

Lessons of the United Front

POLITICAL FACTIONS WITHIN AN ORGANIZATION

The united front is the tactic that enables us to bring together the combined pressure of various organizations of the working class. But one finds that a conference of many political tendencies or a trade union that has many political tendencies raises another problem within the broad problem of the united front. A conference or organization that has many different political tendencies will, in the main, divide between Right and Left and Centre. Working agreements, of a temporary nature, on one or more issues, within the conference or organization, will to a great degree determine which section of the conference or organization, Right-Centre or Left, will dominate the organization or conference. This united front is conducted on the same basis as any united front. However, the complicated situation causes intensification of contradictions between political tendencies which proceed at a more rapid tempo.

IS IT PROPER TO BREAK A UNITED FRONT?

A united front is only a temporary agreement on immediate demands in action and must be preserved as long as it functions for the CLASS INTEREST. If the development of the struggle and the united front for one reason or another is transformed from the basis of class struggle to that of class collaboration and the Right wing is about ready to betray or sell out—it is the duty of Marxists and revolutionists to point out, and to warn of the danger, and if it cannot be corrected, then the Left wing must break the united front BEFORE THE BETRAYAL.

Such action will result in a temporary setback, not due to the break but due to the sell-out. However, if the Left wing has conducted itself correctly, broke away in time, and still retains the confidence of the masses, who could not see their position at the time of the break, the Left wing can lead in the reorganization of the forces, or in checking the retreat and preparing for a come-back.

COMPROMISE

The united front of different working class organizations, in the first place, is an attempt to increase the pressure against the capitalist class, and in the second, a give-and-take proposition between the organizations. In the final analysis it is a victory for that organization and its leadership which knows what to give and what to take. The representatives delegated for the united front conference and those who will do the negotiating must know in advance what the objectives of the united front and the organization are and within what frame-work they must work.

Compromises on secondary questions can and must be made and all the more so when friction is about to split the conference or organization. However, one must know how to distinguish between compromises and compromises. The same word can be filled with two different contents. One must never compromise on principle, while one can compromise on other factors. It is up to the representatives and delegates to know the difference between these two words of compromise.

For example, at the June 1933 Unemployed Conference in Chicago the report of the program and policy committee was amended on the question of the united front, to first strike out the clause, "the right of political criticism," and second, to strike out and change the word "force," in the sentence which said "any organization not entering the united front must be forced into it." The committee compromised on the word force and changed it to a milder form, but the committee would not budge one inch or compromise on the question of political criticism. The question of principle but the question of modifying the word force is not.

LEADERS AND LEADERS

After a group of labor fakers have sold out and betrayed the workers it is often the style to condemn all leaders. One must be able to distinguish between difference kinds of leaders. It is always in place to call for rank and file CONTROL and no revolutionist or Marxist is opposed to rank and file control. It is out of place and wrong to call for rank and file LEADERSHIP. Rank and file leadership is an empty slogan, yet as harmful as the slogan of the "united front from below" Both are inverted non-Marxian slogans.

(To be continued)

SPARTACUS YOUTH CLUB ORGANIZED IN BROWNSVILLE

Last Thursday, July 20th, the Spartacus Youth Club of Brownsville was launched. Eight comrades attended and about a half dozen more will soon join. Most of the members are expelled comrades from the Young Communist League, American Youth Club and Student Forum. There is a healthy sentiment for the Spartacus Youth Club in the section which should insure rapid progress.

At its first meeting George Ray was elected as organizer, Joe Elliott, secretary-treasurer and Morris Kent, literature agent. Plans are being made to get headquarters for the Club in the near future.

FROM THE MILITANTS

I.L.D. Expels 3 Workers in Minneapolis

Minneapolis, Minn.—In March 1933, three members of the L. O. joined the McDuffy branch of the I. L. D.: Joe Ross, M. B. Dunne and Celia Cazanov. Upon our entry into the organization we found an almost total lack of activity, small membership, (6 or 7 active people) and no definite plan for immediate work. We soon became active, proposed work and helped to carry it out. Comrade Cazanov was sent to Chicago to represent the McDuffy branch of the I. L. D. at the Chicago Free Tom Money Congress. We also served as delegates at the May Day Conference. And in short conducted ourselves in such a manner as to gain the respect and approval of the I. L. D. member. New elements joined and old members, who had dropped out, did not escape the attention of the returned.

Our growing influence angered the Party bureaucrats, and a systematic campaign to isolate us was under way. Over the protest of honest members whom we had won to our support we were gradually removed from all activity. The real issue, which of course was Trotskyism, did not come into the open until the meeting of June the 23th. At that time it was brought into an educational meeting by Sam Bernstein, a Party bureaucrat. The charge was made that there were disrupters in the I. L. D., that the disrupting elements were the Trotskyites and he proposed a house cleaning.

A party worker took the floor and stated that if there are any disrupting elements they will be pushed out from activities and also from the organization by the members themselves. Fearing that the L. O. members might get a big support (yes, from Party members and sympathizers) if they were to continue the way they started, Bernstein then made a motion that the branch arrange another educational meeting for next Friday where any kind of a question can be discussed, "yes, even Trotskyism, if you please", pointing at comrade Cazanov. The motion also included a house cleaning "at that same meeting. Comrade Ross then suggested that it should be an open meeting and this was accepted even by the bureaucrats Davis and Bernstein, and of course without any opposition on the part of the members.

All threats of exposing the L. O. all talks of expelling disrupters, came to an anti-climax Friday night. Comrades Cazanov and Dunne were met in the porch of the Workers Cultural Center by S. K. Davis. He stopped us at the door and stated that we were not to be allowed in the meeting. When asked for a reason, he said that it was a decision. We asked whose decision. He refused to answer. We started our intentions of going in and appealing to the membership. He responded by closing the door

The Columbus Conference

2. The Stalinist-Muste Bloc at the Unemployed Gathering

(Continued from last issue)

II. The Stalinist-Muste Bloc

The main thing, therefore, to bear in mind, in seeking to understand the Columbus conference is the fact that the Stalinists in utter dependence over their inability to control the Federation mechanically, rushed into the arms of Muste and the horse-trading began. An agreement was reached between Muste and the Unemployed Councils that, since neither was satisfied with the Federation, for his own good reasons, they would both sabotage it. Muste therefore agreed not to affiliate with the Federation and to favor the committee of five-five, providing the Unemployed Councils would keep out of Muste's conference and let him establish his national organization un molested. The bargain was struck and each rejoiced in his own wisdom, confident that the five-five proposition as outlined by Browder before the Federation would work out to their own advantage. It would. A committee of fifteen, on which the Muste-Stalin bloc would have a mechanical majority from the start was sure to capture the hegemony at the January conference. As to the question which one of the two would get the best of the bargain after the conference, that question could wait. Both the Stalinists and the Musteites know a trick or two about the fine art of packing conventions and capturing mechanical control.

Now, it must be remembered, that the original call for the Columbus Conference was addressed to all unemployed organizations, inviting them all to participate. But the Federation had been founded in the meantime and following that, the horse-trading bargain between the Stalinists and Musteites struck. Muste therefore bethought himself the better and dedicated the Columbus conference to the founding of a national organization of the Unemployed Leagues.

Having arrived a day ahead of time, the writer was able to witness the proceedings of the last day of the state conference of the Ohio Unemployed Leagues. From the comments of the observers of the first two days of this conference it appeared that the central pro-

and sitting down in front of it, flanked by a pair of Party strong arm men. He refused to give a reason or to discuss the question. He advised us to appeal to a higher committee.

To show the brutal intentions of the "door guard", we gave another incident that took place the same evening. Sam Lessin, an active worker in the Jewish field, came to the meeting later for the purpose of joining the I. L. D. He was stopped, questioned and insulted by the same people. When he argued back, the "guards" (several in number) set upon him to beat him up. He was forced to withdraw, to avoid a beating.

The foregoing gives a good cross section view of the local I. L. D. In a city of 400,000 people there is one functioning branch of the organization composed of twenty workers, fifteen of whom are Party members. Out of this number perhaps ten are active. The organization is devoid of democracy. All decisions of importance are handed down from the top. All committees and speakers are selected by the Executive Committee. There is very little discussion and no education. The weakness of the movement, and the degeneracy of the leadership can best be shown by pointing out that they do not care to expel the Left Oppositionists at a membership meeting of the branch, for fear of the discussion and exposure of their bankruptcy.

We appeal to the membership of the McDuffy branch of the Minneapolis I. L. D. to repudiate the brutal, disruptive tactics of the District bureaucrats, and to demand of their leadership, that we be given a hearing at a membership meeting, and that we be given full membership rights until our case and whatever charges which are placed against us are acted upon.

J. ROSS, M. B. DUNNE, CELIA CAZANOV.

A Militant Writes From Glasgow, Scotland

Glasgow.—Many thanks for your parcel of Militants and five copies of the July 1st issue. Lately I have been purchasing several copies of the Militant every week for circulation among my colleagues in the unemployment queues.

We have been able to arrange also, through our London comrades, action in forwarding the bundles of the Militant. I received the first lot last week, then another for supplies of the Red Flag (organ of the British L. O.). Owing to general conditions here, I am afraid it will be some considerable time before the Red Flag can develop into a weekly. Naturally I am doing what I can to sell the paper and also to raise funds for its continuance. You will understand the position when I say that the Daily Worker (London) has a struggle to live and has been once again cut to four pages of a size smaller than the Militant. This despite the fact

that a constant, daily stream of donations are received. Furthermore, I can safely say, as far as Glasgow is concerned, practically the sole party activity is the sale of the Daily Worker.

The "Red Clydeside" as we once knew it seems no longer to exist. The scenes witnessed such as May Day, 1918, when despite all threats 100,000 workers took the day off marched in procession with bands, banners, red flags and revolutionary songs were the order of the day, are only memories. The sidewalk, on route, was at that time lined with sympathizers who raised approving cries. At the Glasgow Green every one of the 22 platforms commanded a crowd. Solidarity and struggle were the orders of the day, sectarianism was relegated to obscurity notwithstanding criticism and counter-criticism. Then again "Bloody Friday" (Jan. 1919) was a spontaneous expression of working class solidarity. These things happened when the patriotic war fever was still in the air and before the inauguration of the C. P. G. B. These items prove conclusively that the party has really failed in its approach to the masses. After being excluded from the Party for "Trotskyism" (before I knew the platform of the L. O.), naturally I felt despondent, for some considerable time, at my isolation, but now that one senses the definite growth of the L. O. in this country the mood has passed and once more we enter the fight.

I have never been a platform man but nevertheless I travel around the Labour Exchanges, streets and spots where "Reds" congregate and I take part in discussions and informal debates. At first the current against the L. O. position was strong and I used to have people on all sides "yapping" at me, but now the situation is gradually changing and I am definitely winning the support of many party members and sympathizers. So far we have not started an L. O. group, but that can be explained by the widespread poverty as many potential members are quite unable to buy literature, let alone pay subs to a party.

I am going through the back numbers of the Militant you sent and am collating material for reprinting. Previously I was able to get a comrade to cyclostyle material from the "Permanent Revolution" a copy of which I possess, but at present it is going the rounds of the comrades. Furthermore, I drafted material from the "Real Situation in Russia", a copy of which is in the library. The only other work of comrade Trotsky, in addition to the above mentioned, in the Glasgow libraries, is the History of the Russian Revolution, just recently added. The I. L. P. put into circulation a copy of comrade Trotsky's speech at Copenhagen (Nov. 1932), but the price charged was six-pence and I am now endeavoring to arrange the print of this speech for sale at one penny.

I am pleased to see the points raised in the current (July 1st) issue of the Militant about the absence of any U. S. S. R. delegation (at the Paris anti-Fascist Conference). For some time past I have demanded to be seated as regular delegates. After a struggle the Musteites gave in and, with the exception of the Unemployed Council delegates, were declared regulars.

The Left Opposition was the only political group besides the C. P. L. A. that made its appearance as such at this conference, being represented by a fraternal delegate who distributed a statement stressing the significance of the Recovery Act, and urging the Convention to affiliate to the National Federation. It seems to have become an established tradition that the first day and a half or two days of a three day working class conference should be wasted in windmilling oratory. The Columbus conference was no exception. The only important accomplishment on the afternoon of the second day was the adoption of a constitution and some minor resolutions which were neither here nor there since they did not affect the policy of the organization. True, on that same day amid much trumpeting and flag waving a Declaration of Independence couched adopted was in a decidedly radical verbiage. It is also true that the whole assemblage stood up and sang "America" and waved more flags after the adoption of this windy Declaration.

OHIO JOBLESS UNITED

Youngstown, Ohio.—Twenty-seven delegates from 13 unemployed organizations (4 Leagues and 9 Councils) met in Youngstown on July 23 and formed the Federation of Unemployed Organizations of Mahoning and Trumbull Counties. The present basis of representation is one delegate from each unit or organization, but it is likely that after other organizations have been brought into the Federation that the representation will be on a proportional basis.

J. S. Neff was elected chairman of the Federation. C. Walker—Vice Chairman, Henry Mack—Secretary, and Harold Newby—Treasurer. The Federation Committee, which includes 13 members now and will be enlarged as other organizations affiliate, was instructed to work out a constitution for the Federation in complete harmony with the policy and structure of the Federation of Unemployed Workers Leagues of America at Chicago. It was also instructed to work out a program for the Federation which will include the following points proposed at the conference: Immediate relief and employment insurance at the expense of the bosses and their government, the 6-hour day and 5-day work week with an increase in pay, an increase in wages and relief to meet the increase in prices, against forced labor, the money for unemployed relief and insurance to be raised by taxing incomes in higher brackets, against evictions and foreclosures. The Committee will probably find it necessary to recommend from time to time that other points be included in the program.

The first work of the Federation will be the participation of its various organizations in centralized August First demonstrations under the leadership of the Federation Committee and with unemployed slogans and demands. The second task is the immediate preparation for a strike against forced labor in the two counties. The Columbus Convention passed a resolution to go on strike August First but the National Committee of the National Unemployed League, according to one of its members Mrs. Mettee, has wisely postponed this action until the necessary preparation has been made. The Mahoning and Trumbull Federation will prepare

put forward this point and drawn attention to the fact that no Soviet delegation was included in the Congress and that no statement had been issued to the Congress by the C. P. S. U. Despite the fact that several delegates went from Glasgow no public report has been given; needless to say the delegation was composed of paid party officials.

Nevertheless, we will yet tear down this barrier of reaction and hypocrisy with the hope that once more the L. O. will take its rightful place in the party and that the Comintern, inspired by new blood, will again be used as a guiding force towards world revolution.

rest of the day spent in making bombastic nomination speeches for the various members of the National Committee.

Here it is necessary to say a word about the conduct of the Lovestonettes at this conference. Their role was truly characteristic of an opportunist group. The fact that two Lovestonettes are members of the national committee of the Federation did not prevent them from drawing up a document called "Draft Program for National Federation of Unemployed organizations." From all indications the Lovestonettes are also dissatisfied with having only two members on the National Committee of the Federation, and came to this conference ready to build a new federation. The only difference between them and the Stalinists lay in the fact that the former openly spoke against the existing National Federation on the convention floor and the Lovestonettes did so in personal conversation only. Not once during the Conference did a Lovestonette take the floor and speak for affiliation.

At this time when the Roosevelt government is introducing elements of state capitalism with all its terrible consequences for the working class, at this time when a clear line of action must be worked out to enable the American proletariat to fight back, the blind empirical Stalinists can only think one thought—how to capture mechanical control of the unemployed organizations. This is in the name of Unity. Yes the Stalinists are for unity—providing they have a stranglehold on the given organization. Let but a voice of dissent challenge their rule, and they will not hesitate to split that organization into smithereens.

The Left Opposition must learn from these experiences. We must seek to entrench ourselves in the unemployed organization. We must strive to raise the unemployed movement from its present level of "soup consciousness" to the level of class consciousness. We need have no fear of working as a small minority. Armed with the weapons of Marxism we shall in due time win the majority just as surely as did the Russian Bolsheviks who had for years constituted a minority.

L.O. Members in Eviction Protest

The New York branch held its regular Brownsville open air meeting last Friday with several hundred workers attending. George Ray acted as chairman, the speakers were Bill Mathewson on Roosevelt's New Deal and Joe Carter on the lessons of the German events for the American working class. On previous occasions the Communist party members attempted to break up the meeting either by demanding the platform or starting a revival meeting across the street.

After a number of question from the audience, A. Dasch, the party fellow who beat up one of our comrades the week before, asked the speaker to adjourn the meeting and call on the crowd to help the Unemployed Council stop the eviction of a jobless Negro worker, Bryan, several blocks away. The speaker replied by stating that such a request had been used on previous occasions to disrupt open air meetings but that we would have two more questions and then go as a group to cooperate with the Unemployed Council. The two questions were asked and answered. One of the party members "demanded" the platform to reply to the speaker. His demand was met with a reiteration of a call for a debate between the Left Opposition and the Communist party. The party members were advised to discuss with us not with their fists—this remark was particularly aimed at Dasch—but by arguments. The meeting then adjourned and the entire audience proceeded to the home of the evicted Negro worker.

The Unemployed Council opened a meeting in front of the house. We volunteered speakers but were told that the secretary of the Unemployed Council would have to consent—he was not to be found. Soon the emergency police squad yanked the speaker from the platform and waded into the crowd with clubs. A number of workers were hurt and had to receive medical treatment. Among those hurt were two members of the Spartacus Youth Club, Herman Gladstone, and Sam Shabel.

The branch will hold another open-air meeting at Bristol and Pitkin next Friday evening.

JULY ISSUE OF YOUNG SPARTACUS READY

The July issue of Young Spartacus is ready for sale and distribution. It contains articles on the American revolution of 1776, reforestation, anti-war day, August 1st, National Industrial Recovery Act, antiwar youth congress, youth strikes and activities of the Spartacus Youth Clubs.

Branches of the Communist League and individuals who have been receiving bundles of Y. S. will have to pay for them at three cents a copy or communicate with us as to what they do with the bundles. Those branches who do not respond will be cut from the list beginning with the August number.

FOR NEW YORK OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Manhattan: 7th St. and 2nd Ave. every Thursday night 6 P. M. 86th Street and Lexington Ave. every Friday night 6 P. M. Harlem: 125th St. and 6th Avenue, every Saturday night 8 P. M. Bronx: 163rd Street and Prospect Ave. every Sat. night 8 P. M.

both organizations. The fight centered between the two Left Oppositionists who introduced a motion for affiliation and Muste who presented a counter motion for the committee of 15. The small hours of the morning came and found the committee divided over this question. The meeting finally adjourned to reconvene next morning and hear another statement from the Federation.

In the meeting of the national committee of the Federation which went into session after being dismissed by the presidium, the Stalinist-Muste combination again blocked the possibility of a unanimous statement for affiliation. When the presidium convened the next morning Dixon again had to report on a division of opinion within the national committee. At this point Dennis Batt, a notorious renegade from Communism—a deserter to the Republican party, came to Muste's rescue by moving that the presiding committee shall not urge the convention to instruct the incoming National Committee on any certain policy of unification but that the entire matter be left to the discretion of the National Committee. After some wrangling the motion was passed by a vote of 20-5 and Muste's face lit up in a triumphant smile.

Since the strategy of the Musteites was such, they naturally were very much interested in hearing no report from the resolution committee. A report on policy would certainly be embarrassing since that would bring the disputed question to the convention floor.

Accordingly, the chairman reported on the proceedings of the presidium and put Dennis Batt's motion to a vote. Were the convention to endorse that motion it meant that it would automatically invalidate any resolution that might be reported on later. The delegates of the Workers League and the Oppositionists put up a bitter fight against such procedure, and for affiliation. But just as the struggle grew the hottest, the Stalinists stepped in and in true Judas fashion saved the situation for Muste by playing on the backwardness of the delegates and urging them to vote against affiliation and for the motion. Reaction prevailed—the motion carried.

The final report of the majority of the members of the resolutions committee, which had somehow gotten together, recommended affiliation. But this was quickly steam-rolled out of order and the

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Between Stalinism and Communism there can be no peace. The advances of Communism can only result out of the defeat of Stalinism. To this end let us bend our efforts.

—NORMAN SATIR.