

---

# The United Front.

by Upton Sinclair

Published in *The Worker* [New York], v. 6, whole no. 274 (May 12, 1923), pg. 4.

The editor of *The Worker* [Louis Engdahl] asks me to state my view on the question of representatives of the Workers Party being admitted to the Labor Party. I am at the present moment the candidate of the Labor Party for congress at a special election of the 10th California District, to be held May 1st [1923]. This Labor Party has just been organized at a convention including representatives of both the Workers Party and the Socialist Party, and the Executive Committee of the Labor Party includes one representative of each of these two organizations.

I think representatives of the Workers Party should be admitted to the Labor Party, and that representatives of the Socialist Party should vote for this. But I should not care to make this flat statement without qualifying it by a criticism of the activities of many leaders of the Workers Party, and likewise of the Socialist Party. I believe in the "United Front"; I have always practised it, to the best of my humble ability, making it the motto of my life to keep my guns trained on the enemies of the working class, and to exclude personalities from my criticisms of working class tactics and activities. I regard it as the great tragedy of our time that so many leaders and would-be leaders of the working class can find nothing better to do with their time and energies than to fight one another.

I quite understand that it is necessary to disagree about tactics, and where the life and future of the working class are at stake it is inevitable that men should differ vehemently. But they can

do it without becoming personal enemies, and without splitting up their organizations and playing into the hands of the enemies of the working class. If they cannot learn to do it, they should be deposed as leaders, and other men should be put in positions of authority who can and will do it. There are writers in *The Worker* who find their greatest delight in ridiculing the *New York Call*, and there are writers on *The Call* who respond in kind, and both are enemies of the working class movement, and the movement should put them to shame. It is not necessary for me to use any space in this article in pointing out that the working class is fighting for its life and for the whole future of humanity. We have enemies enough on the *New York Times* and the *New York Tribune*, and the rest of the capitalist organs of New York, without wasting our few resources in making enemies of one another.

Since I am writing for *The Worker*, I will deal with the matter particularly from the point of view of that paper. *The Worker* supports in the industrial field the program of the Trade Union Educational League, which repudiates dual unionism, and insists that the workers shall stay in the big labor unions and devote their efforts to carrying these unions for the program of the abolition of capitalism. It seems to me that this is the correct policy; in fact, I like it so well that I wish to apply it, not merely to the industrial field, but to the political field. We had a working class organization, the Socialist Party, and it was not satisfactory to some of its members. If so, why was it not

wise tactics to bore from within that party — to stay in it and fight to make it more radical? Instead of that, the party was split in half, and the faction which split off now declares for a “United Front,” and invites the Socialist Party to cooperate with it — but at the same time explains in its own organs of opinion that the purpose of this offer is merely to “show up” the Socialist Party and take away its members!

You won't like the above, and maybe you won't wish to publish it; so I will turn around and present the opposite side of the argument to the Socialist Party members, and send it to the *New York Call*! I say that just as the IWW split off from the American Federation of Labor, and spent some 20 years trying in vain to organize the working class in rival unions, so a large number of the workers, rendered desperate by oppression, and the torments and bewilderments of the war, followed the example of the European Socialists and set up a dual political party for the warfare upon capitalism. They blundered, and their blunder is manifest to everyone in the present political helplessness of the American working class, in the smash-

ing of the steel strike and the railroad strike, and the persecution and jailing of thousands of radicals. Now there is starting a new movement for the political organization of the working class, and there is only one policy of wisdom and common sense, one policy which the workers should and must insist upon — that all factional disputes be abandoned and factional hatreds be buried, and all groups of the workers must join in one organization and obey the rules of the game. Let us provide for democratic control by the majority of workers; let us agitate for our program and point of view in the organization; and then when the workers have given their decision on any issue, let us abide by that decision and strive loyally to carry it out. The working class is in the midst of a war, and it is only by organization and discipline that it can win the victory and save itself and civilization. The most important lesson now to be learned by the working class of America is that of loyalty, and of order and discipline inside the working class army of revolt against capitalism. With all the energy I possess I beg the workers to stop fighting one another.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

*Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2006. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.*