

# Lovestone's «United Front» Maneuver

(At a recent meeting, the national committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition) considered the "open letter" sent by the Lovestone group to our organization and to the official Communist Party. The letter, calling for a "United Front", is published in full in the current issue of *Revolutionary Age*, organ of the Right wing, to which interested readers can refer for the full text from which quotations contained in the following document are taken. The letter which follows is the reply addressed publicly to the Right wing by the national committee of the League.)

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We have received your letter of July 26, 1930 appealing for our "cooperation in setting up a united revolutionary front" as well as a copy of the resolution on "Trotskyism" adopted at the Plenum of your group. Both of these documents are of great significance for us. The resolution is the result of our incessant demand that the Lovestone group take a definite and formal position on the principle questions raised by the Left Opposition. This it failed to do ever since its removal from the leadership of the Party, a policy of evasion which evidently could no longer be maintained even in the ranks of that group itself. Furthermore, the resolution marks a retreat to a certain extent from the position maintained by the Lovestone group while it controlled the Party—a position now untenable for the Lovestone leadership after the Left Opposition has had the opportunity of breaking through the conspiracy of lies and misrepresentations with which the official Communist apparatus, Foster and Lovestone, surrounded the disputed points. That the resolution is permeated with opportunism and continued falsification is not the subject of this letter, which is primarily concerned with the appeal for a united front.

### The United Front

The tactic of the united front is neither a maneuver nor a trick for us. We regard it as a serious means of mobilizing the masses of the workers not yet Communist for a struggle, on the basis of a minimum program, against the attacks of capitalism and its agents in the working class. Such a united front we cannot reject, all the more so since it is we who have constantly urged it on the labor movement in general and its revolutionary section in particular.

But a united front or bloc with the Lovestone group is not the same to us as a united front with a trade union or other labor organizations containing workers of varying shades of opinion without a definite political program and theoretical conception. Precisely because the Lovestone group calls itself Communist, the question of a bloc with it must be examined most closely and pre-conditions of a much higher order must be required. Before establishing these pre-conditions, a few preliminary observations must be made.

The appeal reads: "The revolutionary movement in this country finds itself weak, demoralized and divided . . . the capitalists and their agents are exploiting this division . . . at no time would refusal to cooperate in uniting the revolutionary forces be more criminal."

But it is precisely the Lovestone group which is chiefly responsible for this division, for its leadership initiated the campaign of expulsions of so-called "Trotskyists"; it is precisely this leadership which by its expulsion and assaults upon our group, its "refusal to cooperate in uniting the revolutionary forces" rendered itself criminally responsible. It was this leadership that failed "to consider the broad interests of the revolutionary and labor movement" by expelling our comrades, not only from the Party but from every auxiliary organization under its control—including trade unions. The failure to acknowledge honestly and openly the source and responsibility for the movement's division and demoralization in the past and present, makes any improvement in the future impossible. One cannot wash one's hands of the past by a dishonestly naive silence.

The appeal proposes the setting up of a joint committee of the three groups in

the movement "to present the point of view of Communism, the point of view of those who stand by and defend the Soviet Union".

### Unity with "Counter-Revolutionists"?

But it is the Lovestone group, together with the Stalinist apparatus, which has for years assailed us as "counter-revolutionists and the worst enemies of the Soviet Union", as the "agents of Chamberlain and Chiang Kai-Shek". We have not yet seen an acknowledgement that these declarations were infamous slanders which constituted the regular payment made by the Lovestone leadership to the Stalin-Bucharin regime for allowing it to run the American Party. One may therefore assume that the Lovestone leaders still retain these "convictions" concerning us. How then is it possible to appeal to counter-revolutionists and enemies of the Soviet Union to "present the point of view of those who stand by and defend the Soviet Union"? Or are we to believe that the Lovestone leaders are not and have not been serious in denouncing us as counter-revolutionists. In that case, it is necessary for them to admit plainly that they have for years been practising a disgraceful deception upon the workers' movement.

It is further necessary for us to point out that the principal cause of the present crisis in the Communist movement, manifested by division and demoralization is, the theoretical standpoint and practical activities of the Lovestone group and its international allies since 1923. It is impossible to enter a bloc with the Lovestone group while it retains and defends these conceptions. It is impossible to try to solve the crisis and overcome the division in the Communist movement by a "united front" with the elements that caused the crisis.

Moreover a united front with the Lovestone group—since the official Party bureaucrats can still prevent the Party from join-

ing such a front—would constitute an unprincipled bloc against the Center, i.e., against the Party. It would end in a miserable fiasco (as did the Lovestone "united front" in the textile industry), or as a rallying ground for anti-Party forces. We are aiming, on the contrary, to restore the Party to a Marxist foundation, since it is our Party from which no clique of bureaucrats can separate us.

A united front of all Communist workers is essential. A determined effort must be made to overcome the crisis now raging in the movement. We have advocated such a front and we continue to propose it now. But we do not stand for an abstract unity, or bloc, but for one that has a basis in principle. With its present views on essential questions, and its evasion or silence on many others, a bloc with the Lovestone group is out of the question. Such a bloc demands certain pre-conditions which we hereby pose to the Lovestone faction:

### Questions to Lovestone

1. One of the reasons for the crisis, the division and demoralization of the movement over which you express so much concern, has been the prevention of open discussion. Meetings have been broken up, raids on private homes conducted, comrades physically assaulted. These methods are still used in the Party against all Oppositions, on the basis of the precedent of gangsterism you established in the struggle against our group. There can be no issue from the present difficulties, and no genuine unity, without a condemnation of these atrocious methods, which means in the first place an open renunciation of your own past crimes in this respect. Otherwise no basis can be laid for a free and intelligent discussion of the problems of the movement.

2. One of the main reasons for the crisis and split is the expulsion of the Left Opposition from the Party. This was ex-

ecuted primarily by your group, at that time in control of the Party. It is necessary to know if this is still the official attitude of your group. Else how can you appeal to unite us into a movement to present the point of view of Communism while expelling us from the Communist Party?

3. But our group is only the American section of the international Left Opposition. The expulsion of these comrades, and particularly of the Russian Bolshevik-Leninists, has been of enormously destructive effect to the movement, reflected in the American Party as well as elsewhere. Comrade Trotsky has been deported to Turkey, and thousands of the best Bolsheviks exiled and imprisoned in the U.S.S.R. Bolshevik fighters have even been assassinated by Stalin. Up to now the Lovestone group has maintained a cowardly silence on these crimes. But without the release from prison and exile of the Oppositionists, the return to the U.S.S.R. of Trotsky, and their full reinstatement into the Party, no progress can be made in overcoming the division and demoralization in the movement. Does the Lovestone group intend to prefer a "diplomatic" silence on this burning question to a protest and demand?

4. No bloc is conceivable for us without a revolutionary policy in the trade unions. On this point we have had only vague ambiguities from your group. Recently, your official organ, *Revolutionary Age*, has given its hearty endorsement to the action of Hais and Co. in Czecho-Slovakia in surrendering the independent Red unions under their control to the Amsterdam International. This piece of liquidation was labelled by you as a step in the "unification" of the Czech working class. Does that signify that in the United States, where the Left unions are relatively even smaller than the reformist trade unions, you favor a similar liquidation of, let us say, the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union into the reformist International Ladies Garment Workers Union? The "logic" of Hais' action in Czecho-Slovakia would seem to apply in the American instance with even greater force—from your point of view. As you are aware, we condemn such actions unreservedly. Clarification on the trade union question is a *sine qua non* for any sort of bloc on principle grounds.

5. A united front of Communist workers or groups pre-supposes a certain amount of mutual confidence. The whole past course of your group does not inspire us with any. Your spokesmen and your press continue systematically not only to "interpret" our position, but to falsify it deliberately. The resolution on Trotskyism of your Plenum is a typical instance. We find there a repetition of the hodge-podge of known falsehoods, half-truths, consciously forged quotations that were pressed into service against the Left Opposition since the opening of the campaign against it in 1923. We find there a cheap falsification, unworthy of the dignity of a Communist, of our position on the danger of Thermidorian elements in the Soviet Union. Such methods are intolerable, even if they are characteristic of the whole struggle against a so-called Trotskyism. We demand an end of these falsifications and misrepresentations of our viewpoint.

Our reply is dictated solely by our insistence upon the maintenance of a principled point of view in the Communist movement. We are little concerned with the noises emanating from the empty barrels in charge of the official Party today, to the effect that the "Lovestoneites and Trotskyists" are now merged" to fight the Party. The avowal by the Lovestone group itself that its differences with the Centrists are of a minor character compared with its differences with the Left Opposition which are of a principle character, speaks for itself and shows that in its whole philosophy the Right wing stands immeasurably closer to Centrism than does the Left wing. This clarification of the principle position has a great value.

Nor is our reply dictated by any desire for unity as such and on any basis. Our aim is the re-conquest and unification of the revolutionary movement on the basis of Marxism and the living experiences of Communism in the last two decades.

National Committee  
Communist League of America (Opposition)

## An Answer and a Challenge to a Debate

The Communist League of America (Opposition) has received a letter from Bertram D. Wolfe, head of the Workers School of the Lovestone group, proposing a symposium of the three groups in the movement, the Party, the Lovestone group, and ourselves. In reply, the following letter was sent to Wolfe.

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In your letter of August 14, 1930, you declare:

"The New Workers School therefore invites the Communist Party of the U.S.A., the Communist League of America, and the Communist Party (Majority Group) to send one representative each to present their respective viewpoints at a symposium discussion under a chairman selected by the Civil Liberties Union where they will be able freely to voice their opinions on the present crisis in the Communist movement and the respective merits of the three groups proposals for remedying the situation.

Such an invitation can only be welcomed by us, particularly since, from the very beginning of our struggle and expulsion from the Communist Party, we have insistently proposed a public debate before the Communist and Left wing workers, of the groups. We issued a public challenge, as you will remember, at the time Bertram D. Wolfe was lecturing against us immediately after our expulsion. At that time, the group you represent was in control of the Party and deliberately prevented such a discussion and debate not only by expelling us from the Party's ranks, but by resorting to the most disgraceful methods of slander falsehoods and even physical violence. After your own expulsion from the Party, we again proposed on a number of occasions that you agree to debate our respective viewpoints. Up to now this was refused. Such a debate, however, remains as necessary now as it was in the past.

It is quite clear that the official Communist Party will not consent to partici-

pate in the proposed symposium. Since only two groups would be represented, your own and ours, we propose instead of a "symposium" a debate. We have already selected our spokesman for such a debate. In addition, we have chosen a committee of two to meet with a similar committee representing your group, to decide on the title of the debate, the time, the place, the chairman, the auspices and all other details.

As soon as you shall have done the same, we are ready to meet together and work out all the necessary arrangements. Communist League of America (Opposition)

## Socialist Indignation

During the sessions of the Second International at Zurich the Swiss government refused permission to enter its borders to the inoffensive Pietro Nenni, of the Italian Socialist Party. This was the occasion for great indignation among the leaders of the socialist international who are accustomed to much more deference from bourgeois governments. With an academic solemn pen, they addressed a protest against the denial of "hospitality" by the Swiss government to a proscribed politician.

Now we know the social democratic conception of democratic "hospitality": It consists of patronage by the bourgeois governments to social democratic leaders. But it is never to be extended to proscribed revolutionists who fight implacably against the capitalist order. Even when the social democrats themselves hold the reins of bourgeois government, they apply this hospitality exclusively to the bourgeoisie and its servitors. This rule was not transgressed by the MacDonalds and Muellers in excluding from this democratic "hospitality" the Communist Leon Trotsky. But when the Swiss government failed to maintain the laws regulating relations between the bourgeoisie and their socialist footmen, the latter protested. Their sorrowful and resigned indignation is comprehensible.