

The MILITANT

SEMI-MONTHLY ORGAN OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF AMERICA (OPPOSITION)
 "It is necessary that every member of the Party should study calmly and with the greatest objectivity, first the substance of the differences of opinion, and then the development of the struggles within the Party. Neither the one nor the other can be done unless the documents of both sides are published. He who takes somebody's word for it is a hopeless idiot, who can be disposed of with a simple gesture of the hand."—Lenin.

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Conference of the Opposition Communists Formation of the Communist League of America {Opposition}

The National Conference of the Opposition Communists was held in Chicago on May 17, 18, and 19 and culminated in the formation of the Opposition forces into a National organization. The name of the organization is the Communist League of America (Opposition). The Conference adopted the Platform printed in the February 15th issue of *The Militant*, proclaimed its full solidarity with the Russian and International Opposition under the leadership of Trotsky and undertook the task of organizing American Communists, inside and outside the Communist Party of the United States, on the Platform of the Opposition. A constitution for the Communist League was adopted embodying the principle of democratic centralization as laid down in the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International. A National Committee of seven members was elected to direct the work of the organization. The following constitute the National Committee: James P. Cannon, Maurice Spector, Martin Abern, Max Shachtman, Arne Swaback, Carl Skolund and Albert Glotzer. Membership cards are to be issued and the monthly dues rate was fixed at 50 cents with an initiation fee of the same amount. The chartering of local branches will begin at once. For the time being Canadian branches will be directly affiliated and will function as a part of the single organization.

The Communist League will carry on a program of independent activities in the class struggle and will also continue to work as a faction within the Party.

The Conference consisted of 31 delegates with voting rights and 17 alternate delegates with voice but no vote. Twelve cities were represented as follows:

	Delegates	Alternates
New York	5	4
Philadelphia	2	2
Cleveland	1	0
Detroit	2	0
Youngstown	1	0
Chicago	5	4
St. Louis	3	1
Kansas City	1	0
Springfield, Ill.	2	0
Minneapolis	5	5
St. Paul	2	0
Toronto, Canada	2	1
Total	31	17

Groups in a number of other cities which were unable for financial reasons to send delegates sent greetings and pledges of support. A letter from comrade Trotsky was read to the conference amid great enthusiasm. Letters were also read from comrade Malkin in Comstock Prison, from the Opposition groups in France, Czecho-Slovakia and other countries.

The conference was permeated through and through with the pioneer spirit of self sacrifice and determination in the struggle for principle. The delegates were almost entirely workers who came direct from their jobs. A large percentage of them beat their way to the Conference; others came crowded together in battered automobiles borrowed for the occasion; three or four only paid bus fare and one delegate rode a train—on a railroad worker's pass. Lodgings for the out-of-town delegates were provided at the homes of Chicago comrades and sympathizers. Many of the delegates paid their own expenses for meals and in-

By James P. Cannon

cententials. None of them received wages or per diem.

The entire Conference was thus carried through with an unrivalled maximum of economy. This revolutionary capacity for hardship triumphed over the handicap of the meager financial resources of the Opposition, which works without subsidies of any kind, and made our National Conference possible. For a movement less vital and less confident of its future, the circumstances would have completely prohibited such a National gathering.

The sessions of the Conference were conducted throughout with a business-like efficiency and precision in sharp contrast to the desultory, dragged-out and time-wasting affairs which have become the rule in recent years under the regime of "petty bourgeois politicianism". Being firmly united on main lines of principle and free from the factional intrigue which arises from the lack of it, there was no need for the Conference sessions to be held up and delayed for the deliberations of rival caucuses. It began promptly, on time the first day and conducted all the following sessions precisely according to schedule.

The Conference was marked by a freedom of discussion on all questions which enabled all points of view to be brought fully and fairly before the body. Collective judgement, not caucus manipulation, was the aim sought and achieved. Conflicting opinions which arose over secondary questions were brought out in-

Opposition Progress in Minneapolis Vote

C. R. Hedlund, candidate for mayor of the Communist Opposition, now the Communist League of America (Opposition), received a vote of 896 to 827 for the Communist Party candidate in the mayoralty election campaign held in Minneapolis, Minn., on May 13th. The Communist Opposition and Party candidates were the only ones running on a labor ticket; all others were out and out supporters of the capitalist class. The Minneapolis Opposition group campaigned for comrade Hedlund on the platform of the International Opposition led by comrade Trotsky and espoused the fundamental principles of the Communist movement and the Comintern founded by Lenin. (The local platform of the Minneapolis Opposition was printed in the previous issue of *The Militant*.) In seven of the thirteen wards, comrade Hedlund (a railroad worker, expelled by the Stalin bureaucrats for supporting the Opposition platform) defeated the Party candidate. Meetings were held throughout the campaign and special leaflets were distributed among the workers, as well as *The Militant*.

The Minneapolis Opposition unquestionably commands leadership over the majority of the revolutionary and Communist workers of Minneapolis. Their steadfast allegiance to the principles of revolutionary Communism and their fight on behalf of the workers in the daily battles in the shops, trade unions, etc., has won them that support by the class conscious working men and women. It is the Minneapolis Opposition comrades who built and gave prestige to the Communist Party there. And it is the healthy tradition of the Party built by our comrades before their expulsion which enabled the candidate of the Party bureaucrats to receive even the votes he did. Despite slander by the Party officialdom and the advantage of the Party in running on the official ticket, with its greater resources, press, the Opposition candidate received the greater vote. The Minneapolis elections testify to the firmness and determination of the Communist Opposition to hold aloft the banner of Communism under the leadership of the greatest living teacher of Bolshevism, Leon Trotsky. The Minneapolis comrades intend to conduct a sticker campaign for comrade Hedlund in the general elections on June 10th. All class conscious and revolutionary workers in Minneapolis are urged to write in the name of C. R. Hedlund, on the ballot then. The Minneapolis comrades by their work are putting a spoke in splitting tactics of the Stalin bureaucrats and are working for the unity of the Communist movement and the development of a revolutionary working class movement.

to the open. Earnestness without diplomacy characterized the discussions and put upon the decisions finally arrived at the stamp of real conviction. The final results of the discussion showed a complete unanimity and solidarity of the entire Conference on all the main questions, and the Opposition Communists face the heavy tasks before them as a firmly united body.

The agenda of the Conference was as follows:—

1. The Situation in Russia.—Reporter Comrade Shachtman.
2. The Crisis in the Communist International.—Reporter comrade Spector.
3. The American Situation and the Tasks of the Opposition Communists.—Reporter comrade Cannon.
4. Trade Union Questions.—Reporter comrade Swaback.
5. The Organization of the Communist Opposition.—Reporter comrade Abern.
6. Youth Questions.—Reporter comrade Glotzer.
7. Press and Literature publication program.—Reporter comrade Shachtman.

All the reports were expositions and elaborations of the various sections of the Platform which represents the settled view of the Oppositionists on all the important questions confronting the American Movement. The nature of these tasks has not changed since the Platform was drafted for submission to the Convention of the Party a few months ago and, consequently, the Conference saw no necessity for the writing of a new one. After the discussion on all the main reports had been concluded the Platform was adopted by unanimous vote. Editorial revision and reformulation of some sections were made in order to express the decision of the Conference to pass over from the stage of a purely internal faction of the party to a National Organization also conducting independent activities and recruiting non-party communists, without altering the line of the document. The Youth section of the Platform was also rewritten to deal more comprehensively and concretely with the problems of the Communist Youth.

The Conference adopted resolutions on the Class War prisoners of America, on the imprisoned and exiled Bolshevik-Leninists of the Soviet Union, and messages of greetings to comrade Trotsky and to comrade Malkin.

The report and discussion on the trade union question were a prominent feature of the Conference. A constructive line of Communist policy on this question, restating fundamental conceptions derived from American and world experience and sharply opposing the present false line of the Party, was unanimously demanded. The policy outlined in our Platform on the Trade Union Question, as concretely elaborated in a number of articles in *The Militant* and in the report of comrade Swaback, was supported by all the delegates. The discussion on this point was enriched by the speeches of comrades from all parts of the country and from Canada who have years of experience in the trade union struggle behind them. The "new line" of the Party, outlined in the preparation for the T. U. E. L. Conference and in its recent activity, was refuted and condemned on theoretical and practical grounds.

It was clear to all that the future activity of the Opposition is indissolubly bound up with its organization form and, consequently, great

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