

Insurance Congress Sabotaged by Muste And Socialist Leaders

Rank and File in Their Organizations, However, Are Going Over Heads of Leadership to Endorse Workers' Bill

By I. Amter

In order to prevent the united front in the struggle for relief and unity of the unemployed organizations, and particularly in order to prevent united action behind the Workers Unemployment and Insurance Bill at the Washington Congress on Jan. 5-7, the Socialist and Muste leaders of the opponent unemployed organizations are raising "new" issues. These people know that the masses of the United States want unemployment and social insurance. They also know that the Workers Bill is not only the only genuine unemployment and social insurance bill, but is the only bill that will provide insurance for the 16,000,000 unemployed. Not a single other bill, whether drawn up by Federal or State commissions, or by private institutions, such as the American Association for Social Security (A. Epstein), or the American Association for Labor Legislation (John Andrews), will afford the single penny of protection for the unemployed. All the other bills are unemployment "reserves" bills, allegedly intended to provide insurance for a short time for workers now employed who in the future may lose their jobs. But all these bills are so constructed that even these workers may be deprived of insurance. In addition, they all act as strikebreaking bills.

The National Unemployment Council has proposed the united front to the Socialist and Muste controlled unemployed organizations—not once but many times. On occasion and in certain localities—Pittsburgh, Youngstown, New York, Philadelphia, Illinois, etc.—the united front on certain issues has been achieved. This has been effected not through the good will of the leadership and recognition of their part that the united front and unity are essential for most effective struggle on the part of all the unemployed. It has been achieved through the mass pressure of the rank and file. When directly approached, the leadership of these organizations refused the united front; when the rank and file spoke and acted, these leaders had to change their position, as, for instance, in New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh.

Reject Cooperation

In preparation for the Nov. 24 demonstrations, the Socialist and Muste national leadership of the opponent unemployed organizations united—but they rejected the cooperation of the National Unemployment Council. In spite of this rejection, the locals of the National Unemployment Council participated in various localities. In Chicago, where a real united front was achieved, the demonstrations was a most effective one. In other localities the demonstrations were pitifully small. This shows not only the weakness of the Socialist and Muste controlled unemployed organizations, but also the irresponsibility of their leaders towards the unemployed masses. Is not the aim of demonstrations to increase the fighting power of the masses and aid them in getting their demands? Surely that can be the only purpose of demonstrations, and the only reason that the masses participate.

What were the demands of the Nov. 24 demonstrations? One of the central demands was for the Workers Bill—the bill formulated by the National Unemployment Council and for which the N. U. C. has secured the support of four to five million people in the United States. Should not, therefore, the N. U. C. have been an integral part of the demonstrations, and would not its participation in all localities have made Nov. 24 a ringing day of struggle and protest?

Weak Demonstrations

But what was the result of the refusal of the Muste and Socialist leaders? The best demonstration was in Chicago—25,000, of whom 20,000 were brought into the streets by the N. U. C., 5,000 by the Workers Committee. In New York, 6,000, of whom no more than 1,000 were brought out by the Workers Unemployed Union and were kept away by strict lines from the remainder brought into the streets by the N. U. C. In Pittsburgh, about 500; Columbus, 100 to 150; Gulfport, Miss., 1,000; Milwaukee, 1,200; Charleston, W. Va., 100, etc. In Newark, Ohio, despite the bluff of a demonstration of 20,000 (out of a total population of 30,000), there were only 70 in the demonstration. Other demonstrations showed militancy, but a very weak participation.

Why is this brought forward sharply? Because the Socialist and Muste leaders continue their irresponsibility toward the unemployed in refusing the united front, in keeping the workers divided, not on issues that the unemployed raise, but that they themselves bring forward in order that they, the leaders, may continue in control of their rank and file. This division only helps the government and the bosses and perpetuates the division that the unemployed want ended.

Muste—Socialist Split

In spite of these facts both the Socialist and Muste organs speak about the "gigantic" demonstrations on Nov. 24th, the "greatest outpouring of unemployed since the depression began" (Lasser, Dec. 14th). This is the sheerest humbug, and only harms the unemployed movement.

In response to the letter which the National Unemployment Council sent on Nov. 30, to a so-called "National Action Committee," supposedly representing the Socialist and Muste controlled unemployed organizations, we learn that the Muste-Socialist united front no longer exists, but is split up into two groups, as before. The political

convention of the Musteites together with the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites, decided that unity with the Socialists is "impossible of achievement at the present time, mainly because of the attitude of reformist elements (especially of the S. P.)." The Musteites also speak of "bureaucratic control by the Socialists. Those who attended the convention of the Muste controlled National Unemployed League in Columbus, in July, 1934, learned something about bureaucratic control. Not even William Green or John L. Lewis would attempt to put over what Ramuglia, Johnson and Truax (Muste leaders), tried—only to be rebuffed by their own membership.

Let us, however, look at it from the standpoint of the interests of the unemployed. Both the Muste and Socialist controlled organizations have endorsed the Workers' Bill. This did not come about through recognition by the leaders that the Workers' Bill is the only real bill, but through endorsements that were passed over the heads of the national leadership by the locals and branches.

Try to Prevent Action

What do we find today? Truax, Ramuglia, Johnson, go about from local to local of the Unemployed Leagues, trying to prevent united action and the election of delegates to the National Congress, and promising separate action on January 24th! But January 24th would only mean a division of forces—just what should be prevented. This shows the sincerity of the Muste leaders in the struggle for the Workers' Bill.

The Socialists "talk" united action. Early in the organization of the Sponsoring Committee for the National Congress, not only were the Socialist and Muste leaders of the unemployed organizations invited to participate, but also Norman Thomas. The Socialists attended the first meeting, participated in the discussion, promised a memorandum—then disappeared. The Musteites did not participate at all. Only a short time ago the Socialists again sent "observers" into the Sponsoring Committee—none other than Mr. David Lasser himself. But cooperation? No, the Socialist leaders of the unemployed organizations, who also "endorse" the Workers' Bill, owing to the pressure of their rank and file, promise action on March 4th! Again splitting forces. This too shows the "sincerity" of these people.

In spite of these actions, locals and county bodies of the Muste and Socialist unemployed organizations are electing delegates to the National Congress.

Mr. Lasser now takes a different tack—following the line of the N. E. C. of the Socialist Party. He declares that unity with the National Unemployment Council is impossible because: 1—It is not "non-partisan"; 2—It is allegedly "dominated by a single political party and completely identified with that party. The Unemployment Councils in turn always endorsed and supported that party politically"; and 3—The N. U. C., as a result of the policies of the Communist Party, "is committed at present to dual unionism."

Let us examine these points. Lasser speaks about "non-partisanship." The N. U. C. declares that there is no unemployed organization in the country except the N. U. C., which gladly and freely admits into its ranks workers irrespective of political, national or religious affiliation or belief. The N. U. C. makes no distinction as to color—which neither the Socialist nor Muste controlled organization can even pretend, since they both in various localities openly jim crow the Negroes, and in others will not admit Negroes. The N. U. C. carries on a sharp fight against any manifestation of race prejudice or superiority. The N. U. C. has within its ranks thousands of Socialist workers, workers of all political opinions. We need but point to the support to the N. U. C. in the mining sections of Pennsylvania, where the overwhelming majority of the workers voted Democrat.

On the other hand, the Socialist Party, when it is unable to build a local of the unemployed organization, simply baptizes its S. P. branch an "unemployed union," and thinks it is doing "work among the unemployed."

We wish to state further that practically all of the top and District leaders of the Socialist and Muste organizations belong to their respective political parties. Furthermore, that it is difficult for any worker to rise in their organizations unless he joins the political party that controls the particular unemployed organization. The N. U. C. on the other hand, has in its leadership workers of all political affiliations. It is particularly the task of the N. U. C. to bring into leadership any and all workers who sincerely and militantly fight for the line of the N. U. C. Leadership is lacking in all working class organizations, and only the most rapid training of leadership will enable us to carry on the fight. As a result, there are Republicans, Democrats and Socialists, as well as Communists in the leadership of the N. U. C.

If, however, by "non-partisanship" Lasser means what Sam Gompers and William Green maintain—a so-called "neutral" attitude towards politics, then the N. U. C. is not "non-partisan." This so-called "non-partisanship" is only a cloak for covering up all the political trickery and actions of the capitalist politicians to keep the workers down. The N. U. C. advocates and will continue to advocate militant WORKING CLASS POLITICS. The unemployed above all have to face the question of politics. They con-

Communist Party Tells and Correct Errors a

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the United States of America publishes the following letter to the "Communist" Opposition (Lovestone group) as educational material for our new members, showing the inevitable ending of all opportunist oppositions to the Leninist line of the Communist International:

To the National Committee and all members of the "Communist" Opposition,
51 West 14th Street,
New York City.

We have received a letter from the secretary of your group speaking in the name of your "National" Committee, in which is proposed that we meet with representatives of your group to discuss the building of a "new" organization to fight against war and fascism, and also to "join in a common effort to bring about a better political understanding between our organizations so as to pave the way to complete unity."

Surely there is no need to carry on any discussions on the first point. Especially do we see no ground for discussion on the basis of the approach to the American League Against War and Fascism contained in your letter. Can the members of the Lovestone group talk about united action seriously and at the same time approve the vicious and provocative approach to the League of Struggle Against War and Fascism contained in your letter to us? In what way is the language here different from that of the open enemies of the Communist movement?

The League Against War and Fascism and its various subdivisions, especially its Youth Section, represent already millions of workers, farmers, students, intellectuals, etc., among them important sections of the American Federation of Labor trade unions, and some important socialist organizations. Its program represents the broadest possible approach toward mobilizing the American masses in the struggle against war and fascism. The League has achieved these results despite the attacks made upon it by the reactionary officialdom of the A. F. of L., the leaders of the Socialist Party and the sabotage and sniping of the leaders of the "Communist" Opposition. As an example of this sabotage is it not enough to cite the role of Zimmerman in the League? What has he done to build the League in his own local, of which he is the head and which he represents on the League's National Committee?

To be sure, the League is only on the road to develop into the instrument needed by the masses. As is well known, it is the Party policy to win to its support the broad masses of the A. F. of L. unions, the unorganized workers, all the Socialist organizations, all toilers and those who sincerely wish to fight against war and fascism. We have made serious efforts to enlist the support of the N. E. C. of the Socialist Party in support of the League. We have made headway in winning S. P. local organizations to the League despite the opposition of the N. E. C. And what has been the role of the "Communist" Opposition? One of trying to prevent the drawing in of the Socialist Party and other organizations.

Surely the League will not be broadened by such discussions as Lovestone is carrying on. Even if you were to stop your attacks on the League and join in building it—which surely no one prevents you from doing—would that change materially the situation? Hardly. After all, why not look facts in the

face? You represent only a handful of individuals with very little connection among the masses. Those of your followers occupying leading positions in some trade unions in New York and vicinity are after all only in these "commanding" positions by grace of A. F. of L. bureaucrats with whom they are allied (Zimmerman), or have lost all support of the masses as a result of their reactionary and class collaborationist policies (Keller).

What is true of the united front on the field of struggle against war and fascism is unquestionably true in all other fields where the broad united front can be and is being built (unemployment, in the trade unions, Scottsboro, etc.). Can we talk of united front for example in connection with the unemployment insurance campaign when you speak of the broadest movement ever built in the history of the Communist movement in this country as "just another name for the bankrupt Unemployed Councils," the "latest puppet organization of the Communist Party"? Is this not going William Green one better? Or can we have united front in the trade unions—where you are completely isolated in the important industries, or in the few locals where your members are openly allied with the reactionary bureaucracy, fighting against the Communists and militant workers?

No discussion is possible with you on the united front, so long as you carry on such anti-Communist slanders and actions. A united front with your handful of followers is at any rate of little consequence in the labor movement. If you change your ways and really wish to honestly support the position of the Party in the struggle it is leading you can show it in the practical daily work.

Now as to the second point in the letter regarding "a better political understanding . . . so as to pave the way for complete unity." We are sure that you are fully acquainted with the position of the Party on all important questions of fundamental policy and tactics. We also are well acquainted with the view of your group. There is no need to organize any discussion merely for the purpose of restating our respective positions which are well established. The only way in which any understanding can be reached between us is by your group abandoning its anti-Communist position and fully accepting the policies and tactics of the C. P. U. S. A.

It is not necessary for us to go into the motives behind the sending of the letter to us. But every member of the Lovestone group who sincerely wishes to fight capitalism and be part of the Communist movement ought to ask himself the question: why did the leaders of the group send this letter to the Communist Party when only a few months ago, after the Comintern informed through the columns of the "Communist International" that all the followers of the Brandler group who wish to come into contact with the Comintern should address themselves to the respective Communist Parties. The Lovestone group instead of taking this honest course, opened up a new "offensive" against the C. P. U. S. A. in the form of "an open letter" to the membership of the C. P. U. S. A.

Unmistakably the following are chief reasons why Lovestone is now compelled to make this latest maneuver:

1. Because the C. P. U. S. A. is now completely united on the basis of the line of the Comintern and is making rapid progress in all fields of work, especially in the trade unions, and in the building of the

Party and the Communist Party. The Socialist Party supports the bureaucrats in the A. F. of L. The Communists support, organize and lead the rank and file in opposition to the class-collaboration policies of the bureaucrats. It is this which raises the fear of the Socialists and Musteites, so that they do everything in their power to eliminate Communists from their unemployed organizations. These reformist leaders, bureaucratically trying to control their organizations, fear the leadership of the rank and file against their pussyfooting policies.

Sabotage Interests of Jobless

The rank and file of the Socialist and Muste controlled unemployed organizations must take note of the sabotaging activities of their leaders. The sabotage of the National Congress is the clearest expression of their struggle not for but against the interests of all unemployed. Their refusal to form the united front, their seeking fake issues to prevent unity, clearly expose them as working against the interests of the unemployed.

To the rank and file we appeal: It is in your interest that there should be unity. Elect more delegates to the National Congress and the Convention of the N. U. C. Build unity groups in every branch and local of these unemployed organizations. Pass resolutions in your locals. Instruct your delegates to the city and county bodies to fight for united front action with the N. U. C. in your locality.

But don't wait! FORM THE UNITED FRONT IN ACTION with the N. U. C. on the immediate issues in your vicinity. Draw up joint demands, mobilize jointly, elect joint leadership and go to the relief bureaus in one body. Join together in arranging the demonstrations on Jan. 7 to back up the demands to be presented by the National Congress to the U. S. Congress. Send resolutions to Roosevelt and your congressmen. Prepare jointly for the struggle after the National Congress to force the U. S. Congress and the State legislatures to pass the Workers Bill.

The issue daily becomes clearer: Your leaders do not want unity. They are doing everything in their power to prevent unity. YOU want unity—WE want unity. Unity must be achieved, despite all sabotage.