

“... the basic purpose of the National Labor Relations Act ... written into law by Congress in 1935 and never changed ... is that—as a public policy of the United States—workers should be encouraged to organize into unions of their own choosing and to engage in collective bargaining.

“The (Republican) party not only did not reaffirm this fundamental public policy; it sought, in language that was only somewhat camouflaged, to dilute the basic rights of workers to unite in unions and bargain collectively.”

—AFL-CIO President George Meany

In sharp contrast to the GOP, the Democratic Party labor plank calls for strengthening the rights of working people and their unions.

The Democrats declared: “Collective bargaining and a strong and independent labor movement are essential to our system of free enterprise and economic democracy.”

The plank reaffirmed “the right to organize and bargain collectively” and called for:

- Repeal of Taft-Hartley Section 14(b);
- Collective bargaining rights for farm workers and others not now covered by the labor relations act;
- Situs picketing;
- Speedier decisions in unfair labor practice cases and representation proceedings;
- An equal break for unions in access to remedies available under the labor relations act;
- An equal break for unions to communicate with employees without coercion.

The platform vowed the Federal government will not do business with companies that repeatedly violate workers' rights to organize or which refuse to bargain with their unions.

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AFL-CIO COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION

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Walking the GOP Labor Plank

The Republican Party platform plank on labor spells trouble for trade unions and their members. The GOP wants unions to "walk the plank" right into hot water and deep water. Following is a brief analysis of the three main points of the GOP platform plank on labor.

THE PLANK . . . ONE

"We will be vigilant to prevent any administrative agency entrusted with labor law enforcement from defying the letter and spirit of these (Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin) laws."

THE MEANING . . .

This statement follows up on the full-scale attack on the National Labor Relations Board by GOP leaders in Congress and by the Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers.

The campaign against the NLRB has been going on for a year. Legislation already has been introduced to dismantle it, backed by many leading Republicans. The GOP plank, in effect, puts the party's stamp of approval on the effort to wreck the NLRB.

THE PLANK . . . TWO

"We strongly believe that the protection of individual liberty is the cornerstone of sound labor policy."

THE MEANING . . .

This high-sounding statement has national open shop written all over it. It is code language that really means so-called "right-to-work."

The platform language thus confirms traditional GOP support for Taft-Hartley Section 14(b) which authorizes state open shop laws. Further, it can be viewed as a trial balloon for federal "right to work" imposing open shop laws on all 50 states.

This has been the prime ambition of the National Right to Work Committee, whose publications lavishly praised the GOP labor plank. It has been the goal, too, of major business associations and right wing ultra-conservatives.

THE PLANK . . . THREE

"Healthy private enterprise demands responsibility—by government, management and labor—to avoid the imposition of excessive costs or prices and to share with the consumer the benefits of productivity."

THE MEANING . . .

"Responsibility", in GOP language, has always meant workers should sacrifice their standards and welfare to stave off inflation. The GOP has never pinned inflation on the real source, which—according to the *Wall Street Journal* of August 5, 1968—is soaring profits.

They want you, the worker, to hold the line while profits take off.

Adding up the facts, the GOP labor plank is a storm signal for working people and their unions. The facts are these:

- The plank itself proves a strong attack will be made on unions should conservatives gain control of the Congress and the White House.

- The GOP presidential nominee, Richard Nixon, is a perfect match for the plank he runs on. He has a long history of anti-unionism. His first statement as a Congressman on Jan. 3, 1947 was, "I was elected to smash the labor bosses. . . ." As a member of the House Labor Committee, he helped draw up the Taft-Hartley Act. He has boasted, "I helped write Section 14(b) into the law." This is the section that has spawned state open shop laws.

- The plank, plus Nixon, grows doubly ominous when you add Dixiecrat-turned-Republican Sen. Strom Thurmond. It was Thurmond who secured Nixon's first-ballot nomination at the GOP convention by delivering the south. Thurmond has made a career of labor-baiting. He has introduced legislation to ban multi-union joint bargaining which has meant so much to workers in large industries in recent years.

- The attack on NLRB and multi-union bargaining is part of a larger package that threatens unions. Other conservative goals include clamping anti-trust laws on unions and curbing labor's political programs.

All of these goals will be in reach if conservatives gain control of the Congress and the White House.

None of them will be achieved if liberals retain control of Congress and the White House.



NIXON AND THURMOND (right foreground) together at GOP convention. They are together, too, on anti-labor bias. The Nixon-Thurmond axis, plus hard-line anti-union GOP platform plank, is ominous for trade union movement.