

AGRICULTURAL REPORT

NFO CALLS FOR MORATORIUM ON AGRICULTURAL DEBT

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Dec. 7 (IPS)--Seven thousand delegates at the annual convention of the National Farmers Organization (NFO), one of the largest farmer groups in the U.S., unanimously endorsed a resolution Dec. 4 calling for the immediate suspension of all farm debt.

Drafted by two farmer delegates from South Dakota, this resolution called upon the NFO to "urge the governors and President of the United States to declare that a state of emergency exists in agriculture and to issue a proclamation to all banks and lending institutions declaring a moratorium on all foreclosures or evictions and on all loans (for livestock, land, etc.) pertaining to agriculture. The moratorium is to be lifted only by an Act of Congress."

For workers and farmers throughout the world, this historic declaration has the immediate potential to break Rockefeller's stranglehold on farmers. It also creates the immediate practical necessity for a fighting worker-farmer alliance to stop Rockefeller's planned destruction of useful production in all technologically advanced nations.

A major leap in this direction began last week with the Labor Party's successful organizing campaign around the moratorium resolution and the U.S. Labor Party's Emergency Food Program at both the NFO convention itself and throughout significant layers of the working class. Tens of workers at unemployment centers around the country sent telegrams of support to the NFO and increased their organizing efforts for an emergency food and fusion power program to solve the international food and energy crisis.

How Could It Happen

What workers are asking now is how and why such a resolution was passed by the NFO, an organization nominally committed to food withholding actions, cattle slaughterings and other destructive policies geared to forcing market prices upward.

Except for the top leadership of the NFO, headed by Rocky's agent Oren Lee Staley, Labor Party organizers at the conference discovered that most delegates had already privately concluded that the food-destroying practices were insane and were actually driving the debt-ridden farmers further into the arms of Rockefeller's bankers. This understanding, combined with the strong populist sentiment of most farmers which automatically pits them against "the bankers," was intersected by the Labor Party's anti-Rockefeller campaign and the Labor Party's complete program for

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expanding food and energy production. The result was a predictable explosion.

Bud Cooper and Marvin Kammerer, the two sponsors of the debt moratorium motion, are self-educated socialists who, without any direct knowledge of the Labor Party, drafted the resolution on their own and pushed it through the pre-convention resolutions committee. Despite their correct assessment of farmers' growing demoralization with NFO tactics, they did not anticipate any possibility for the practical realization of this proposal. There was no existing social force, they thought, which could take up this demand and forge it into a viable alternative for workers and farmers.

Expanded Production

As soon as Cooper and Kammerer studied the Labor Party's Emergency Program, which was widely distributed in pre-convention meetings and at the convention itself, they realized the crucial element missing from their resolution: the concept of expanding production. It is the expansion and cheapening of food production at Rockefeller's expense which directly link the farmers' interests to those of the working class. At a meeting on Wednesday evening with Labor Party cadre and six other delegates from Missouri, South Dakota and California, they resolved to present the entire program as an amendment to their motion the next day. They were positive they would get backup support from the delegates even though the farmers would be forcefully intimidated by Staley and his "preachers."

Referring to the six other farmers who attended this meeting, Cooper and Kammerer accurately summed up these farmers' state of mind and their response to the Labor Party: "See how scared they are--and they're the bravest--but they're coming up here because everyone wants to know what this [the Labor Party] is all about."

After Cooper presented the moratorium resolution and saw it passed, he attempted to attach the amendment calling for full food production. It was nullified, as anticipated, by the chairman, who said that he could not make an addition to an existing resolution. The microphone was then cut off by Staley. Later, after another resolution was put on the floor to support a version of Rockefeller's food reserve bank, Kammerer jumped to the microphone and said, "I have something to say and I'm going to say it."

Staley again moved to shut off the microphone, but was stymied by irate farmers who shouted to let Kammerer speak. Kammerer then addressed the convention delegates: "The NFO has shown that the American farmers have the capacity to feed the world. We know there is a tremendous amount of hunger in the world and the American farmer is being wiped out. The NFO has to take the lead in fighting for emergency agricultural production; therefore, the directors of the NFO in Washington should

support all legislation for emergency agricultural expansion." "If we do this," he concluded dramatically, "the eyes of the world's working class will be on us."

Kammerer received a standing ovation, led by the South Dakota delegation. Aided by the cumulative effect of intensive Labor Party organizing, he was able to bust through the controlled atmosphere created by Staley's monotonously long agenda of suicidal, anti-working class resolutions, including one lifted directly from Rockefeller's Trilateral program: selective fuel rationing and a call to establish an independent agency to direct a full rationing program.

It is now up to the Labor Party to consolidate a worker-farmer movement based on these resolutions. The hundreds of workers and farmers organized last week around the developments at the NFO convention and the thousands more who will be organized in weeks ahead will make sure that the "eyes of the working class" stay focused on the farm debt moratorium and the U.S. Labor Party's Emergency Food and Energy Program. Staley and the NFO leadership will not be allowed to bury these demands under the rug.

MILK DRIVERS STRIKE USED TO BUST UNION, PREPARE POPULATION FOR FOOD RATIONING

NEW YORK, N.Y., Dec. 8 (IPS)--Three-thousand milk drivers, members of Teamster Local 584, were forced out on strike here this week when milk dealers demanded a productivity agreement which would effectively cut the workforce by 20 per cent. The New York Times and other Rockefeller-allied press have used the strike to play on the urban population's sense of helplessness in the face of food shortages, softening them up for food rationing. On the first day of the strike, scare headlines provoked housewives' panic buying which emptied stores of milk within hours.

The Teamsters are the latest casualty of Rockefeller's financial squeeze on the farmer-owned Dairylea Cooperative and independent food processors generally. Last month, 8,000 farmer-members of the Dairylea Co-op were saddled with an \$18.6 million assessment demanded by banks to pay off the co-operative's debt. Dairy farmers are now offered the milk drivers' union as the target for their rage--a classic splitting device aimed at sabotaging the worker-farmer alliance inspired by the Labor Party which emerged at this week's National Farmers Organization convention.

Although there are more than 100 milk processors, distributors and dealers in New York City, the Dairylea Cooperative and Dellwood Dairy are the drivers' chief employers, together accounting for 80 per cent of the milk market. Dairylea's near-bankrupt condition was aggravated by this summer's forced collapse