

Longshoremen's + Warehousemen's Union, Int'l
(1948)

INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN'S & WAREHOUSEMEN'S UNION
S.F.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

November 30, December 1, 1948

STATEMENT OF POLICY

THE CIO

Representing a union which pioneered in the establishment of the Congress of Industrial Organizations and with it gained great advancement in economic conditions we members of the national executive board of the International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union feel bound to convey to the membership of our union problems and policies which must necessarily be reviewed as result of the Portland convention of the national CIO.

We are concerned, as our whole membership must be concerned, by certain developments within CIO which indicate a trend away from CIO's traditional democratic principles and the apparent attempt to invade and destroy the autonomy of those international unions and councils which do not readily accept political and other decisions made at the top and handed down.

In our own union structure we have never attempted, nor would we be able to make decisions at the top and force them onto the locals and ranks. Every policy we have ever recommended has been explained and voted up or down, not according to our dictates, but according to the wishes of the rank and file.

We do not believe, either in our own union's conduct or in the conduct of the CIO, that blind acceptance of a policy is a proper yardstick of loyalty, and if such is to become the case, then free trade unionism is dead.

It is our position that the unorganized must be organized; that low rental and low cost housing must be furnished by the government; that prices must be rolled back and rigidly controlled; that the infamous Taft-Hartley Act must be totally repealed and replaced by the Wagner Act; that social security must be extended; that a civil liberties program must be made real, and that all the people of the world in sub-standard condition must be helped with American goods and money. Insofar as the national CIO promotes these things we are in basic agreement and sincerely believe our ranks are likewise in agreement.

However, we cannot agree that it is an act of disloyalty to the CIO or the nation to disagree. We assert the right to disagree and hold that our CIO charter so gives us the right as an autonomous union.

We believe and assert that any member of our union or of any other union of the CIO has the right to be a Communist, Republican, Democrat, Progressive, Socialist or to adhere to any other political persuasion that is without union-busting purpose, and that the true test of his trade union loyalty is not his political belief, but is his conduct in the union.

We deplore the red-baiting and Jew-baiting which was openly indulged in at Portland and call upon the members of our union to guard against any spread of such cancerous union-wrecking within our own ranks.

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We recognize the right of the CIO to adopt and pursue any policy which a majority of its representatives may decide upon, but we do not recognize that the CIO has any right to say to autonomous affiliates, or to the delegates to state or local councils from the autonomous affiliates that they must vote in accordance with such policy whether they agree or no.

We will defend our autonomy and be guided by the wishes of our ranks. We will resist any raiding of our union and if necessary return any attacks upon us in kind.

Our record with the CIO is unassailable. We have organized the unorganized. We have made gains unequalled elsewhere. We have worked, fought and sacrificed to build the CIO, and we will not be penalized because there are times when we choose to exercise our right of free, independent decision.

We fully support all actions of our delegates to the CIO Convention. We specifically endorse the action of William S. Lawrence in opposing the unexplained increase in per capita tax. We further express complete confidence in our president, Harry Bridges, and resent certain remarks made which tended to indicate that President Bridges deliberately absented himself from CIO executive board meetings. The record will show that President Bridges has never absented himself from such meeting excepting when his own union negotiations forced such absence.

We instruct President Bridges to make every effort to obtain from the CIO, for the information of the officers and members of our union, a full financial statement of the CIO.