

Little Progressive About Federation for Progress

Since Ronald Reagan took office, various elements of the peoples' movement have expressed the need for unity of action against our common enemy. One attempt to divert this tendency and channel it along reformist lines was the All Peoples Congress, formed by the Trotskyite Workers World Party. Another, more recent, addition is the Federation for Progress, formed by the Communist Workers Party (CWP), famous for the murder of five of its cadre by the KKK in Greensboro, North Carolina. The emergence of these organizations and others raises important questions about the tactics of the peoples front and how to fight the danger of imperialist world war and fascism.

The Federation for Progress attempts to present itself as a form of the peoples front: an alliance between the working class and allies such as sections of the middle class, democratic intellectuals, small farmers and other progressive strata which are oppressed by imperialism and are fighting against it. In the U.S., this was achieved in the 1930's with the Democratic Front movement.

But the Federation is not intended as a front against imperialist war or the danger of fascism. It is merely a top-down federation of organizations to oppose the present policy of Ronald Reagan. In essence, the Federation is an anti-Reagan front. The All People's Anti-Reagan Front is precisely the tactic outlined by Gus Hall at the December, 1981, meeting of the Central Committee of the CPUSA. The Draft Program discussed at the founding conference is neither anti-imperialist nor anti-fascist. Instead, it is a mixture of "multi-issue, multi-movement" concerns with no analysis of their origins or interconnections. It seeks to be all things to all people.

In fact, Nelson Johnson, a leader of the CWP and the Federation, promotes the Federation as a means to "unite all classes" against Reaganomics. The exploitation and oppression of the working class and other strata is promoted as a particular policy of a particular Administration, and class collaboration is offered as the remedy. This is little more than the revisionist call by the CPUSA for unity between the working class and the "non-monopoly" section of the capitalist class.

Following from this, Michio Kaku, an

anti-war activist and physicist, made a plea for a "left-center coalition". This seeks to abandon the unity of action by the working class itself in favor of alliances between the liberal, reformist, and reactionary trade union bureaucrats, and their fellow travelers in the peoples' movement. On several other questions, the conversion of the once-Maoist CWP to modern revisionism and the Soviet camp became obvious:

The Federation expresses no concern for the aggression of Soviet social-imperialism, the invasion of Afghanistan, or the Soviet nuclear bombs aimed at the people of the world.

The Federation adopted the Soviet analysis of the current economic crisis. The current crisis is to be viewed as unique, as permanent, and as a crisis of "under-consumption". The Marxist-Leninist theory of the general crisis of capitalism, and the cyclical, periodic nature of the over-production crisis was abandoned.

The Federation adopted the view that "Reaganism is Black Genocide". For thirty years the CPUSA has sought to negate national oppression in the U.S., and reduce racism and white supremacy to a mere policy of U.S. imperialism. This promotes the illusion that monopoly capitalism in the U.S. would rather exterminate a section or all of the Black people of the country rather than intensify their super-exploitation to gain yet further profits.

As we might expect, the Federation sought to portray its convention as a new starting point in the peoples' movement, and an unequivocal success. In reality, several of the major signers of the call for the conference either failed to appear or played no role in the actual work of the conference. While 500-600 people attended an evening session to hear Julian Bond speak, only about 200 participated in most of the working sessions. And most of the participants were from New York, Washington, D.C., or North Carolina. There was scant participation from working people or trade unionists.

The Federation represents a new attempt by modern revisionism to gain influence over sections of the peoples' movement that the CPUSA and the National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression have been unable to achieve. It is an attempt to create a new reformist, revisionist center in the movement. In fighting the growing danger of imperialist war and fascism, it is necessary to expose the Federation for Progress in order to build the genuine unity of action required in the progressive movement to combat imperialism, social-imperialism and reaction.