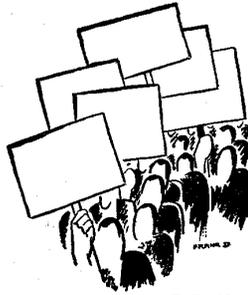


ical future of the nation. In New York, the American Labor Party spreads upstate, and forms A.L.P. clubs in wards and precincts, educating the voters, widening the influence of the party. In Ohio, the "Defeat Davey" movement promises to put the corrupt Ohio machine out of office. In California, a broad coalition brings together labor and the progressives, some of whom supported the Epic movement in 1934. In the South, the League fights for extension of suffrage to Negroes and dispossessed white workers and farmers. In the Middle West and nationally, the League has entered into alliances for mutual aid with farm organizations, such as the Farmers' Union. In Michigan, the League supports the reelection of Governor Murphy and opposes that of Senator Vandenberg and Representative Hoffman, leaders of the Republican, anti-New Deal bloc. In Minnesota and Wisconsin, the League bolsters the Farmer-Labor Party and the Progressives. In Washington, it supports the Commonwealth Federation. In the Southwest, small farmers and agricultural workers have already used the League to force political concessions from the big-grower-controlled state governments. In every state, Labor's Non-Partisan League is acquiring skill that will serve it in the 1938 gubernatorial, congressional, and local elections, when the once nearly impregnable power of reaction in politics will be challenged.

The stronger the League grows, the more frenzied becomes the opposition. Resistance of old-line politicians and reactionaries was expected, just as the hostility of the A.F. of L. hierarchy, which now menaces labor unity, could be predicted in advance. Yet so thoroughly has the drive for independent political action permeated the labor movement that, despite the commands of the executive council, the great majority of state federations continue to cooperate with the League, and in most states the officers of the League include high A.F. of L. officials. Where formal cooperation with the A.F. of L. proves impossible, progressives have decided to utilize William Green's own plan of setting up A.F. of L. non-partisan committees, and to turn them from opponents of Labor's Non-Partisan League into allies, supporting the same program and the same candidates.

Nor have various other disruptive groups been more successful than the executive council in holding back the League. Certain sections of the Socialist Party—particularly those factions dominated by the Trotskyites—have advocated the setting up of labor parties that exclude the progressives and middle classes and oppose the League's policy of building a democratic front. The result of such tactics is to split the labor vote in much the same manner as the executive council attempts to do through its non-partisan committees, and to isolate the progressives and middle-class people from the unions, as happened in Detroit. But such "labor parties" have made almost no progress and can count their adherents by the hundreds only. The Trotskyites and the Lovestoneites—particularly on the West Coast and in



F. Davidson

"March Comrades"

(Words for a workers' chorus, from "A-8")

Workers and farmers unite
You have nothing to lose
But your chains
The world is to win
This is May Day! May!
Your armies are veining the earth!

Railways and highways have tied
Blood of farmland and town
And the chains

Speed wheat to machine
This is May Day! May!
The poor's armies veining the earth!

Hirers once fed by the harried
Cannot feed them their hire
Nor can chains

Hold the hungry in
This is May Day! May!
The poor are veining the earth!

Light lights in air blossoms red
Like nothing on earth
Now the chains

Drag graves to lie in
This is May Day! May!
The poor's armies are veining the earth!

March comrades in revolution
From hirer unchained
Till your gain

Be the freedom of all
The World's May Day! May!
May of the Freed of All the Earth!

LOUIS ZUKOFSKY.

★ ★ ★

Michigan—have taken a similar position, more to split labor than to achieve any positive goal. But these groups, while they are valuable to the reactionaries and have influence among some misguided labor officials, possess almost no following among the working class.

The League does not confine itself to pre-election preparations. Every day it proves its worth by fighting for additional and adequate relief grants and for immediate passage by Congress of the Wages and Hours Bill. Unless the present legislators keep the interests of the majority in mind and act accordingly, the League realistically threatens them with defeat at the polls. The League has already pub-

lished the voting records of all representatives and senators. Those who opposed the Wages and Hours Bill, those who do not support relief appropriations, can expect firm opposition when they come up for reelection. But congressmen who have proved their friendliness for labor and its allies will receive the eager endorsement and aid of the League.

The League has gone far beyond the old A. F. of L. pure-and-simple approach of "endorsing" friends. The A. F. of L. approved and disapproved for the most part on the basis of relations between certain labor officials and the political machine in power. Of course, the Federation talked about the candidate's "record." But the Federation was concerned with playing the game inside the machine of one of the two parties. It did not, like the League, campaign nationally and in the states, with a well-defined program to guide it, and it did not campaign independently of the old parties. Nor did it enlist progressives in its fight. It did not build a democratic front, as the League is doing, on the basis of middle-class cooperation with a united labor movement.

As yet the League has not perfected the complex organization that can assure victories in all elections. While in most states the autonomous state Leagues, affiliated with the national body, are supported by per capita dues of their component organizations, the national office must still depend on voluntary contributions from some of the larger internationals. Much remains to be done in setting up committees in counties, wards, precincts, and smaller communities which will keep the individual voter in touch with League activities. Moreover, the League is shy of the word "machine." Remembering past connotations of the phrase "political machine," groups within the League debate the advisability of building a solid machine that can acquaint voters with the League's program, bring them to the polls, and hold their allegiance.

In 1938 the League enters its first national campaign as an independent political force. The stakes are high: the aim is the defeat of reaction, the repulse of fascism. The campaign has the possibility of surging forward with surprising vigor; but though it will undoubtedly record impressive gains, it cannot expect to be universally successful. What is important is that, by participating in the fight this autumn, the League can build its organization, its "machine" for 1940, and at the same time change the composition of Congress and the state legislatures so that they will truly represent the majority of the people. Above all, the League can demonstrate that democracy is able to protect itself against fascism through the democratic front, led by the League.

This promise of protection makes the League potentially the most important political weapon yet devised by the American people. For the democratic front, with the League as its leader, can be the precursor of an American People's Front that will have as its goal the security, peace, freedom, and progress of all the people.