

Unity Urged to Lift Ban On Ethiopia Mass Rally

Powerful United Front of All Friends of Peace Will Force Chicago Authorities to Give Masses Right to Streets, Says Haywood

A full reprint of this article is made necessary due to an error in composition make-up. The article first appeared in the Monday edition of the Daily Worker.

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The advance of fascist war armies into Africa against Ethiopia, the last independent Negro country, has stirred the Negro masses everywhere more profoundly than anything in recent years. An emotion deep and powerful has arisen among them to challenge the raw imperialist war moves of the Italian fascist plunderer Mussolini.

In the great Negro centers of the big cities of this country, as well as among the oppressed people of the colonies, the recognition of the meaning of Mussolini's desire to enslave Ethiopia is taking the form of a militancy and determination to struggle that fills the rulers of this country with the greatest alarm.

Heroic Stand

Why has the brutal challenge of Mussolini and the stalwart defiance of Ethiopia struck so profound a chord among the Negro people? It is because the heroic stand of Ethiopia against the arrogance of Italian fascism has become for them a glowing symbol to inspire them in their local struggle against oppression. Backward, undeveloped, poorly armed Ethiopia dares to hurl defiance against the armed monster of Italian fascism rather than yield an iota of its independence. And by the same token, the oppressed Negro masses of this country feel new energy and power in their fight against oppression at home.

The readiness to defend Ethiopia against Italian fascism becomes inevitably a readiness to fight against the menace and advance of fascism, against every petty persecution, every Jim-Crow, degradation, misery and discrimination right here in Chicago! The fight against Italian fascism menacing Ethiopia in Africa develops inevitably into a fight against the power of advancing American fascism, against, for example, the political machine of Democratic Mayor Kelly in Chicago, against the systematic persecution and discrimination of Negroes on the South Side!

The fact is that the deep-rooted emotion of the Negro masses in Chicago for defense of Ethiopia can very quickly develop, and will develop into a new wave of mass actions among the Negro workers of the steel mills and stockyards, the jobless, starving families around the relief stations, against their own exploiters and oppressors! And it is just this which explains the events which have been taking place in Chicago in the past few weeks in the development of the Ethiopian issue.

The Chicago administration of Mayor Kelly, recently honored with a decoration from Mussolini, knows this. The police know this. And above all many Negro reformist leaders are acutely aware that mass actions against Italian fascism must become mass actions against Jim-Crow oppression in Chicago.

Mass actions on Ethiopia may develop into such a mass upsurge as shook Chicago's south side in 1931—may develop into a repetition of Harlem's recent spontaneous mass actions against Jim-Crow misery. This fact explains at once the absolute refusal of the Chicago authorities to grant a permit for a parade through the South Side in defense of Ethiopia, and at the same time, the urgency of building the widest united front, the broadest People's Front among the Negro and white masses for elementary civil rights.

Deny Parade Permit

The fight for permission to parade on August 31 on the South Side in defense of Ethiopia is now a most vital political issue facing the working class and the Negro masses of Chicago. Up to now, the city administration, Mayor Kelly and Chief of Police Allman, have refused all requests for a permit to hold such a parade. An attempt to hold a parade last Sunday was broken up by a large mobilization of police and detectives. Significantly, the city authorities justify their reactionary stand for the first time with a political, rather than a technical, reason, denying the permit on the ground that such a parade would be an "unfriendly act against a friendly power," innocently "forgetting" that Ethiopia also is a friendly power.

In the present fight for the August 31 parade, the united front is the primary weapon. We have already had some experience in the united front on Ethiopia. With the first reports from Africa and Rome, the Communist Party took the initiative, acted promptly and called a united front conference which met at the Pilgrim Baptist Church, with 1,100 present, representing seventy-six Negro organizations, twenty-eight churches and six unions included.

This enthusiastic conference endorsed the parade, the plan to embargo on all munition shipments memorialize Congress to declare an armistice with Italy, and for the holding of demonstrations before the Italian Consulates, etc. Later experience, however, showed that due to certain weakness in work, this large conference which should have been the starting point of a wide united movement culminating in a parade, remained instead the high-point of the united front.

Quick Response

It was the speed of the Communist Party's response to the Ethiopian danger, with its firm, clear-cut program of active support for Ethiopia and struggle against fascism that swept many of these reformist groups into the first con-

ference. Later, when they had had time to take a survey of the situation, they began to find ways to hinder the movement of the masses toward joint action.

Tied by a thousand ties to the Chicago capitalist machine of Kelly, their intense fear of the mass movement which they very well knew would fight not only for Ethiopia but for rights at home, prompted them, with Reverend J. C. Austin in their lead, to bolt from the joint conference held at Austin's own church—the Pilgrim Baptist Church. Austin at once began to issue false and slanderous statements to the press on the parade, separated himself from the united front, and with the cooperation of the Chicago Defender, which suppressed all news of the parade and the united front, succeeded in creating confusion which made it easier for the authorities to stop the planned march down the South Side.

Cites Weaknesses

Why was it possible for Austin and the Chicago Defender to turn this way against the movement for a mass parade and street actions? Examination of the united front revealed certain important shortcomings. First and foremost, there was the failure to make the lower Party organizations—the units—the active agents of the united front, the lesson emphasized by the Central Committee. The united front carried out mainly by a few leading comrades in the section, through negotiations on the top, while the Party membership was not mobilized to penetrate the churches, lodges, etc., of the organizations endorsing the united front.

The units were not given concrete tasks and leadership to cement the united front from below by approaching the local organizations in their neighborhoods. As a result of this, it was not possible to sufficiently mobilize the masses near the Party and the masses in the reformist organizations, and revealed the isolation of the Party from the reformist-led masses. The absence of consistent work in the reformist mass organizations made it possible for many of the leaders who were present at the Pilgrim Baptist conference to keep the militant program of the conference from their own followers. And lastly, the parade itself was poorly organized.

But the blocking of the first parade last Sunday has not quenched the fighting spirit of the Negro masses on the South Side. The willingness to fight for Ethiopia and for civil rights is as intense as ever. The very strength of this mass feeling is forcing the reformists like Austin to attempt to start separate movements in their churches whose sole purpose is to collect money and kill the desire for mass struggle, a struggle which must, they know, rise against the growing menace of fascism which comes from the repressive measures of the Kelly administration. Other schemes to side-track the masses are rife, such as that of Robert Ephraim, Garveyite, who proposes fantastic enlistment plans at the same time that he foments race hatred by warning against "white leadership" and unity with white workers.

For Strong Unity

The central task now for the Party is to organize so powerful a united front that the authorities will not be able to keep the masses from the streets in parades and demonstrations for Ethiopia. The iron ring of repression must be broken through by deepening and extending the united front for the Aug. 31 parade. The fight for the permit becomes now a focal point of the fight against the menace of fascism in Chicago, for the exposure of the city administration headed by Kelly as a friend of Fascism. Petitions are being circulated by the Joint Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia. Open-air meetings are being held, and scores of Negro groups are being visited, the emphasis being made that the fight for Ethiopia involves the winning of the right to demonstrate and parade on Aug. 31.

The independent activity of the Party in the units mainly, calling upon branches of the N.A.A.C.P., Illinois Workers Alliance, Socialist Party and all neighborhood organizations, churches, lodges, etc., to get 25,000 into the streets on Aug. 31 in defense of Ethiopia, is the key to the fight for Ethiopia and Negro rights on the South Side of Chicago.

Hearst Gangsters Seize Two Workers Who Urged Boycott

(Daily Worker Midwest Bureau)

CHICAGO, Ill., Aug. 13.—Stung by the spread of the anti-Hearst boycott in this city, Hearst is hiring thugs on his trucks to seize workers who dare to distribute the anti-Hearst stickers calling for a boycott of his papers.

The latest victim of the activities of these special Hearst "Storm Troopers," as they are called by the workers, are Theodore Rossberg and Sol Bernstein, both of whom