

The United Front

By Ben Gitlow

THE official Communist Party has forgotten entirely the tactic of the *united front*.... The united front lies buried in the ridiculous leftist phraseology and Party wreckage of the present Party leadership. It becomes absolutely necessary for the Communists in the U. S. who refuse to live on phrases but who want to base their activities upon the stern reality of the actual American conditions to again raise the question of the united front.

Communists must realize that the mobilization of the masses for revolutionary struggle against capitalism is our main task. The Communists alone without the participation of the masses cannot make the revolution. To expect the present Party membership, which to-day is barely five thousand, alone to struggle against U. S. capitalism and to achieve the revolution is ridiculous. If the Communist Party was one hundred times that size, it could not make the revolution without winning the decisive proletarian masses, sections of the farmers as well as some sections of the petty bourgeoisie. The winning and mobilization of the masses for revolutionary struggle, that is the most important task of the Communists.

How to win the masses, how to mobilize them, should be questions ever foremost in the minds of Communists. The united front tactic is the answer to this question. The most effective way to win the non-Party masses is to unite them on the basis of some of the immediate issues of the class struggle, to fight against capitalism.

Why do we seek to unite the workers for struggle on immediate issues? Because we realize that tho the non-Party workers are not yet ready to accept and follow the full Communist program, large numbers of them are ready to unite with the Communists and even to accept Communist leadership in struggles against capitalism on certain immediate issues. It is necessary for Communists to realize that there are many workers, in fact more workers than Communists, who are ready to fight capitalism on certain issues. They are not ready to engage in an armed revolution to overthrow capitalism. It is the duty of Communists to recognize this fact if we are to win the masses. But the present Party leadership refuses to recognize this fact. For them only the Communists fight against capitalism; all others are enemies, lined up with capitalism. In the Thesis issued by the C.C. on the membership drive, one of the slogans for the masses is the following: "*The Communists alone fight for the working class.*"

This is the very antithesis of the views of Lenin. If the Communists alone fight for the working class, then why trade unions, why united front movements, why the mobilization of the working class? "The Communists alone fight for the working class!" say the present Party leaders. Then all others in the working class fight against the working class, are enemies of the workers! This rubbish which is paraded as "left" "revolutionary" Communism by the present Party leadership is fit for the place where all rubbish belongs, the garbage can.

What about the workers who go out on strike, who are not Communists, are they fighting for their class or against their class? How about the members of the new unions, the majority of whom are not Communists? Are they fighting for their class or against their class? According to the present Party leadership it is impossible for them to fight for their class because "only Communists fight for the working class!"

To-day the present Party leadership is demonstrating how to fight for the working class by dividing and splitting the

Communist Party and by wrecking the mass organizations of the workers. Good Communists who insist upon the abandonment of insanity on the part of the present Party leadership, on a policy of unity, are branded as renegades. To-day the official Party leadership is pursuing a policy of disastrous sectarianism with a vengeance.

Lenin warned the Communists against sectarianism. Lenin insisted that the Communists should guard always against being isolated from the masses. The united front is a tactic of growing Communist contact with masses, and of establishing our influence and leadership among the masses. To-day, however, our official Party leadership starts by completely separating the masses from the Communists by the contemptuous slogan: "Only Communists (The chosen and favored of the working class) fight for the working class!" No such assumption on the part of the Communists is necessary . . . only by fighting with the workers against the bosses, by leading them thru sacrifice in the class struggle will Communists establish their influence, their leadership, their right to be considered the vanguard. Not by holding in contempt the working class and boasting: *Only* Communists fight for the workers.

The workers in the United States are not Communists. They have not yet developed to the most elemental stages of class consciousness. How to win such workers for Communism is a problem. You do not solve this problem by declaring, as did the "great leader" W.Z. Foster, that the millions of workers who voted for Al Smith for president were radicalized workers, or in the simple way in which the present Party leadership does by declaring that all organizations not dominated by the Communists are "social fascist organizations." The vote of millions of workers for Al Smith was an indication of the backwardness and lack of class consciousness among the workers in the United States. To call all organizations not dominated by the Communists "social fascist" organizations does not help to develop a program for unifying the workers and mobilizing them for struggle against capitalism. To brand all organizations not dominated by the Communists "social fascist" organizations does not help to develop a program for unifying the workers and mobilizing them for struggle against capitalism. To brand all organizations the Communists do not control as "social fascist" is as convincing as branding all Communists who disagree with the wrong policies of the present Party leaders as renegades.

In spite of all name calling, in spite of all the leftist phrases, the problem remains. How can we develop these backward workers? How can we instill class consciousness, how can we mobilize them for struggle?

By the united front tactics, by realizing that these backward workers are ready to fight for immediate issues against capitalism! By understanding that the intensification of the class struggle will bring about discontent and a willingness to struggle on the part of even larger numbers of these workers! It becomes therefore the duty for the Communists to raise those issues of immediate struggle that will rally the workers to fight against the capitalists and upon the basis of these issues appeal to the workers and their organizations for united action, for united struggle.

But the Party leadership views the present situation as one in which American capitalism has already collapsed. All we have to do is to wait for the whole edifice to crumble to the ground. The official theory is that the workers are so radical-

ized that they are running at rapid-fire speed to the left, that so fast is the pace of the American workers that the Party cannot keep up the pace and is lagging behind, that every strike is an armed revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism! But why such day-dreams and hallucinations? To make the wish the fact—that is not Communist wisdom. Such an unrealistic approach to the problem of winning the masses gets the Communists nowhere.

Only on the basis that the Communists are able to issue unifying demands and slogans, to organize united front movements as a bridge between the Party and the non-Party masses will the Communists succeed in the struggles step by step to develop the workers, instill class consciousness and eventually establish Communist leadership.

It is no accident that to-day the entire present Party leadership, from the pious Max Bedacht who crosses himself in formal loyalty and confessions of faith, to the pyramid of Communist wisdom, J. Zack, advocates the abandonment of the Labor Party policy—because it is a united front policy that establishes a bridge between the Party and the masses.

Bound up with the question of the united front is the fight against the social reformists, the reactionary labor bureaucrats and other misleaders of labor. How are we to fight them for the leadership of the workers? Name calling alone will not help us. Children at a very young age learn how to call names. Only by uniting the workers to fight the capitalists on concrete issues can we best expose the role of these misleaders of labor. Thru such united front struggles the workers will learn who fights with them and who betrays them.

United fronts with the masses of the rank and file, with their organizations, that is the method of winning the masses. It means fighting to win the workers everywhere, even in the most reactionary organizations.

In the United States with its millions of backward workers, with their illusions and lack of class consciousness, we see many evidences of readiness for struggle. It is precisely here in the United States, in spite of all the phrase mongering of the present Party leadership that the united front tactic remains the most important means for the winning of the masses.



Lenin said:

"In establishing a workers press . . . we should not, cannot and must not rely upon the finances of rich 'friends' but only on the sacrifice of the workers . . ."

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