Congress of Industrial Organizations is clearing its official house of Wallace supporters, apparently as a preliminary to endorsing President Truman for election, it was revealed today. The union has forbidden its members to use the CIO name in getting campaign funds for the Progressive Party. Members of local CIO Political Action Committees are being expelled for indicating the union backs the Wallace and Taylor ticket.²

Another UP item of the same date added that:

Officials said they have just about completed their purge of Wallaceites from high positions on the Political Action Committee and Industrial Union Council.

Murray set the pace last winter when he relieved Lee Pressman as general counsel for the CIO and fired Harry Bridges as CIO Director for

1 Des Moines Register, February 10, 1948.

2 New York Herald Tribune, August 4, 1948.

Northern California. He replaced President Albert J. Fitzgerald and Secretary-Treasurer Julius Emspak of the United Electrical Workers on the Political Action Committee.

Allen S. Haywood, director of organizing, John Brophy, national director of Industrial Councils, and Jack Kroll, director of Political Action, followed up with orders to subordinate groups "to clean house."

The CIO estimates that more than 92 per cent of the four hundred subordinate councils have conformed to CIO policy opposing Wallace.³

But how effective or how far-reaching this would be at that time was still an open question. How far would CIO's left-wing go beyond rejecting Philip Murray's stand against Henry Wallace? The answer was already apparent in February of 1948, when the small, leftist Farm Equipment Workers Union provided a quick sounding board for the Wallace bloc. Delegates to a special FEW convention—called to study Taft-Hartley strategy—were asked to vote 100 per cent support for the new third party.

FEW, whose executive board was first in the CIO to endorse Wallace, was in the lead a second time: It was the first major CIO union to take up the third party issue officially.

One week later, in Cleveland, a pattern was set for CIO right-wing action. The Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers (very anti-Communist) opened its biennial convention on February 9, 1948. Its president, John Green, called for—and got—strong support for Murray's political program.

Business Week reported that:

The FEW convention will forecast what other CIO left-wing unions will do. What FEW decides about future support for CIO's Political Action Committee, for instance, may foretell PAC's fate. And FEW's attitude toward CIO's right may show just how serious the crack in CIO may be.⁴

3 Los Angeles Times, August 4, 1948.

4 Business Week, January 31, 1948, 70.

Murray got off the fence between CIO's right-wing and left wing factions in Washington on January 24, 1948, as had been predicted the previous fall. He offered his right-wingers leadership by:

1. Flatly calling for a resolution endorsing the Marshall Plan;
2. Openly identifying the CIO leftish leaders who supported the third party.⁵

Murray's stand severely strained relations between CIO's right and left. But for the present an open break was not expected.

There was an obvious reason: Neither bloc was ready to lose the benefits of economic solidarity. But even this reason was not to stand the acid test of time.

CIO executive board members backed Murray's opposition to a third party by a vote of thirty-three to eleven. Five were absent, two abstained from voting. CIO went on record that it was "Politically unwise to inject a third party into the political scene in 1948."⁶

In announcing the actual vote (an unprecedented step in CIO's twelve year history) Murray made this point: "The majority has laid down a policy which all unions now have a 'moral obligation' to follow."⁷

Harry Bridges, president of the left-wing International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, did not agree.

"He told reporters that there is nothing to bind CIO unions to any national policy. The organizations for which he spoke will continue efforts

5 Business Week, January 31, 1948, 70.

6 Ibid., 71.

7 Ibid., 72.

in behalf of the Wallace third party."⁸

And Albert J. Fitzgerald, president of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, backbone of the CIO's left-wing, demanded that Murray issue a "clear declaration" that international unions can "endorse and support such candidates as they see fit." By such a declaration, he said, Murray could avoid widening "divisions in our ranks." Fitzgerald called for continuance of the PAC. It can "continue to function effectively in present circumstances," he said, if it would limit itself to congressional elections.⁹

These circumstances led to a FEW conference. Its president, Grant W. Oakes, was one of the eleven pro-Wallace voters; and he and FEW's thirteen member board had refused to file non-Communist affidavits under the Taft-Hartley Act. There was growing opposition in the union to the leadership on the grounds that the existence of many FEW locals were being jeopardized.

A group led by Thomas Kelly, an ousted international representative, was getting set to challenge incumbent leaders on the T-H issue. Even if it were to bear little fruit in the form of votes against the incumbents, the attack was hoped to be important because it could have paved the way for switchovers by right-wing locals to Walter Reuther's United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers (UAW).

Top leaders of CIO were strongly opposed to a third-party movement at that time. They wanted the Political Action Committee united behind President Truman for reelection. Scattered votes, they were convinced, would aid a

8 Business Week, January 31, 1948, 72.

9 Ibid.

Republican candidate.

CIO opposition to a third party placed left-wing unions on the spot. The leftists, with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers in the lead, were for Wallace; they had also been, both physically and financially, a backbone for the PAC.¹⁰

The nine vice-presidents of the CIO met with President Philip Murray in Washington on January 21, 1948, to study the problems posed by the situation. Only one voice was raised for Wallace--that of Albert J. Fitzgerald, UE president.

The leftists strategy apparently was to fight a delaying action. They did not want CIO and PAC to go on record against Wallace--at least not too soon. But meanwhile, their unions had jumped the gun by giving Wallace a solid sendoff. UE's support, through its newspaper, brought a general warning from Murray for CIO unions to steer clear of pledges of support to candidates.

There were two previews of the CIO problem in January of 1948. The New York State executive board of the CIO denounced Wallace's third party plans after a heated right-left political debate. Unions represented split evenly (fourteen to fourteen) on the issue, but a per capita vote favored the right-wing position against a third party candidacy.¹¹

And one day later, the right-wing unionists broke with the American Labor Party, which Hillman had worked so hard to build up, over its plans to endorse Wallace. ALP had been PAC's staunch political arm in New York since

10 Business Week, January 10, 1948, 86.

11 Ibid.

Hillman won control over it from Dubinsky. Ironically enough, its biggest union bloc, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (CIO), which Hillman had founded, led the exodus from the ALP.

Other unions which quit an active role in the labor party were the CIO's auto workers and steel workers. Control was left wholly in the hands of pro-Communists and party-liners. ALP immediately endorsed Wallace.¹²

A few years later there came to light the story by an ex-Communist that the American Labor Party took its orders straight from the Kremlin. Its infiltration was quite extensive, going all the way from participation in a committee appointed by the mayor of New York City to investigate Communistic infiltration to ranking men on the city police force.¹³

After this break with the ALP, the 1948 political strategy of the CIO's left-wing leaders began to take definite shape.

In International Unions under their Control, the leftists continued to support Henry Wallace and oppose the Marshall Plan.

In State Councils, where they're more vulnerable, the left-wingers plugged for a "hands-off" policy on both issues.¹⁴

As was expected, the leftists' policy line was set at the Farm Equipment and Metal Workers Union convention held in Chicago early in 1948.¹⁵ FEW bolted the CIO-PAC program on the Wallace and Marshall Plan issues. The attack on the European Recovery Program, launched by President Grant W. Oakes, can only be described as merciless.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Chicago Tribune, July 23, 1953.

¹⁴ Business Week, February 21, 1948, 103.

¹⁵ Business Week, January 31, 1948, 70.

But despite some opposition, Oakes' stand on ERP and Wallace won by heavy majorities. So did a proposal that FEW stand firm in its decision not to comply with the T-H law. And some three hundred delegates, claiming they represented seventy-five thousand workers, were just about unanimous on one "hot" issue: They pledged an all-out, "bare knuckles" fight on "any vultures from another CIO union" who would try to raid FEW plants.¹⁶

All in all, it can be said that the leftists could have gone as far as they wanted to—or members would permit—in deviating from CIO policy in their internationals.

But it was a different story in the state councils.

The CIO's 1946 convention made it mandatory for state and local councils to follow CIO policy, although the consequences of this mandate were not felt until 1948. Then Philip Murray did not hesitate to oust leftists who refused to come along.

Harry Bridges had been mentioned as one who might be the first knicked by Murray's axe. True, he finally did get it, but in the beginning, he smoothly walked around it.

. . . Bridges carefully avoided rousing Murray's Scotch temper. He dodged the third party and Marshall Plan issues at a California council board meeting. Instead, Bridges led the left in a successful fight to sidetrack "disputed issues"—and to confine state council action to intrastate matters on which there is "universal" agreement.¹⁷

Nation reported that Philip Murray was laying down the law to CIO rebels for all the world as though the CIO were the most disciplined political

16 Business Week, May 1, 1948, 98-100.

17 Business Week, February 21, 1948, 103.

group in the country.¹⁸

PAC Election Campaigners And Their Backgrounds

As of May 17, 1949, top officials in the CIO-PAC were:

Director: Jack Kroll, Vice-President, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

Assistant Director: Tilford E. Dudley, Labor Relations Counsellor.

Secretary-Treasurer: David J. McDonald, Secretary-Treasurer, United Steelwork-
of America (now President of the United Steelworkers of America).

Comptroller: George Rettinger.

Public Relations Director: Henry Zon.

Research Director: Mrs. Fritzie Manuel.

Henry Zon once addressed a Washington Bookshop meeting, a Communist dominated organization, on October 18, 1940, on the subject of "Labor and the Elections". There is no evidence that he was or had been a member of any pro-Communist organizations. On the other hand, Tilford E. Dudley, formerly employed as a field examiner by the National Labor Relations Board, was at one time a member of the Washington Bookshop, a member of the Washington Committee for Aid to China and the Washington Committee for Democratic Action. All three organizations had numerous Communist sympathizers in their midst.¹⁹

David J. McDonald had a previous record of affiliation with the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship (declared subversive by the Attorney General), and he was one of the sponsors of a Madison Square Garden

¹⁸ Nation, December 18, 1948.

¹⁹ Source material on CIO-PAC in private files of a member of the House of Representatives made available to the author.

Rally on November 8, 1943 climaxing the Congress of American-Soviet Friendship held in New York, November 6, 7, and 8.²⁰ Later, however, he apparently made a clearcut break with such groups, for an item in the New York Times listed McDonald as having made a speech critical of Communists and their activities in the labor movement, as the Atlantic City convention of the newly-organized Utility Workers Union.²¹ At this meeting, Communists were barred from holding membership in the union through an anti-Communist clause in the new constitution adopted at the convention.

Clearly the new leadership in the CIO-PAC reflected the new determination of the CIO to clean its house of Communists and fellow-travelers. In this respect there is a vast difference between the PAC leadership after 1949 and that of 1943-46 except for Mr. Dudley.

1948 PAC Campaign Literature

The most noteworthy feature about the CIO-PAC spokesmen and their literature is their careless disregard for the niceties of sticking reasonably close to the truth in their propaganda.

An example of this is contained in the following dispatch of May 2, 1948 from Washington, written by the Washington Bureau staff of the Philadelphia Inquirer. Quoting the article:

Jack Kroll, Chairman of the CIO Political Action Committee, had a date to speak at the Textile Workers (CIO) convention at Atlantic City last week, and asked his two-man public relations department to write out a draft speech for release to the press. The speech arrived at newspaper offices a day or so ahead of time, and one statement attracted a good deal of attention--an allegation that Senator Robert A. Taft (R., O.) spent

20 Daily Worker, October 30, 1943.

21 New York Times, April 11, 1946.

\$3,000 a month for food.

An enterprising Ohio reporter called up the PAC office in Washington to find out what the source was for this nice high, round, food budget statistic. The public relations man on duty was not the one who wrote that part of the speech so he called his side-kick in Atlantic City. The side-kick said he thought Kroll had told him to use that figure, but wait a minute, he would ask Jack. He called Washington back and said Jack thought he had read it in an Ohio newspaper. Washington suggested that the Atlantic City man call the CIO people in Ohio. This the Atlantic City man did, reaching a conscientious member in Ohio, who called the major newspapers in the State.

The upshot was that nobody in Ohio had seen or read the statement and that Kroll and his publicity department are beginning to wish they never heard of food budgets, particularly Senator Taft's.²²

Other CIO literature has similar examples of twisted truths or false representations. Not that the CIO-PAC is alone in this respect, for the Republican Party National Headquarter's counters with some of the most exaggerated statements this author has ever come across. Seemingly enough, it is just "part of the game" as far as those who are involved are concerned.

The CIO News of June 27, 1948, published a PAC report attacking the Eightieth Congress' tax bill, for example, as a "spare-the-rich" tax bill-- "Wealthy families get big tax cuts; the rest of us get peanuts."²³ Actually, the Republican tax reduction bill took six million low-income taxpayers off the tax rolls entirely through increase in personal exemptions; and gave 71 per cent of the total income tax reduction to the people with incomes under five thousand dollars, only 29 per cent going to those making over five thousand dollars. Tax cuts to low-income families were percentagewise much greater than

22 Philadelphia Inquirer, May 3, 1948.

23 CIO News, June 27, 1948.

to the rich.²⁴

The so-called "Speakers' Book of Facts" for the 1948 elections put out by the CIO-PAC contains almost anything but facts. The material, while cleverly done, is studded with inaccuracies so numerous that it would be a major task to try to list them all. Some of the slanting is annoyingly vicious.

Some PAC pamphlets are biased and colored, full of innuendos rather than honest facts. Some are propaganda leaflets first and last, without respect or regard for the truth. The implication is always the same—that everything the PAC wants or stands for is good and beneficial; all else is a plot to crush labor or to exploit it. The material is cleverly written and illustrated, and well-presented. It packs an unquestionable punch, if one is willing to overlook the distortions.

PAC Tries To Draft Eisenhower

But these were not the only discrepancies that the PAC had. Although Kroll and the CIO-PAC eventually ended up in Truman's camp (and on Truman's post-convention campaign train as it rolled through Ohio), originally they had no enthusiasm for Truman's candidacy.

On the 29th of April, 1948, addressing the Textile Workers Convention in Atlantic City, Mr. Kroll had in effect cast aside President Truman and openly admitted that the CIO-PAC was looking for a candidate "who would show a superlative type of leadership." Kroll stated:

It is Mr. Truman's misfortune to have succeeded Franklin D. Roosevelt and what he does suffers by comparison with that great President"

²⁴ Source material on CIO-PAC in private files of a member of the House of Representatives made available to the author.

The whole question of the CIO's position on the Presidency is still to be decide.²⁵

CIO-PAC instead threw all its weight behind a draft Eisenhower move.

As Doris Fleeson reported from Washington on May 5, 1948:

Through the error of a mailing clerk, the draft Eisenhower maneuvers of Philip Murray and his CIO are out in the open.

"Operation Eisenhower", a pamphlet keyed to newspaper headlines that Eisenhower can be drafted, is reaching the public in envelopes marked CIO-PAC. Inquiries developed that while CIO-PAC paid for the pamphlets, the envelopes were a mistake; it had been intended to mail them under the aegis of Americans for Democratic Action²⁶

A year later, in January, 1949, relations between PAC and ADA did not appear to be so close.²⁷ According to Asher Lauren of the Detroit News:

Milwaukee, Wis., Jan. 22nd --- Prominent UAW-CIO leaders also connected with the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), an elite group of liberals, strove today to conceal a mixture of shock and chagrin.

But try as they might, few could dismiss lightly the blunt pronouncement by Jack Kroll, national director of the CIO's Political Action Committee (PAC) requesting the ADA to "lay off our (CIO) people. . . ."

"Let the ADA organize liberals but stay away from CIO people on State and local levels," Kroll roared. "There is a liason between the two organizations at the top level. That ought to be sufficient." (The issue was on whether a union member should contribute his dollar to PAC or ADA).²⁸

Seemingly satisfied with very flimsy evidence of Eisenhower's views on issues, particularly labor issues, the CIO-PAC nevertheless went overboard in urging his candidacy. As reported by Robert S. Allen of the North American

25 AP, Charlotte Observer, April 30, 1948.

26 St. Louis Post Dispatch, May 5, 1948.

27 ADA is now partially incorporated in the IVI; Independent Voters of Illinois.

28 Detroit News, January 22, 1949.

Newspaper Alliance on May 31, 1948:

Behind this latest CIO (pamphleteering) move for Eisenhower is the strong conviction of top CIO officials that the former chief of staff can be nominated at the Democratic Convention. They are also convinced that Eisenhower can be "drafted."

In both these views, the Laborites see eye-to-eye with officials of the anti-Communist Americans for Democratic Action. There is no formal tie-up between the CIO and the ADA, but both are strongly opposed to the nomination of President Truman. Also, both organizations are very busy behind the scenes mobilizing anti-Truman votes at the Democratic convention.

It was authoritatively learned that demonstrations of CIO and ADA opposition to the President's candidacy will be staged at certain scheduled stops on his (pre-convention "nonpolitical") transcontinental tour.

These demonstrations will take the form of newspaper ads, large posters on his line of travel, and the distribution of literature among the crowds. It was stated emphatically that there will be no attempt to go beyond those "orderly expressions of disapproval."²⁹

Jack Kroll himself came out for Eisenhower. For example, on the sixth of June he told a CIO audience in Providence, Rhode Island, that he thought he knew the man they wanted to be the next President of the United States, and he exhorted them to make their decision known then to party convention delegates.

Kroll afterwards told a reporter that Dwight D. Eisenhower was the man he had in mind. "Everywhere you go in the country," he said, "you hear Ike's name mentioned. People are certain he can be elected and they want to see it."³⁰

It was not until the sixth of July that Eisenhower finally and unmistakably made himself understood that he could not be drafted for the post.³¹

²⁹ Charlotte Observer, June 1, 1948.

³⁰ Providence Journal, June 7, 1948.

³¹ New York Herald Tribune, July 6, 1948.

The Eisenhower-bent-frame-of-mind was not all inclusive as might first suppose. "Three major unions--textiles, steel and clothing failed to endorse Eisenhower or to take any outspoken position in their annual conventions."³²

This left the PAC in an embarrassing position.

Following the July 6th message from Eisenhower which killed the PAC's campaign for him, on July 8, Director Kroll announced that he had wired James Roosevelt of his intention to attend the pre-convention caucus at Philadelphia called by the younger Roosevelt and seventeen other Democratic leaders for the purpose of seeking some alternative to Truman as party nominee. Kroll reminded Roosevelt that the CIO-PAC is not committed to "any Presidential or Vice-Presidential aspirant, avowed or unavowed," but he added significantly to William Knighton, Jr. of the Baltimore Sun that:

CIO-PAC, however, is committed to an open convention to the end that a ticket may be selected in a democratic manner, free of interference from those holding high office or the strings of political patronage.

The stress of the times is such at this time that we must rely on the common sense of the citizens of the country to choose leaders capable of meeting domestic and international crisis of today and the immediate future³³

But as the dissenters were to find, President Truman had already sewed up his nomination, which came on the first ballot early in the morning of July 15, 1948.

PAC Backs Truman

The CIO-PAC did not immediately jump on his bandwagon.

32 New Republic, July 19, 1948, 6.

33 Baltimore Sun, July 9, 1948.

On July 22, Director Kroll began to edge a little closer to Mr. Truman with a Milwaukee announcement that President Truman "has a new look now, and I must say that the new look becomes him." It could have been that this "new look" of Truman's did not have an opiated effect upon the CIO-PAC, but rather that they just surrendered to the inevitable dictum of the party leaders.

Addressing a CIO United Gas, Coke and Chemical Workers Union convention, Kroll repeated that neither the CIO nor the CIO-PAC had yet made a presidential endorsement. But he added: "It may be that the plain people of the United States have found another champion. It may be that President Truman has found himself." Kroll continued by praising the Democrat platform, and condemning the Republicans.³⁴

Finally, on August 31, the CIO executive board endorsed by a vote of thirty-five to twelve the Truman-Barkley ticket, and agreed to throw its weight behind it.³⁵

Meanwhile, as the split began to widen within the CIO and the CIO-PAC, which, in the last analysis is the same, the political boundaries took their form on both sides:

In the CIO, leaders of thirty-one of the forty-four international unions, with a total membership of about 5,000,000, have formally backed Truman. Officials of twelve other unions, totaling about 350,000 members, have come out for Wallace either boldly or cautiously. One union is so evenly split that it has endorsed no one.³⁶

The explanation of this overwhelming sentiment among union leaders is not difficult.

³⁴ AP, Baltimore Sun, July 23, 1948.

³⁵ Philadelphia Inquirer, September 1, 1948.

³⁶ New Republic, August 23, 1948, 11.

one reason given was the awakening of the President to his new Deal heritage. Another, more significant, is found in the unhappy alternatives to Truman--an anti-labor, GOP Administration, as clearly foreshadowed by the Eightieth Congress, or the rise to power of the Communist-influenced Progressive Party. For as it was, PAC and other labor organizations were out-maneuvered by their fellows-in-arms, the professional politicians. They had no choice. The dilemma was accept Truman or else.

Around this time, the CIO decided to talk for Harry S. Truman for President and since they had been out-generaled, to work for a Democratic Congress. The decision to back the Democratic candidate again in 1948, in spite of all the seeming faults labor had had to find with the Truman record came as soon as the CIO found an opening.

PAC Campaign Tactics

The CIO Political Action Committee admittedly was seriously weakened by the withdrawal of the left-wing unions led by Albert Fitzgerald of the United Electrical Workers, who had formally joined the Progressive Party.

PAC, however, had improved its basic methods of operation since the last election. In 1944 and 1946, CIO-PAC put on a great show, with tons of literature and hundreds of speakers stumbling and running out from headquarters into the country. But its organizational underpinnings were shaky. It was long on propaganda and short on ward and block work. "Piles of undistributed literature left over from the '46 campaign are still stacked in dark corners of local union halls throughout the country today."³⁷ PAC tried another method in

37 New Republic, August 30, 1948, 12.

the 1948 campaign. It sent literature into the states only on request—and the local unions payed for what they got, so the material was being distributed.

In the 1944 election, PAC was a hyperthyroid instrument of agitation and propaganda which tried to convert everybody, bombarded the country with some eighty-five million pieces of campaign literature, and managed to made itself as big an issue as Roosevelt and Dewey. By 1948, however, Kroll had rebuilt the organization into an old-fashioned machine with the block workers, not the fancy pamphlet writers, as his key men. "Only 10,000,000 pieces of campaign literature were distributed this time, and local unions and PAC's had to pay for them." 38

It is readily understandable why the vast majority of the labor leaders in this country were dead set against Wallace. Among other things, Wallace came out with a statement in New Republic (before he resigned as editor) which surely must have made up their minds: "I never had anything personally against Truman, but I was troubled about the forces which put him over as vice-presidential nominee in 1944." 39

When the political split came within the CIO-PAC, it obviously weakened it for the political campaign ahead. The PAC could not endorse Truman without risking the practical secession of pro-Wallace unions. But when the left-wingers moved to greener pastures, the CIO-PAC more than held its own.

As a result, New Republic reported something that was soon to prove false: "Pro-Wallace unions probably will not formally break with the PAC, any more than they will withdraw from the CIO itself" 40

38 Hugh Morrow, Saturday Evening Post, March 5, 1949, 29.

39 New Republic, July 19, 1948, 18.

40 New Republic, February 2, 1948, 36.

One thing that they did predict was that the left-wing unions would use their dollars and campaign work for Wallace-for-President committee and various state "progressive" parties.

Bridge's Longshoremen had already shied away from PAC contributions in 1948, although it was not generally known; they had also failed to contribute substantially to the CIO's Southern organizing campaign.

Jack Kroll, director of the CIO-PAC, as spokesman for that organization, told what labor's stake in the election was. To labor, the issues were more than politics. They meant their bread and butter, their civil and political rights, and security of the country.

As far as labor was concerned, the Eightieth Congress drew the issues sharply. The "reactionary" Republicans, in their eyes, teamed up with the Dixiecrats to scuttle every move to provide the American people with adequate housing, the guarantee of civil rights under the Constitution, blocked health insurance, stripped millions of Social Security protection, gutted the Labor Department, crippled the TVA, allowed high prices to eat up the savings of the wage earners, and enforced the spare-the-rich tax policy.

As Kroll put it:

The American people suffered these things from a reactionary majority in Congress when there was a President in the White House fighting the people's battle. What should we suffer under a President hand-picked by the great interests that grew fat upon the dominant policy that grew in the Eightieth Congress?⁴¹

Jack Kroll, pointing out that serious attempts to organize labor politically on a year-round active basis was not started until 1943, stated that

⁴¹ Nation, October 16, 1948, 426.

no matter how the election turned out "the work of the PAC will go on."⁴²

This had always been, and still is, one of the major defects of the CIO-PAC. They try to go into competition on a part-time basis with organizations that function year-round.

During this election, as in past elections, PAC registration drives were the highlight of their spade work. Henry Murray, New England CIO-PAC Director declared that he was out to register everyone he could get his hands on "since in Connecticut, a 5 per cent shift decides a Republican or Democratic victory."⁴³ Hence labor's turnout could, and did, decide whether or not Chester Bowles, the Democratic Candidate, would win.

1948 Election Results

Despite these close ties with the Democratic Party, PAC did endorse six Republicans. This led to an odd situation in Vermont, where PAC supported Republican Governor Ernest W. Gibsons for re-election. Gibson won.

The unendorsed Democratic candidate, who was defeated, therefore was understandably surprised when he received a telegram from Kroll after the election, congratulating him on the victory which PAC had helped him not to win.⁴⁴

It was one of a large sheaf of telegrams which Kroll's staff dispatched that day, and when told that their man had won in Vermont, the man in charge of sending the telegrams naturally assumed that their man was a Democrat.

As early as September 30, Kroll told a news conference in Washington that Henry Wallace and his Progressive Party were no longer "to be taken seriously," and because of heavy registration, he said that he was sure that the

⁴³ New Republic, October 25, 1948, 12.

⁴⁴ Hugh Morrow, Saturday Evening Post, March 5, 1949, 119.

Democrats would regain control of both houses of Congress.⁴⁵

On October 7, he even went so far as to count Ohio's twenty-five electoral votes in the bag for Truman.⁴⁶

Then on October 27, at a Washington news conference, Kroll made the flat predictions that:

- (1) President Truman would win.
- (2) The Senate would go Democratic, and
- (3) "We're going to surprise an awful lot of people by having a Democratic House."

Kroll added that Truman's vote totals would be a surprise and that the Gallup and other polls were "off base somehow, I don't know how."⁴⁷

Much has been said and written since the 1948 election campaign in depreciation of labor's campaign role. But still it must be pointed out that Dewey carried the industrial states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Connecticut, and Delaware.

Kroll and the PAC contended that Wallace cost Truman New York and Michigan. And in Michigan, despite the fact that Truman lost it, the PAC supported candidate for governor was victorious. In Pennsylvania, several congressional seats were picked up by the PAC. The gubernatorial candidate with PAC endorsement won, along with three of the six House candidates. Also, a PAC approved senator was elected in Delaware.

⁴⁵ Louis Stark, New York Times, October 1, 1948.

⁴⁶ Edward Kernan, Cleveland Plain Dealer, October 8, 1948.

⁴⁷ James Haswell, Chicago Daily News, October 28, 1948.

All told, Kroll guessed wrong—in the Kroll Poll made public on October 26, 1948—on Maryland, Indiana and Michigan, which went Republican when he thought they would go Democratic, and on Wisconsin, Idaho and California, which pleasantly surprised him by going Democratic. He also forecast, incorrectly, that half of Florida's electoral votes would go to the Dixiecrats.

More important, from PAC's viewpoint, were the 137 PAC congressman elected to the House, seventy-eight other PAC endorsees having been defeated; the seventeen PAC-supported senators, out of twenty-one endorsed; and the fourteen PAC-backed governors, out of seventeen endorsed.

And in the White House sat Harry S. Truman, still President of the United States.

Here is an excerpt from the CIO-PAC victory news edition of November 22n 1948 entitled:

THE WINNERS!⁴⁸

Here is the CIO-PAC Box Score for November 2nd election:

House of Representatives

Candidates endorsed	205
PAC endorsees elected	135
PAC endorsees defeated	70

Senate

Candidates endorsed	19
PAC endorsees elected	15
PAC endorsees defeated	4

State Governors

Candidates endorsed	13
PAC endorsees elected	11
PAC endorsees defeated	2

THEY WON'T BE BACK

There will be a lot of missing faces when the new Congress sits on January 3.

They are faces of die hards and labor baiters, of union busters and errand boys of big business. Most of them were beaten on November 2, did not choose to run against the tidal wave of votes that swept the reactionary Republicans out of power.

Here are some of those who won't be back:

Senators;

Joseph H. Ball (R., Minn.), C. Wayland Brooks (R., Ill.), C. Douglass Buck (R., Del.), Henry C. Dworshak (R., Idaho), George A. Wilson (R., Idaho), Ed H. Moore (R., Okla.), Tom Stewart (D., Wyo.), and Chapman Revercomb (R., W. Va.) along with Edward V. Robertson (R., Wyo.).

Representatives;

Fred A. Hartley, Jr. (R., N. J.), Rose Rizley (R., Okla.), Harold Krutson (R., Minn.), Max Schwabe (R., Mo.), Marion T. Bennett (R., Mo.), and Charles J. Kersten (R., Wis.).

Oddly enough, in this same election, one of Kroll's best friends was Charles P. Taft, the senator's less-conservative brother, who was elected to the Cincinnati City Council with the help of Kroll's Almalgamated Clothing Workers.

Not only was this election a victorious one for the Democratic Party, but (although credit should have been given to the farm vote, too) it also established Kroll in the eyes of all. As Hugh Morrow put it: "Like President Truman, Kroll became a leader in his own right as a result of last fall's

election, not merely the humble echo of a spectacular predecessor."⁴⁹

There can be no denying that Kroll was one of the few political leaders to predict with reasonable accuracy the election results. "Only two people thought Harry would make it," he is quoted as saying, "Harry and me."⁵⁰

49 Saturday Evening Post, March 5, 1949, 119.

50 Ibid., 29.

CHAPTER V

THE OFF-YEAR ELECTION OF 1950

Kroll likes to make the high-sounding statement, as he did on January 21, 1949 at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, that: "We are not Democrats and we are not Republicans. We are not going to attempt to capture the Democrats or the Republicans and we are not going to be captured by them. . . ."¹

For the answer to that, it is only necessary to cite the story of what happened in the State of Michigan following the successful campaign conducted by the CIO-PAC for their candidate for Governor, G. Mennen Williams in 1948.

First there was the report of December 18, 1948 by Asher Lauren, Staff Correspondent of the Detroit News, as follows:

Lansing, Michigan, December 18th--a six-man steering committee to handle applications of CIO members for State jobs under Governor-Elect G. Mennen Williams was named here tonight by the CIO Political Action Committee (PAC).

The action came at a conference of fifty PAC leaders after a survey by CIO researchers showed between 270 and 300 State jobs exempt from civil service and subject to patronage.

The committee will make recommendations to Williams for appointments

August Schoole, president of the State CIO council and State PAC chief stressed, however, that the CIO does not intend to go 'hog wild' about filling all the jobs with CIO members.

1 UP, Washington Times Herald, January 22, 1949.

"I do not want to see the CIO made into a lousy patronage organization," Schoole told the PAC leaders.

He said the CIO is interested in only 'about a half dozen' of the top State jobs and in some of the less important posts. . . .

Patronage on the county level would be allotted to the various county PAC committees under a resolution adopted at today's conference. . . .²

Then on February 5, 1949, The New York Times ran a special report from Michigan. Said the Times:

Grand Rapids, Michigan, February 5th--Governor G. Mennen Williams stood by quietly today as the Congress of Industrial Organization took over the reins of the Democratic Party at one of the largest gatherings in that political group's history.

Instead of the Governor becoming titular head of the party in traditional fashion, August Scholle, president of the CIO State Council, and chairman of the union's Political Action Committee, assumed leadership.

Mr. Schoole presented a slate of candidates to be nominated for the spring election. He wrote the list on the back of an old envelope and presented it to the party's leaders in a small room.

And there was little doubt but that Mr. Scholle's list of candidates would be adopted by the convention. . . .³

Subsequently, however, the CIO-Democrat slate of candidates nominated by the Democrats at their State Convention was rejected by the people in favor of the Republican slate in the April election. The campaign was fought on the major issue of CIO domination of the Michigan State Administration.

Taft Victorious

President Truman was reliably reported to have told a labor delegation at the White House that "we're going to trim the pants off Bob Taft in 1950."⁴

2 Detroit News, December 19, 1948.

3 New York Times, February 6, 1949.

4 Saturday Evening Post, March 5, 1949, 29.

And so developed one of 1950's "hottest" campaigns--the scene of which was Ohio and the source of the friction was Senator Robert A. Taft, running for re-election. To the CIO he was the author of the "infamous" Taft-Hartley Act. To the Ohio Association for the Advancement of Colored People he was the father of a voluntary fair employment practices bill which defeated an enforceable version. The Ohio Association of Manufacturers, on the other hand, found him the valiant defender of corporation tax reductions and the opponent of "burdensome" governmental controls. While at the same time, the people of Ohio found in him the statesmanship qualities to become one of the greatest sons of Ohio. It was not surprising, therefore, that these interest groups should feel anxious to participate in Taft's re-election or defeat.

The Ohio Democratic Committee in 1950 showed no particular enthusiasm about nominating candidates, expanding party organization, co-ordinating internal party groups and campaigning. Some political sages explained its inactivity as the result of a bad case of internal factionalism. The committee was composed of a number of well-organized and practically autonomous county parties. Some of these county leaders displayed little love for Governor Lausche, a politician of independent strength, who dazzled voters with claims of "independent from corrupt local party machines." Despite their feelings, however, these county delegates knew where patronage came from. They duly elected a "Lausche man" chairman of the committee. The chairman took no chances with mutiny. The state party showed so little interest in other candidates that some politicians even surmised that Lausche had entered some "deal" with the Republicans; he would not press a strong Democratic candidate against Senator Taft in 1950, provided that the Republicans would not press Senator Bricker against Lausche in 1952. As a

result, the Democratic Party nominated a rather weak candidate, Joseph Ferguson, Ohio State Auditor, and not a real match for Senator Robert A. Taft. In any case, the attitude of the state party office toward Ferguson was so cool as to be hostile. At any rate, PAC's cry for help did not result in whole hearted support from the Democratic machine.

Some people are of the opinion that Ferguson was a weak candidate. Admittedly, he was not a very strong candidate, but who was there that was stronger? None! The passivity of the state committee almost inevitably called forth an old-time politician like Ferguson who could fend for himself. As state auditor, Ferguson had been able to control about six hundred jobs for sixteen years. This gave him the nucleus of a personal organization and independent contacts with the county parties. Only such a candidate could supply the political resources and local party co-ordination necessary to run a successful primary and general election campaign. So PAC turned to him after their favorite son, Murray Lincoln, a liberal prominent in the Farm Bureau was turned down.

From PAC's standpoint, he was much better senatorial material than Ferguson. But Lincoln had neither a personal machine nor the support of the AFL or even the Farm Bureau. He would have had to depend largely on PAC to pull him through primary and general elections. Before the primary, PAC tried to get Ferguson to withdraw in favor of Lincoln. When Ferguson refused, Lincoln, with the concurrence of PAC, decided not to make the race. Lincoln and PAC reckoned that they could not muster sufficient primary votes to win such a contest. PAC thereupon, gave up the nomination idea entirely. It told its members, "Fortunately, this year unusually well qualified men are seeking the United States senatorial nomination on the Democratic ticket. All of these candidates are

committed to a policy of placing the welfare of the people ahead of the profits of special interests. . . . The Ohio CIO-PAC is making no endorsement in this race."⁵

The Issues

The main issue that CIO President Philip Murray wanted to base the election on was unemployment. Late in June of 1950, Murray attended a PAC rally and addressed the group to elect a Congress that would meet its responsibilities. "My actual topic today is unemployment. The trend since 1947 has been for unemployment to increase at the rate of one million a year. And it evidently continues despite an unprecedented era of so-called prosperity."⁶

Other main issues at stake in the campaign were:

- 1) Repeal of Taft-Hartley;
- 2) Improvement of Social Security;
- 3) Renewal of Rent Control;
- 4) Passage of a FEPC Act.

5) Defeat of the Mundt-Nixon Bill, which, to the union, had the faint idea that it endangered civil liberties, union rights, under the guise of fighting subversive activities.

- 6) Enactment of an Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act.

But as election time drew closer, the political nick was gorged deeper with Taft on one side and labor on the other, separated by the Taft-Hartley Act. Kroll contended that "Ferguson, unlike Senator Taft, knows the problems of

5 Monthly Labor Review, United States Department of Labor, March, 1950

6 The CIO News, XIII, Number 26, June 26, 1950.

ordinary folks."⁷

But even at that, PAC's exposure would not have been so bad if its public relations had been better. The only large papers to endorse Ferguson were the Dayton News, the Springfield Sun, and the Lancaster Eagle Gazette. Many papers like the Youngstown Vindicator were bitterly anti-labor. Fear of socialism, vaguely defined, was reinforced by the extensive advertising of the NAM and the AMA. Even potentially compatible interest groups became afraid that combinations with PAC would be a "kiss of death." The upshot of all this was that Ferguson did not have a chance against the great statesman and powerful Taft who had all the tricks in the deck. Taft rolled to a decisive victory.

PAC's Work In New York

In New York, the PAC reverted to different tactics as once again the ALP came into prominence in a major election. This time the American Labor Party met more opposition than ever before.

The United Labor Committee of New York City held its first meeting in June of 1950, with three thousand representatives of the CIO and AFL unions attending.

The committee was formed the previous year to work together politically and on other matters of general labor interest. But this particular meeting was the first held for the delegates from the affiliated locals, where plans were laid for unified support of liberal and progressive candidates in the election of 1950.

They combined with Democratic, Republican and Liberal leaders in

7 CIO News, XIII, July 3, 1950.

backing former State Senator James G. Donovan as a "tripartisan" nominee to defeat Representative Marcantonio of the American Labor Party.⁸ Donovan won.

PAC Action In Michigan

In Michigan, the CIO-PAC tried to take over the state party. "We are not accepting the Democratic Party in Michigan as it now is. Our purpose in going into it is to line up with its liberal elements and remold the Party into a progressive force."⁹

Shortly thereafter, most of the Old Guard interest groups turned to the Republicans! They formed the Democrats for Kelly Club (Kelly was the Republican candidate for governor). The leader of this club said: "Leaders who have turned control of our party over to nonpartisans with Socialist backgrounds and others of their ilk, cannot expect true Democrats to be complacent. I know of hundreds of good Democrats who feel the Democratic label is being used to advance ideologies to which we cannot and will not, subscribe."¹⁰

August Scholle, state CIO president claimed: "The overwhelming majority of the regular Democrats have welcomed us into the party with open arms. They find no difficulty in working with union members on a wholesome and co-operative basis."¹¹

Both the phraseology and the content of the 1948 and 1950 Michigan Democratic platforms indicated that the party, under PAC issue-oriented interest

8 The CIO News, XIII, Number 25, June 19, 1950.

9 Michigan CIO News, March 7, 1948.

10 Detroit Free Press, October 11, 1950.

11 Michigan CIO News, March 3, 1949.

group, aimed its appeal at a particular segment of Michigan's voters. It did not attempt to please everyone, as the previous patronage-oriented party had done. The state Democratic party platform stated: "For this record of indifference and hostility to labor's interests the Republican Party stands condemned. The Democratic Party believes that the prosperity of the whole state depends on the health, security, and dignity of the working man."¹² Kelly, the Republican candidate for governor was beat by 1,154 votes.

The Results

All during the campaign of the 1950 off-year election, the PAC was well aware of the opposition that they were facing. The CIO News reported that: "The NAM is putting on a no-holds-barred, brass-knuckles campaign . . . and its purposes are to regain control of Congress and to convince Congressmen that labor has no political power. And the NAM has found new ways to spend money. It's not pouring its funds into the party tills. The cash is going directly to the party candidates. . . ."¹³

But despite all this money spent by the Republicans and their supporters, the Democrats did make some gains. As Kroll put it: "It wasn't an off-year election for the people."¹⁴

Kroll's comment on the election was that: "Insecurity and uncertainty influence the vote."¹⁵

12 Michigan CIO News, October 5, 1950.

13 The CIO News, XIII, Number 23, June 5, 1950.

14 The CIO News, XIII, Number 44, October 30, 1950.

15 The CIO News, XIII, Number 46, November 13, 1950.

These resulted from the complex situation in which the people then were engaged as a result of communistic aggression elsewhere in the world.

The people were concerned over the possibility of world-wide conflict with its hardships in terms of casualties, shortages, increased taxes, and the other sacrifices.

The most noteworthy defeats suffered by the Democrats were: Their majority leader Scott Lucas of Illinois; their majority whip, Francis Myers of Pennsylvania; the chairman of the Labor Committee, Elbert Thomas of Utah; and the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Millard Tydings of Maryland.

One so called reactionary, out of all the targets, fell before liberal attack--Forrest Donnell (R.) of President Truman's home state of Missouri. He was defeated by a comfortable margin by Thomas Hennings, Jr.¹⁶

Union label, when hung on candidates for Congress, turned out to be a liability, voters of 1950 preferred anti-union stands.

Republican gained, Democrats lost in many cases where labor was the big issue. Governors, too were caught in the tide. This off-year election found a total of 234 Democrats in the House as compared to two hundred Republicans and one Independent. The election itself resulted in a net gain of twenty-eight Republicans. Notable gains were registered by Indiana and Illinois Republicans. They gained an increase of five and four members respectively.¹⁷

And when Jack Kroll, CIO Political Action Committee Director was asked to give his idea of what happened in the 1950 election, he side-stepped

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ U. S. News And World Report, November 24, 1950, 52.

it by answering that "we just didn't get enough votes." But later on he added that "I think the members of our unions, by and a large, voted to their own best interests, which was the recommendation of their CIO Political Action Committee."¹⁸

At any rate, the Twelfth Constitutional Convention of the CIO, held in Chicago, ended on November 24, 1950. On that day they released the statement that:

In the face of the setback experienced by labor in the November elections, the Convention made plans for continued political activity looking to 1952 and a radical modification of labor legislation by a return to the principles of the Wagner Act.¹⁹

¹⁸ Interviews With Labor Leaders, U. S. News And World Report, November 24, 1950, 25.

¹⁹ Monthly Labor Review, November, 1950, 11.

CHAPTER VI

LABOR IN RETREAT

Labor's political campaign for 1952 got off to an early start, with chief interest centered in Congress. Union leaders figured that they needed to add nine seats to the "labor bloc" in the Senate and thirty-six in the House to get pro-labor legislation through Congress.

To get a good start, the CIO planned to take an active part in the primary election campaigns. Their idea was to get a pro-labor candidate nominated by one party or the other, particularly the Democratic Party, rather than wait until the November vote.

CIO's Political Action Committee, headed by Jack Kroll, warned the Democratic leaders that "his organization would not support 'second-rate' candidates just because they happened to be Democrats."¹

But these words of warning were not to be taken seriously since the CIO-PAC supported Sparkman despite his poor record in the light of labor standards, particularly those of the Congress of Industrial Organization.

PAC Rejects Barkley Abruptly

Labor started out looking like a powerhouse in the Democratic Convention. It shoved Vice-President Alben Barkley right out of the race for the

1 U. S. News And World Report, January 4, 1952, 45.

Presidency. It got nearly everything it wanted in the platform. It worked effectively in state delegations for rule changes requiring "loyalty oaths" to the convention's nominees.²

At that point, a well-known Midwestern editor, Roy Roberts of the Kansas City Star, wrote with some justification that labor was the dominant voice in the convention.³ But labor power had already started to fade by then.

The Barkley episode boomeranged, as the labor leaders themselves realized almost immediately.⁴

The rules victory was negated when the convention seated the three rebellious Southern delegations.

Then labor initially backed losing candidates both for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency.⁵

It was the way labor renounced Barkley, an old friend, more than the renunciation itself, that rebounded as a piece of bad public relations. Both George M. Harrison, President of the AFL Railway Clerks, and Jack Kroll, CIO Political Action Committee's director, were convinced that James Farley was plotting to recapture the party through Barkley--and they regarded Farley as a New Deal deserter.

Barkley had invited CIO and AFL convention groups to breakfast on the

2 Business Week, August 2, 1952, 103.

3 Kansas City Star, August 1, 1952.

4 Business Week, August 2, 1952, 103.

5 Ibid.

opening day of the convention. Instead of waiting until then to break the news to him, the two laborites announced to the press the preceding afternoon that labor could not back Barkley; he was "too old" for the job, they said. By breakfast time the next day, everybody was aware that the Vice-President was playing host to his own political executioners.⁶

The stir this created among other labor leaders, not a direct party to the anti-Barkley statement, was profound. For a time it looked as though Harrison and Kroll would be repudiated by their own people. Actually, it did come close to that.

George Meany, then AFL secretary-treasurer, Charles J. MacGowen, the Boilmakers' president, and other AFL people called on Barkley to assure him of their personal esteem and to emphasize that the AFL as an organization had not done this to him. This took some explaining, because one of the breakfast guests was James L. McDevitt, director of AFL's Labor's League for Political Education. Harrison did not show up for the breakfast date.

Philip Murray sent his personal counsel, Arthur Goldberg, and James Carey, CIO secretary-treasurer, to assuage Barkley's wounds. He also sent a telegram to the Vice-President, in deeply personal terms.

Meanwhile, a well-known Republican, John L. Lewis, moved in to exploit the CIO-AFL blunder. Through press agents on the scene, and through a United Mine Workers district president, Sam Caddy of Kentucky, Lewis ripped into Kroll, Harrison and one of his favorite targets--Walter Reuther of the CIO's United Auto Workers.

6 Ibid.

PAC Political Preferences

As far as candidates were concerned, Governor Adlai Stevenson was labor's third choice. Averell Harriman and Senator Ester Kefauver were ahead of him; both were Taft-Hartley repealers, and that was what counted.

In particular, most of the AFL group were for Kefauver. One of them, T. C. Carroll of the AFL's Maintenance of Way Employees, lambasted Stevenson on balloting day, calling him an election loser. Harrison first campaigned for Harriman, then switched to Stevenson when the New Yorker withdrew.

The CIO leaders privately preferred Harriman, but for the record, soft-pedaled this early preference. Some Stevenson sentiment showed up in the lower CIO ranks, but the top echelon managed by some chicanery to keep it quiet. All that the record showed, until the last day, was that anyone of the three candidates would be acceptable. Finally, the CIO called on its people to vote for Stevenson as soon as they could discharge their state commitments. By that time, they were merely embracing the inevitable candidate.

Labor and supporting liberal leaders were rebuffed in the selection of Senator John J. Sparkman of Alabama for Vice-President. The Democrats wanted support from the South. The PAC wanted Kefauver or any northern "liberal" for the number two spot. They regarded Sparkman's civil rights votes as a liability among minority-group voters. Further, they said, he blurs a principal labor campaign issue because he voted for Taft-Hartley in the Senate on the initial vote, then later switched to sustain Truman's veto.

Here was the unusual circumstance whereby the CIO had to repugnate the man they wanted for president just a few years before, and supported another man whose principles were not in conformance with those of the CIO. The

connexion between the Democratic Party and the CIO's Political Action Committee was too strong to be broken.

Labor leaders at the Democratic Convention ostensibly were speaking and acting as individuals, not for their organizations. But the fiction of nonpartisanship fooled nobody.

The contrast with the Republican convention was obvious. William Hutcheson of AFL's Carpenters was the only top labor leader at the GOP session.

The CIO was strongly represented at the Democratic show, and—since it is a more closely knit group—acted as an organization. Handouts were issued in the name of its PAC. Kroll and Reuther, neither of them delegates, directed things from the Palmer House.

In all, CIO and AFL claimed "more than one hundred" delegates carried union cards.⁷

As to whether Mr. Stevenson would receive any support from the PAC, the only thing close to it was a statement that: " . . . a strong feeling prevailed that if Mr. Truman ran again, despite popular disapproval, he would have the support of the CIO."⁸

An inclination on how labor leaders thought their membership would vote, came in a pre-election poll made by the official newspaper of the AFL Machinists. Ballots received by the CIO, AFL and independent union heads, revealed that Governor Earl Warren of California, would receive more support from the unions than any other Republican. At the same time, Senator Paul H.

7 Business Week, August 2, 1952, 103.

8 U. S. News And World Report, January 4, 1952, 45.

Douglas of Illinois seemed the likely Democrat to get the "okey" from labor.⁹

Walter Reuther was credited with a major voice in the selection of Adlai Stevenson as the Democratic nominee for President, though this is open for debate.¹⁰ But at any rate, Walter Reuther and his associates in organized labor did not kid themselves politically. They were beginning to work in a practical, daily manner to further labor's political interests, something that was lacking before.

PAC Campaign Strategy

CIO-PAC considered this election as a fight for survival. Down at PAC headquarters in Chicago, John Alesia, PAC Division Director, State of Illinois, and Larry Keller, Health and Welfare Division, stated that if the Republicans won the election it would be the end of unions. They thought that the Republicans were holding the Taft-Hartley law over their heads, and when the time came, they would let the axe fall. To them it would mean a time of reckoning, heads would roll and Wall Street would rule.¹¹

As the political campaign rolled on, union papers blasted the GOP. They upheld Stevenson-Sparkman and the Democratic Party in general. There were certain (but few) Republicans endorsed by them. The Illinois State Industrial Council (CIO), published the endorsements of candidates in their union paper.¹²

The constant cry of the PAC was "you never had it so good." Union

9 Ibid.

10 Statements of John Alesia and Larry Keller, personal interview.

11 Ibid.

12 Illinois Labor, Illinois State Industrial Union Council, CIO,

papers continually preached against the Republican Party. Steel Labor stated that if Ike got in, unemployment would develop. People would once more be selling apples.¹³

General Eisenhower was pictured as the avowed foe of labor. Steel Labor quoted the President as saying that the General "had apparently made his peace with the author of the Taft-Hartley Law. Apparently his conduct will not be out of line with the Republican platform, which is the most anti-labor platform they have submitted to the country in at least sixteen years."¹⁴

This was certainly strange considering the former PAC stand on Eisenhower.

Pamphlets by the thousands were printed by the PAC for the working man to influence him at the polls. This Is PAC, led the parade. It told what PAC was about. Next they gave the workers Where Your PAC Dollar Goes. Those were the groundwork for what was later to come. It was worked into a fine indoctrination to swing their votes to Stevenson.

With this framework laid, they next countered with little books pointing out unemployment and the Taft-Hartley Law.¹⁵

Then the PAC came out with one "About Prices". This one "explained" why prices were high. The price inflation that began with the Korean War sprang from two sources—profiteering and the refusal of the conservative coalition

¹³ Steel Labor, United Steelworkers of America, CIO October, 1952, XVII, Number 10, 16.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Taft-Hartley, '52 Facts, CIO-PAC, Number 3.

dominating Congress to give the government adequate control powers.¹⁶ Foreign Policy and Politics also got their names into print by the PAC. They argued in favor of the "Marshall Plan," among other pertinent items. It was a highly geared operation. It must be admitted that the men in charge truly believed in what they were doing. Work was taken for granted during this election, they never ceased. They kept going day and night.

The PAC later came out with a booklet on The Facts On Candidates, giving the background of Adlai Ewing Stevenson.¹⁷ In it, they gave quotes from newspapers concerning Stevenson's favorable disposition of Alger Hiss,¹⁸ and also a statement issued from the Illinois State House dealing with the same issue.¹⁹ On the whole, it seems that Stevenson did only what any citizen concerned with the proper function of our judicial system would do.

As the day of election drew near, the PAC passed out "Voting Guides" to its workers in the union. It told them exactly whom to vote for. But as we now know, this went for naught.

They also prepared other booklets to influence the voters, such as How To Have A Secure Old Age. All their pamphlets had a distinct Democratic flavor.

CIO-PAC early in the campaign, started a drive to get its members paid "time-off" to vote. No matter what their politics, everybody seemed to

16 About Prices, '52 Facts, CIO-PAC, Number 1, 2.

17 Facts On Candidates, CIO-PAC, Washington, D. C.

18 Peter Edson, Washington Daily News, April 5, 1952.

19 Chicago Daily News, April 16, 1952.

agree on this one point; that registering on the company's time was the answer to the problem of how to give workers an opportunity to get on the county voting lists.

CIO-PAC hammered at this relentlessly for months. The theory being, "a large vote, a Democratic vote." Many companies echoed the "register to vote" theme with placards, in employee publications and by personal appeals to workers. Still, however, in many states the workers were among the largest groups of non-registrants.²⁰ Yet the CIO-PAC made some progress in securing paid time-off for the workers to vote, notably with Johnson and Johnson and with the Line Material Corporations. These are just a few, but it showed a trend which most of the employers of the country followed suit.

The unions did, however, shift their campaign tactics from those used in previous elections. Why? The new insight was the result of the lessons they learned in 1950. CIO-PAC now stated that they should avoid tagging a candidate as pro-labor. They now instructed their men not to talk too loudly about "purges," and not to "gang up."

The CIO-PAC made a list of "don'ts" for their workers:

(1) "Don't boast about 'purging' a candidate in advance of the election, even if he is the man you want to beat."²¹

This "rule of thumb" came out of the Ohio Senatorial Campaign of 1950, when unions went overboard to "purge" Robert A. Taft. Taft, consequently car-

²⁰ Registering on the Company's Time, Business Week, October 4, 1952, 160.

²¹ Unions Shift Campaign Tactics, U.S. News And World Report, October 17, 1952, 77.

ried the state by a large majority, including industrial areas where the unions had their largest concentration of power.

(2) "Don't label a candidate."²²

This also was high on the list of advise to local unions. The idea was that it was perfectly all right to cooperate with other groups in backing a candidate, but not to put a "labor candidate" tag on him. It was logically reasoned that voters did not like to think that a man in office was "owned" by any single group. They (the voters) like to think he will vote in the interest of all the people.

(3) "Don't stress interunion committees."²³

This was to avoid the appearance of throwing too much weight against a candidate and to avoid advertising that labor was "out to get him." According to a pamphlet edited by Mr. Jack Kroll, in the 1952 election, there were fewer joint committees of members of the CIO, AFL and other unions. These groups were working separately, although in most cases they endorsed the same candidates.

Union support, as the campaign neared an end, was confined largely to Democratic candidates. In some areas, the PAC, as well as other union organizations, backed the entire Democratic ticket, from Governor Stevenson down to county offices. Occasionally, however, a Republican got the support of the CIO-PAC.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

The other campaign tactics employed by the PAC did not differ from those used in past elections. Getting workers registered was still one of their principle tasks. Labor organizations in several states had conducted extensive campaigns to see to it that union members were eligible to vote. One of the most elaborate drives made by the CIO Political Action Committee was conducted in New Jersey.

They compiled a roster of all CIO members in the state, broken down by precincts. Names were checked against registration lists and workers not on those lists were urged to register. Election officials cooperated in setting up registration desks in plants (like Johnson and Johnson Company) and employers gave time-off to those who wanted it.

Precinct workers were again supplied by the CIO-PAC and other unions. Democratic political organizations saw to it that members got to the polls on Election Day. Before the election, they rang doorbells and distributed leaflets on the election "issues" like the ones that have been mentioned. Leaflets by the millions were printed by the CIO-PAC.

Speakers were provided by the unions just as they had done in the past. In fact, the CIO-PAC printed a Speakers Manual for its men. It contained the "do's and don'ts" of public speaking and other helpful information. Labor leaders, from the higher echelon of the CIO down to local union officials, took the stump to back their favorite candidates. The organization provided money for nation-wide radio and TV speeches by union leaders and for special programs aimed at supporting candidates.

Voting records of members of Congress were also distributed by the CIO-PAC as "guides" to their members. The "guides" showed how each Senator and

Representative voted on key issues selected by the labor leaders.

About this time, people were wondering if labor could rally the vote. Labor leaders were puzzled and disturbed by the apparent political apathy of union members. This was scheduled to be the year of the "big push" for political action. The CIO launched it by taking its top brass, two hundred strong, to the White House lawn for a pep talk from President Truman.²⁴ But from all over, union officials were reporting listless responses from their constituents.

Contributions to CIO's Political Action Committee were slow coming in. Union-sponsored political meetings were scantily attended. Those who did attend, were always the same ones. The rank and file was exhibiting a general lack of interest in matters political. This substantiated the theory that the working-men will follow their labor leaders in economic but not political matters. When they go to the polls to vote, they go as individuals and not as a class.

But even with this "handwriting on the wall," some union officials working the political front professed that they were not worried by the lethargy. After all, 1948 was a surprise to everyone. But one thing that labor leaders failed to consider in this political parallel was the climate that the farmers were nurtured in during 1948 to 1952.

Some union officials saw 1952 as another 1948 campaign when an undemonstrative electorate kept its own counsel so well that the experts miscalculated the strength of pro-Truman sentiment.²⁵ But these union officials were in the minority. A majority were seriously concerned.

²⁴ "Can Unions Rally the Vote," Business Week, October 18, 1952, 150.

²⁵ Ibid.

Election Results

As things turned out, General Eisenhower won by a landslide as shown in the following table.

Landslide For Eisenhower

Popular Votes:	
Eisenhower	55.1 per cent
Stevenson	44.5 per cent
Minor parties	.4 per cent

Electoral Votes:	
Eisenhower	442
Stevenson	89

Key States edge for Eisenhower;	
New York	851,000 votes
Ohio	505,000 votes
Illinois	470,000 votes
California	630,000 votes
Texas	136,000 votes ²⁶

Standing among the ruins of the 1952 Political Action Campaign, Jack Kroll was able to find only a few sources of consolation. Chief among these was his opinion that, while some labor votes obviously swung to the Republicans, the labor vote as a whole shifted less than the non-labor vote.²⁷ Still, he reminded his membership that " . . . General Eisenhower had been elected President of all the American people and that he is entitled to their support in carrying out the duties and obligations of that high office."²⁸

The most dramatic shifts, Kroll pointed out, were in states where the CIO was weakest—Florida, Texas, Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, Arizona, New

26 "Polls as Election Guides," U.S. News And World Report, November 14, 1952, 32.

27 Picking Up the Pieces, Fortune, December, 1952, 83.

28 Monthly Labor Review, November, 1952, LXXV, Number 5, 111.

Mexico and Oklahoma. But he said nothing about the smarting defeats suffered where CIO was strongest, such as Illinois, New York and Ohio.

But at any rate, it is probably worth recalling amidst all the current derisions of the "labor vote," that labor leaders never claimed (except in the early days of PAC) that they were able to swing elections. They did, however, believe that between two-thirds and three-quarters of union members were normally Democratic, and that their propaganda efforts might raise this range by several percentage points, and that if they could get union men to the polls in greater numbers, they might, though it is doubtful, tilt a few marginal areas into the Democratic column. But if you consider a poll conducted by Mr. Gallup, it shows an increase of one per cent in union members voting Democratic.²⁹

All these reflections could not, of course, offer much solace to a man like Kroll, who had predicted Eisenhower would get "a maximum of one hundred and fifty" electoral votes.³⁰

Of twenty-one senatorial candidates endorsed by the CIO, which stayed out of campaigns in states where it had little membership, such as North Dakota, thirteen were beaten. In the House campaigns, the results for labor were equally disastrous. The PAC endorsed and fought for 238 congressional candidates but only 134 were elected.³¹ In addition, control of the Senate Labor Committee passed from Murray of Montana, a warm friend of organized labor, to Senator Taft of Ohio (who later died), co-author of the Taft-Hartley Act.

²⁹ How Labor Votes, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, March, 1951, CCLXXIV, 124.

³⁰ Picking Up The Pieces, Fortune, 1952, December, 83.

³¹ Ibid.

Labor's defeat followed a campaign that it had fought energetically. The PAC raised close to one million dollars in voluntary contributions, half of which was spent in Washington on national issues and half of which remained for local campaigns.³² This was a far cry from the three million dollars in a war chest that had been reported.³³

Aside from the monetary aspect of this election campaign, as compared with previous campaigns, there were two major changes in the CIO effort. It was concentrated as much as possible in the so-called "3 per cent areas," i.e., states or congressional districts that were won or lost by less than 3 per cent in the 1950 mid-term elections. Secondly, except in industrial areas where it was sure of its strength, the PAC stressed the loyalty of its approved candidates to the Democratic platform under the slogan of "you never had it so good," rather than to the standards of the CIO.

Before the election, at least, the new techniques appeared to be working smoothly. In Indiana, for example, the PAC made no attempt to budge solidly entrenched Republicans, but instead, limited its effort to seven of the eleven Congressmen, the senatorial campaign of Governor Schricker and the gubernatorial campaign of John Watkins. The PAC, working closely with the AFL unions, hired about two thousand five hundred cars to deliver voters to the booths. In South Bend, Indiana, the Auto Workers even set aside an emergency fund to buy snow chains for their cars in case the weather suddenly turned for the worse.

32 Ibid.

33 Unions Put The Heat On Voters, U.S. News And World Report, August 29, 1952, 70.

Throughout the state, the PAC had twenty-three full-time political workers, in addition to hundreds of part-time volunteers. It spread around the state more than a million copies of four campaign pamphlets; it sponsored, on fifty radio stations in the state, about three rebroadcasts per station of Senator Morse's main speech for Stevenson; and it made sure that union men worked in close co-operation with Democratic precinct captains.³⁴ But in those areas where PAC strength was weak, they did not function at all.

Still, in the main event, labor elected only one of the seven congressional candidates it was endorsing in Indiana and saw its senatorial and gubernatorial choices defeated.

Jack Kroll, in his report to the CIO executive board, expressed confidence that 70 to 75 per cent of the CIO members had followed the recommendations of their union leaders in the Presidential balloting.

It is no sense constitutes a victory for the Republican Party or the ideas associated with the Republican Party. It was a victory for a hero . . . and cannot be construed as a repudiation of the principles of the New Deal and the Fair Deal. . . . No significant realignment of parties has yet taken place in the South and control of political machinery of the Democratic Party is still lodged in the same hands.³⁵

PAC Retrenches

In all, it was a smashing victory for the Republicans. Labor, with all its backing of the Democrats, was defeated in a perdue fashion. The peri of their hopes was utterly dissolved in vapor. They believed that since the Republican Party was in power, the ax would fall.

³⁴ Picking Up The Pieces, Fortune, December, 1952, 84.

³⁵ Mission Accomplished, National Precinct Workers, Inc., Chicago, Illinois, 1953, 13.

Then there were rumblings that the CIO might suspend its national Political Action Committee for four years to save money. But this was opposed by Chicago leaders of the union group.

John Doherty, who was the personal representative of Philip Murray in Chicago, said: "CIO-PAC must be maintained in some form. We must have some political instrument, local or national."³⁶

As an aftermath of the election, in which the labor backed Democratic ticket of Governor Stevenson and Senator Sparkman was completely buried, it seemed that there were only two alternatives for the Congress of Industrial Organizations; to suspend CIO-PAC for at least four years, or to intensify its activities, work harder and broaden its scope. It seems that the latter path in the one that the CIO has chosen to tread.

Even as the dust was settling, the CIO was making plans for new political action. Permanent political action groups in Cook County's twelve Congressional districts were being formed.

The new plan will break down the organization into ward, township and precinct organizations.

William Rocco, chairman of the Cook County CIO Political Action Committee said:

We are establishing committees in each district and a committee in each ward.

We are not going to do it over night. We are building ward by ward. We are doing it slowly and solidly.³⁷

36 CIO Split Issue of Disbanding PAC, Chicago Daily News, November 7, 1952.

37 Chicago American, April 14, 1953.

It did not take the CIO long to rip into the Eisenhower Administration. Victor Riesel, reporting in the Herald-American on Walter Reuther's speech at the United Auto Workers Convention, states that he "slashed at the Republicans as you would expect," before he started a demand for a third party.³⁸

Then the PAC switched from the general to the more specific when it ripped at the new labor law draft.

They charged the changes would make the present act "worse" than it is. And they renewed their demand that President Eisenhower send Congress his own recommendations.³⁹

But still the gulf widened between the CIO-PAC and the new Administration. When John Edelman was rejected by the administration as CIO's candidate for assistant secretary of labor, the CIO flatly refused to submit another nominee.

CIO is fully in the opposition now. The story is that it would have blasted Eisenhower from inauguration day on, but didn't want it to appear to its members as a sour grapes action. The high strategy adopted last January was to wait for some issue on which to break with the administration. The Edelman situation is it.⁴⁰

The top echelon of the CIO-PAC began picking up the smallest details to throw back at the Republicans. "CIO leaders who are checking up on how much time the President takes off for golf strongly urge a thirty-five hour week, with a goal of thirty hours a few years hence. Eisenhower might like that, too."⁴¹

38 Herald-American, March 16, 1953.

39 Chicago Daily News, May 23, 1953.

40 Chicago American, May 26, 1953.

41 Detroit Free Press, May 31, 1953.

It was not long before tactics, issues and timetables for the 1954 election were being laid by the PAC.

Harry Truman sat in an off-the-record luncheon in June of 1953 with some old friends and allies. These old friends were labor leaders.

The luncheon came nine years after the day in Chicago when a little known Missouri Senator walked into the political headquarters of the late Sidney Hillman at the 1944 Democratic Convention.

Truman told the CIO-PAC leaders to practice self-restraint. He said that the office of the presidency was the "greatest, most responsible job in the world." He said it would be "unfair to lambaste Eisenhower" this early in his administration, that no one could "master the office" in so short a time.

Truman pointed out he could not "ethically" now attack "Ike." It would lend the impression Truman was still trying to run the country on the basis of what he had been privy to as president.⁴²

At any rate, the PAC leaders did not take the advice of Mr. Truman when it came to the critical attitude they took of President Eisenhower and his associates. It was significant to note that the CIO-PAC is still wed to the Democratic party leaders at least in its friendliness.

The CIO-PAC is beginning to realize that its political power is not only advanced by pamphlets, money and speeches, but must have substantial membership in which to exert this influence. Consequently, organizing campaigns have taken on political consequences. Unless the unions can go into those fields which are not organized, a large potential "voting bloc" will be lost.

⁴² Victor Riesel, Chicago American, June 29, 1953.

Unions are particularly aware of this now. They feel that their political setbacks in late 1952 were due, in part to lack of support from the big unorganized white-collar or salaried work force. They feel, too, that labor's economic and social programs will stand a far better chance if the white-collarites can be drawn into unions.⁴³

But preparations are still only preparations. Only the results of the 1954 off-year election returns will give us the answer to how successful the PAC plan-of-attack was.

⁴³ "Unionizing Office Workers," Business Week, July 18, 1953, 121.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

As was seen, the "reactionary" off-year election of 1942 led directly to the formation of the PAC. But the question arises as to whether or not the CIO was justified in establishing such a body to delve into the political field.

The answer seems to be in the affirmative. Government, more and more, had come to delve into the problems and affairs of labor. Therefore, as a means of survival, labor had to enter the political arena where questions of legislation were effecting them, either directly or indirectly. The logical outcome was based upon the sound policy of non-partisan political action. With these thoughts in mind, the CIO launched its Political Action Committee.

Two factors aided the successful drive of this infant organization.

First was the powerful and appealing candidate that it backed during the 1944 presidential campaign—Franklin D. Roosevelt. In all due respect to the PAC, it must be stated that it rode to victory on the "coat-tails" of a great master politician.

The second factor which aided the Political Action Committee was the guiding genius of Sidney Hillman. To him the PAC owes a great debt. It was his powerful mind and superb knowledge of political strategy that activated it to its fullest extent.

It proved to be a wise choice on the part of the CIO when it placed Sidney Hillman at the helm of its Political Action Committee. For like Gompers, Hillman's socialistic training proved an asset. He saw that the socialistic thoughts would not fit into the American way of life. With these thoughts in mind, it was no wonder that Hillman approached the task with such a highly practical spirit and rejected the path to a third party.

Hillman's next venture to capture the American Labor Party was a brilliant move. The ALP was the dominant labor political organization in New York. Coupled with the fact that the New York electoral vote far exceeded that of any other particular locale.

Therefore, it was only logical that Hillman would want to gain the upper hand in that land of honey.

With this chore successfully tucked under his belt, Hillman and the PAC turned their attention to Martin Dies. Dies was out to break the PAC, but this time PAC did deliver the vote. With the increase of union personnel in Jefferson County, Texas (due to war work), the PAC was able to raise registration by about 20 per cent and thus offset any majority Dies might have had.

But that was a small isolated district. When it came to the nation as a whole the Democratic Party feared that the PAC would hurt rather than help the cause. However, after a time the pessimism of Roosevelt subsided and the Democratic Party went all out to gain labor's support.

Still, as the Democratic Party was trying to consolidate, the PAC continued its backing of Henry Wallace for Vice-President. It was a known fact to PAC leaders that high ranking Democrats opposed Wallace for many reasons, but still they insisted on his candidacy. It was only after they became convinced

that Wallace could not win that the PAC went along with Truman.

The campaign tactics used during the 1944 election were laid upon the premise that clever literature could do more than actual door to door canvassing. The PAC as yet was not strong enough in actual number to cover each and every ward in the country with representatives, so it relied upon a slick campaign of pragmatic literature to do the job for them.

But with all this, there is no direct evidence that PAC was responsible for the election of Roosevelt and the other New Dealers in the 1944 Presidential election.

In 1946 it was a different story. Both Roosevelt and Hillman had passed from the scene. The people were becoming critical of labor as a whole. PAC began to lay back on its laurels, not realizing that it had to fight harder this year to maintain what they already had accomplished.

During this time there were still calls for a third party—primarily from the Socialist-minded segment of the CIO—but they were rejected.

And the CIO-PAC were very disappointed with the Truman Administration. While they did not openly criticize them, they did not give them their wholehearted support.

After the campaign of 1944, PAC talked much of expanding its day-to-day activities in wards and precincts. But it was just lip service. As the election day grew closer and closer, it became evident that they were relying more and more upon the tactics used in 1944. The results were a reprint of the tactics—a stunning defeat. Candidates carrying PAC support were buried under an avalanche of opposition votes. The landslide was extremely extensive. It even covered areas where labor had always been strong.

Then, when the PAC was placed upon the apron of political defeat, the internal conflicts of communistic influences started to gnaw at its super-structure. The split between the left and right-wing factions weakened the CIO-PAC considerably. All in all the future looked bleak just before the dawn of the 1948 Presidential Campaign.

But in the first month of 1948, the CIO-PAC's executive board gave a destine resolution condemning the third party idea for 1948. Then the PAC, under the direction of Jack Kroll announced that that organization would not back Henry Wallace in his bid for the presidency.

This move on the part of the PAC had a disastrous effect upon the chances of success for Wallace and his affiliates. Even more serious was the effect it had upon the CIO-PAC. An immediate split became apparent as the gap widened. When the smoke cleared, the CIO-PAC found themselves smaller in number and financial backing, but stronger at the hard core of right-wing reliability.

With this friction removed, PAC immediately launched into the 1948 campaign in the usual literary way. The main task, at least in the beginning, was the "Draft Eisenhower" movement. But in this movement they failed to consider one aspect. Would Eisenhower accept their draft proposal? The answer was no. If they would have found this out in the beginning, they could have saved a tremendous amount of time and effort.

Definetely, the PAC was against Truman. But as it became apparent that they had again been outgeneraled, they jumped on the bandwagon and embraced the man from Missouri.

After Truman had secured his nomination, PAC moved into high gear.

The principle campaign methods were revised. It now started to develop grass roots of ward and precinct workers, relying less and less on their "bright little pamphlets." The results were an increase in interest among the people at less expense to the organization.

At the end of the long 1948 campaign road, success was waiting for the PAC. But was that success earned by the PAC alone? It is true that the changes they made in their tactics were all for the best. It is also true that they worked hard and in the end their goal was achieved. But the final outcome cannot be attributed just to the CIO-PAC. Labor claimed the credit for Truman's election, but they failed to consider the significance of the huge farm vote that also had a bearing on the election of Mr. Truman.

1950 was an entirely different story as the political pendulum again swung back. This campaign turned out to be the big brother of the 1946 contest.

The words of President Truman, "we're going to trim the pants off Bob Taft in 1950," proved disappointing to the PAC. His political future was of no small concern, especially to the CIO-PAC. Their hopes were high because he was running for re-election in a highly industrial state--Ohio. It is true they did not have a man strong enough to face Mr. Republican and it is also true that Ferguson did not get the full support of all democrats in the state. But still, considering all the potential labor vote that existed in the state, Ferguson should have done better than he did if the PAC had delivered the vote.

It would seem, upon hindsight, that PAC's labeling Taft for defeat, contending that he was the foe of labor did more to help him than it did to hinder him. Consequently, Taft achieved a decisive victory.

In New York, the PAC revamped its policies and combined with other

labor and political groups to roll to an easy victory.

But in Michigan, the PAC made the same mistake that was made in Ohio--they labeled the opposition as anti-labor. However, in Michigan they tried to capture the Democratic Party which proved a further mistake because the general public did not take to the idea. These setbacks were coupled with the defeat of other key Democrats, namely, Scott Lucas of Illinois, Francis Myers of Pennsylvania, Elbert Thomas of Utah and Millard Tydings of Maryland. Republicans gained, Democrats lost in many cases where labor was the big issue.

Then as the 1952 Presidential election drew on the horizon, hopes ran high for a Democratic victory. But for the first time in its short history the political cycles did not swing back.

The first mistake PAC made was in its rude rejection of Alben Barkley. The result was the leaders of the Democratic Party had an ill feeling toward the labor leaders as a whole. However, the CIO-PAC and other labor leaders were quick to see their error and tried to smooth some of the hard feelings.

As for the backing of the right candidate, the PAC played its usual role of being far in arrears. Their backing centered around Averell Harriman and only later, when the inevitable candidate started his victorial pace did the PAC come out for Adlai Stevenson.

However, in the selection of a vice-presidential candidate, the PAC was forced to swallow its principles. Senator John J. Sparkman of Alabama, whom the PAC frowned upon because of his stand on civil rights, got the nod at the democratic primary. It did prove one thing however; the CIO-PAC is wedded to the Democratic Party. If they were not, then they would not have given their support to a man who had voted for the Taft-Hartley in the Senate on the initial

vote and whose stand on civil rights was in direct opposition to that held by the CIO-PAC.

But the PAC continued its support of the Stevenson-Sparkman ticket till the end. CIO-PAC considered this election as a fight for survival. For the second time in its history it began to profit by the mistakes of past elections. It still stuck to its revamped policy of less propaganda and more precinct work. But this time it did not label a candidate as being for or against labor. Instead it switched to the emotional appeal of "you never had it so good."

But even though they tried not to label a candidate as anti-labor, the PAC could not resist one poke at General Eisenhower as the foe of labor. Apparently this had no effect upon the workers of the country. Maybe the workers remembered how the PAC tried to "draft Eisenhower."

Then, as the final day of the campaign drew near, the labor leaders of the country began to suspect what was in store for them. Some, however, refused to believe that they would be defeated. In ostrich fashion they believed that the election would result in another 1948. But as it turned out Eisenhower registered a landslide.

So in summation it can be said that when the results of these past elections are studied, the Gompers theory must be reflected on; that labor has never been able to sight the perigee of political action. This is not to say that labor should remove itself from the political scene entirely because government, since 1932, has entered into the affairs of labor through legislation. Common sense dictates that times have changed and thus ideas should change, but what the author wants considered is a revamping of the Gompers theory to fit

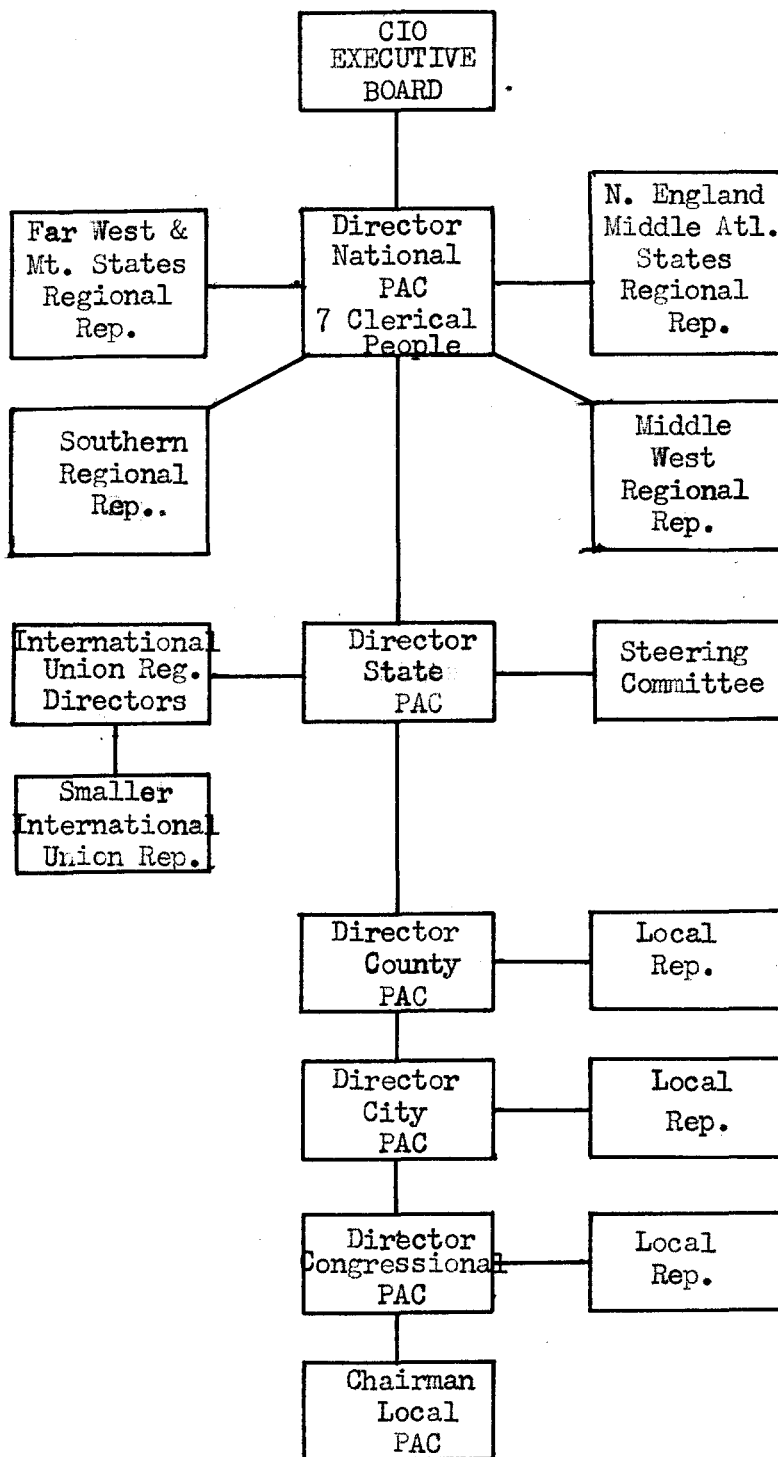
the change that has taken place, not a complete denial of it. What labor should do is intensify its lobbying activities and nonpartisan political action principles. At the same time they should continue to shun the idea of a Labor Party because it does not fit the philosophy of the American Worker.

But these manifestations were unheard of in the aftermath of the 1952 election. CIO-PAC headquarters here in Chicago estimated that approximately 35 per cent of her members had deserted it and voted Republican. Later, they denied this and said that their membership voted just as they had advised.¹

1 Statement of John Alesia, Illinois PAC Director, personal interview.

CHART I
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE PAC¹

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¹ Statement of John Alesia, Director of PAC, State of Illinois, personal interview.

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