

Lessons of the United Front

(Continued from last issue)

THE FRAME WORK OF THE UNITED FRONT

In the consideration of the united front one must not only know the Leninist concept. One must, above all, apply this to objective conditions, and the frame work of the working class and its organizations.

Local, sectional' national and international united front action are complicated in their application. Defensive and offensive struggles call for different modes of working class motion, just as periods of reaction, reform and revolution do. The immediate objective must at no time be isolated and separated from the direction of the objective Leninist Marxism is heading for.

THE REFORMIST REFUSAL OR ACCEPTANCE OF THE UNITED FRONT

The proper application of the united front tactic is a winning one for the revolutionist regardless of the acceptance or refusal of the reformist leaders. The degree of the gain will be altered by the position taken by the reformists. However, in turn, the position of the reformists is refusing or accepting does not rest within their own hands. Their refusal or acceptance in the last analysis rests in the hands of the pressure of their rank and file. Insufficient pressure will enable the reformists to refuse and strong pressure will compel the reformists to accept or stand exposed. This does not mean we revert to united front from below. We increase the PRESSURE from below, upon the organization to force them into the united front.

If the leadership is able to prevent the organization from joining the united front we expose such a leadership, not through slander but through political criticism. If the pressure is sufficient to force the leaders into the united front and "if" their program is not to the interest of the working class and their action opposed to working class interests than we EXPOSE THEM IN ACTION as part of the united front. A Marxist can expose an opportunist and reformist if they refuse action. It is far better and a more thorough job of exposure if it is done in action.

Workers do not have illusions only about certain misleaders in whom they still have faith. They also have many illusions about capitalism. In action, around the united front, the twofold process of disillusionment in misleaders and in the capitalist system can be developed. Only Marxist revolutionists can stand this acid test.

CALLING THE UNITED FRONT

The calling of the united front is not the simple task of sending a letter to all working class organizations. Many Right wing secretaries will throw the communication in the basket and the organization will in no way have knowledge of the projected united front. After it is decided to call a united front and before the provisional committee (whatever may be its composition) sends out the call those taking the initiative should organize their own forces to bring pressure from below on all other organizations and especially in the organizations that have labor fakery at the head. The rank and file of those taking the initiative must know about the call and its objective. They must set to work preparing the ground work for the call so when it is sent to all the working class organizations there is sufficient pressure from below to force as many organizations as possible into united working class action. Continued effort must be made to bring those organizations in the united front that at first refuse. Political exposure of those organizations must be carried on.

UNITED FRONTS THAT EXCLUDE COMMUNISTS OR HAVE WRONG PROGRAMS

There are many types of reformists who endeavor to carry on united front action between reformist organizations and exclude the Communists in order to keep the conference and action respectable. The relation of exclusion should be that of breaking into the conference. This refers to united front action on immediate demands. We will consider all factors involved more than once before breaking into a parliamentary united front action of reformists.

The second question of importance in such a united front called by reformists is the question of what kind of a draft program they have presented. We must enter to oppose their class collaboration policy with a policy of class struggle. If we pass the first line trench and are seated but do not succeed in shaping the immediate demands into a program of action and class struggle we should not serve on the Executive Committee elected to carry out the reformist, abstract, anti-working class, opportunist program of the united front.

The third important relationship to consider is the relationship of our entrance into a united front that is dominated by forces that adopt a fundamentally wrong program of action such as the Amsterdam Congress of the Stalinists or the Washington Continental Congress of the reformists. Under such a circumstance we expose

LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

A Report from the Middle West

Davenport, Iowa.—The following is a report on activities in the tri-city (Davenport, Muscatine and stock Island) and throughout the state of Iowa:

No doubt you are aware that the Unemployed Union which was organized on our initiative was taken away from us and we were expelled as the result of a combination of the party leaders and some miscreant leaders formed in a section against us. The Unemployed Union then changed its name to the Cooperative League and became affiliated with the A. F. of L. The Unemployed Council was completely liquidated. And today a fight has broken out between the A. F. of L. leadership and the party. It is doubtful as to the outcome.

Now as to the activities of the party. In Davenport they are doing very little. In East Moline or Moline the Unemployed Council has been more or less captured by a reactionary element, according to our information. The party has organized a Workers School which is not making very much progress. The united front which they organized last spring blew up. No direct benefits were reaped as a result of the "change" of policy of the national leadership of the party on the united front. Now as to the A. F. of L.—As a result of the industrial Recovery Act they are sweeping the three cities and organizing local union after local union.

Muscatine In Muscatine the party is practically non-existent although they have about nine members who do nothing. The party makes no efforts to educate such good elements as are in its ranks. The Unemployed Council exists only on paper. The Citizens Employed and Unemployed League has stopped functioning. We have some contacts in this city. Through them we will organize some open air meetings and try, in the very near future, to round up some of the elements that have ceased functioning in the party to form some sort of an educational group which will expound our ideas.

There is very little unemployment in Muscatine at this time due to the pick-up in the button industry which is working full blast. It would be very easy to organize a button workers union but the party has made no effort to do so. I am sure that the A. F. of L. will do it in the near future.

Des Moines The party got a very good start in this region but has isolated itself due to incorrect policies. There are about six Unemployed Leagues in the city. The party's Unemployed Council is non-existent. The I. L. D. never meets though they have some thirty or forty members on paper. While there was a petition circulated demanding that the branch meet and that the organizer be forced to call the meeting. The party had a chance to organize the cement workers but due to their inane methods they all went over to the A. F. of L.

The workers in Des Moines are from within the conference if we are allowed into the conference and expose a correct program against the Executive Committee elected. THE FORM OF THE UNITED FRONT The united front is not only a question of local, national or international unity, and is not a question of unity between organizations or political tendencies to constitute a Left wing in a trade union fight, etc. It is also a question of organizational development to a higher stage.

The organizational development of the united front can take on a varied number of forms. Temporary agreements between organizations on one or several demands or a bloc in struggle that covers a whole series of demands and actions, or a federation as a crystallized higher form of the united front which deals with one phase of the class struggle, etc., or the Soviet, which is the highest form of the united front action of the working class. The Soviet as an organization in itself passes through a whole series of stages of development.

PLANS AND PROGNANDA

Delegates do not come to united front conference to hear propaganda speeches. The leaders as well as the delegates who take the floor must be instructed to save their propaganda speeches to use on those workers outside of the united front who have not yet been won over to our action.

Delegates must confine their arguments, and those in charge of the conference must set the keynote on the question of program and how to carry out the program adopted. What to do and how to do it, is the job of the convention, not propaganda speeches. The delegates should not have to be propogandized.

IMMEDIATE DEMANDS AND ULTIMATE DEMANDS

United fronts are not passive agreements. United fronts can be only temporary alliances of different organizations in action upon immediate demands. Communists cannot form a permanent body with reformists to fight war or overthrow capitalism. Such can be a

more interested in meetings and lectures than I have seen anywhere in the state. Hundreds gather on the river front in front of the library and hear all kinds of speeches. The party is unable to make any impression on them. I was there for two weeks and held six open air meetings arranged by our sympathizers. It was claimed by everyone that they were the biggest and most interesting meetings held. I had a debate with an I. W. W. on tactics and policies. It was very well received. I had a debate with a socialist on the Industrial Recovery Act where the biggest crowd attended this summer. In both of these debates our group made a very good impression and was congratulated by the workers.

The different industries in the city of Des Moines seem to be picking up. If we can keep up our open air meetings and agitation in Des Moines there is no doubt that we can organize a group. We have spoken to many party members who are very friendly and we have met many times till late at night. The Wobblies are trying to make headway in Des Moines. The A. F. of L. has chartered several locals through the use of the N. I. R. A.

The following is the situation in the mining regions of Iowa: The U. M. W. A. officials got the miners a 22 1-2 wage cut. This was done without a vote of the membership. The miners are very much disatisfied. Fourteen or fifteen local unions have already endorsed a call for a special district convention. Only sixteen locals are needed for this purpose. Meetings of miners are being held all over the district by opposition forces who are more or less corrupted by the influence of one time office holders within their ranks. Many old party members, especially south Slavs, are in the mines around Iowa. The party thus far has done nothing to crystallize a Left wing within the miners union.

Council Bluffs Here where a year and a half ago we had a splendid movement nothing exists now of the party or the Unemployed Council of the party except a few former disgraced party members. The party organizer does not even bother to do anything at all. The A. F. of L. has organized a Worker's Protective Association for the Unemployed which they claim has 2,500 members. We have plenty of contacts in Council Bluffs which could be worked up if someone were permanently located in this territory.

Omaha The party has moved the office of District 10 to this city. Many comrades are out of the movement who used to be the most active. We have many contacts with the old party comrades but they all seem to be demoralized and disgusted. The socialist party and the Y. P. S. L. are making big headway in Omaha.

Lincoln, Nebraska and Sioux City Lincoln, Nebraska and Sioux City are the most promising bright spots of the party. After considerable time in which nothing was done the party has been able to organize a big unemployed movement. This was mainly due to the activities of the local comrades who worked on their own initiative. The whole branch in Lincoln is very friendly to the Left Opposition.

Latest Developments in the Textile Industry

Uncle Sam is vitally concerned with the sick textile industry and has shown this concern by first approving the textile code. Now the other sections of the industry are submitting codes. In the meantime wide discontent and strike struggles are taking place throughout the industry. At the same time thousands of ill-used workers are joining the A. F. of L., controlled by Associated and the United Textile Workers. These workers are promised almost anything under the Industrial Recovery Act. An equal number of seasoned strikers will have nothing to do with the U. T. M., that is discredited from one end of the industry to the other.

On the other hand, the National Textile Workers Union is facing the new situation in the midst of the T. U. U. L. confusion, which reflects itself in the hopeless policy of the N. T. W. U. Many workers refuse to join the N. T. W. U. This is the reward of the third period blunders in particular and the Stalinist revisionism in general.

In Salem, Mass., the N. T. W. U. organizers were forced to organize an independent union. In Paterson the N. T. W. U. are forced to organize the warpers they have influence over, into an independent merger of different organizations and political tendencies into one political organization. One does form a united front on concrete issues relating to war and the overthrow of capitalism as temporary agreements in action.

On the other hand, the Marxists does not enter the united front for getting the ultimate demands. The revolutionists always has in mind the relation of the immediate demand to the ultimate demand. The proper connection of the two, distinguishes the revolutionist from the reformist.

(To be continued)
—HUGO OEHLER.

Sioux City except that many comrades have been expelled from the party.

General Conditions The noticeable thing about general conditions existing around this region is that there seems to be a general revival of industry as to the number of workers being employed. And secondly that the A. F. of L. appears to be making considerable gains. On the other hand, the party is absolutely floundering about not knowing what to do. Many bright opportunities exist for the Left Opposition in this territory. —GEO. J. PAPPUN.

Opportunism in N.Y. Food Union

The whole recent policy of the Stalinist leadership in the Food Workers Industrial Union constitutes a sharp zigzag to the right, which has resulted in great demoralization among the workers. It is hard to say whether this is a Left-wing or a Right-wing union, in the F.W.I.U. the 60-hour week with practice. In some shops organized wages as low as \$12 prevails.

Still more outstanding is the recent action in the strike at the Savarin Cafeteria at 7th Avenue and 36th Street, in the heart of the garment center, a Left-wing stamping ground. When the strike was called, the Daily Worker announced that all workers would join to smash the injunction, which had been the main weapon of the bosses. The strike lasted two weeks—nothing was accomplished.

At the last membership meeting of the F.W.I.U. comrade Kramberg, organizer, gave a lengthy report on the achievements of the union in recent weeks. He told about the gains in membership, and the settlements with various shops. He criticized the past "extreme revolutionary" policy of the union and quoted, with approval, what the bosses were saying, "You are good fighters but bad settlers." "They are right," he added, "we do not know how to accept a good opportunity for a settlement when we have one." He pointed out that one must take account of the crisis in making settlements, that of course one could not get as good terms as during the prosperity period. "This is how he justified accepting terms that were no better than those of the open shops.

A worker brought up on the floor the question of the Savarin settlement, and workers of that shop expressed their objections to the terms. These were: wages raised from 12-1-2 to 25 cents an hour, and only three hours daily, in other words, 75 cents a day. This is less than the reforestation camp wage scale! Three workers were to be taken on as extras under this scale, another was to be raised \$2 a week. Nothing whatever was done for the other workers who were left outside of the union, as there was no recognition of the shop committee or of the union. Nothing was said about the injunction of 1929 which still prevails, and can be used again should the F.W.I.U. attempt to reorganize the shop. On the basis of this injunction 18 workers were arrested during the strike, which lasted two weeks.

The following fact alone shows

The Savarin boss, taking advantage of the opportunity, has put up a sign in the window which is very tricky worded and reads, "The Strike Has Been Settled (With the Union)". This alone gives a black eye to the whole policy of the Stalinist leadership with its slogan of a "flexible policy", which is nothing but a Right-wing policy.

The only thing that made it possible for the leadership to act in this way was the fact that many militant workers have been discouraged, and have left or joined the A. F. of L. union. Those who remained have been terrorized by the threat of being thrown out of their shops and discriminated against. There are actual cases where this has happened.

This membership meeting, called to celebrate the "victories" recently gained, attracted an attendance of only 50 or 60 workers, which sufficiently proves the emptiness of the boasts of victory. The members are not even interested enough to show up.

The Right-wing poison has crept through the whole life of the union. At the cooperative camps, only the kitchen men are members of the F.W.I.U., and get \$15 a week. The others are so-called "voluntary" workers, not members of any union, and get only \$5 a week.

The situation in this union must be thoroughly exposed and cleared up in order to stop this degeneration.

—A FOOD WORKER.

Banks in 'Support' of N.I.R.A.

In the name of patriotism with the flag wrapped around themselves eleven large New York banks have issued a statement pledging help to the NRA by financing the production of goods. The statement says in part: "One of the principle functions of the banks is to finance the production and distribution of raw materials, food products and goods. Commercial loans made for these purposes are among the most desirable loans which a bank can make. Such loans should be granted, of course, only where the credit of the borrowers justifies it, and each loan must be considered on its own merits. We believe that in this manner the banks can and will be of the greatest help in assisting a successful issue the President's industrial recovery plan."

In other words, where safe and sound loans can be made on the financing of production, the bankers will give their undying support. The bankers, like the other sections of the large capitalists are in a mad scramble to pile up profits. The logical outcome of the NRA will be the accumulation of capital in fewer hands; with a lower standard of living and more misery for the working class. The patriotic action of the banks to help themselves is no different from the patriotic action of any band of robbers in any period of the history of class society.

CHICAGO PICNIC FRIENDS OF THE MILITANT CLUB Sunday, August 6, 1933 FOREST PRESERVE S Western and 87th Street South East Side Come and bring your friends along!

IN THE PARTY

Lydia Beidel Expelled from Chicago Dist.

The expulsion campaign of the Party in Chicago continues unabated. Starting with the recent expulsion of a half dozen Y. C. L.'ers there soon followed the expulsion of Albert Goldman. Now the latest expulsion is that of a comrade with years behind her in the Party.

(Note: All quotations used are accurate, being taken from a stenographic record of events at the meeting on July 6, 1933.) All the members in Section Seven Chicago were called together—to discuss. Beforehand nobody was told what would be discussed but the bureaucracy evidently had something new to blame on the membership.

A certain unfortunate party member, who had been a member even in the ancient and forgotten days when Lenin was alive, had begun to think on things in general and on Germany and Chicago in particular and had begun to doubt and had expressed these thoughts and doubts to some youths—who had been thereby inoculated with the virus of criticism. And so, this unfortunate party member had been told—deviously and also directly by all those who had power—that her days within the party were definitely numbered (to seven at the most).

Now this unfortunate comrade had once heard—but that was also in the ancient days when Lenin was still alive—about various mysterious concepts called democratic centralism, party democracy, Bolshevik self-criticism and freedom of discussion; and in her foolishness she hoped to invoke the law now in her hour of need, forgetting that all others who had also heard of these concepts and spoken in their name had been driven into exile. And so she thought of a plan.

Many times had their comrade seen what happened when those who thought tried to speak. So she put her thoughts on three long sheets of paper and made fifty copies of each sheet and put them into a briefcase and went to the meeting which was called to discuss.

All evening the bureaucracy flayed the membership, abusing them for everything done and undone, and being self-critical according to their lights. The Communist party was not functioning well; there was a four-year old crisis at hand and the party had not yet been able to make anything of it. By eleven o'clock it was clear to everyone that something was wrong; but, despite the loudness of the loud voices and the plainness of the denunciation of the membership by the bureaucracy, nobody knew exactly what was wrong.

Then the unfortunate comrade stood up with her briefcase before the membership of her section (of which she had once been organizer, and where she was well known as an active and competent agitator and organizer), she began to avail herself of the three minutes allotted to her to explain her differences with the bureaucracy, and to defend herself against her imminent expulsion. She very meekly suggested that maybe abuse of the membership would not help so much as an analysis of policies and tactics, and then made so bold as to mention Germany. From then on things happened fast.

"Germany is not under discussion. I move this comrade be forbidden to continue." This like machine-gun fire from one Ferguson, who for years had sat at the feet of Kuusinen and knows about many things including the invincibility of the party line. And in a grand reflex came the seconds from her benches.

"Very well," said the unfortunate comrade, "I expected this. So I wrote my speech and here it is." And she proceeded to pass out the three long sheets in fifty copies each. And it is amazing to record that the great political maneuverers there present lost fully three minutes before they could react and grasp the matter at hand.

At this point the atmosphere was rent by the piercing shriek of District Agitprop Director Shields. "What is this! Stop her, stop her! She's passing out a document!" And her valiant lieutenant Ferguson opened up and emitted, "Comrades, we forbid you to read this statement. It's a counter-revolutionary document. It is a platform against the party. Hand every copy up here to me. You are forbidden to read it." And the copies began forthwith to disappear from circulation although only three found their way to the desk of the bureaucracy.

Then stood up Agitprop Shields: "This comrade," she shrieked, "is expelled from the Communist party, and her statement is counter-revolutionary."

"But," said the unfortunate comrade from the back of the room, "You can't expel me and I was never told that anyone else had done it."

"Shut up!" said this leader of the revolutionary proletariat, "if you want to talk, go before the Control Committee and talk your head off, but the membership will not listen to your counter-revolutionary speeches."

Then stood up a new comrade, who seemed to be distressed, since he always had a very high opinion of the unfortunate comrade. "But I'd like to ask," he said, "why isn't the comrade allowed to express her opinion, even if it's wrong? I don't

seem to understand this, but maybe that's because I'm new in the party."

"This comrade cannot speak here. She has counter-revolutionary intentions. She is looking for an audience. Let her talk to the Secretariat; they'll settle her." It was the High-Priestess of democratic centralism and freedom of discussion, Agitprop Shields.

Another bewildered comrade spoke up: "If this comrade has been expelled from the party, why is she here? Why was she allowed into the meeting?" But the bureaucracy has never yet missed an answer. "Her unit organizer was not notified of her expulsion, and he invited her." Ferguson rose to the occasion this time but she failed to explain why the omniscient section bureaucracy itself was so lax about admitting expelled members. (It might be said, parenthetically, for the benefit of others who were party members while Lenin was still alive, that on other occasions, Section Organizer Ferguson, aided and abetted by District Agitprop Shields, summarily expelled members of the section at membership meetings.)

Came then some long-winded and highly intricate "enlightenment" on the German Situation and the United Front, which looked a great deal to the unfortunate comrade like an ideological hypodermic, especially when....

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" burst out the victimized membership. "The German party was not defeated."

And hurrah, hurrah. The ugly head of counter-revolution had been crushed in Section seven.

Thus ended the meeting that was called to discuss things.

Bosses Propose Starving Schools

The April 1933 issue of the American Teacher, official organ of the American Federation of Teachers in the A. F. of L. lists twenty recommendations for economy in education sent out by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce to all chambers of Commerce in the United States.

(4) Postponement of new capital outlay for buildings and replacements; (8) Shorten school day one hour; (9) Increase size of classes; (10) Increase teaching hours; (12) Suspend automatic increase of salaries; (13) Reduction in teachers salaries not to exceed 10 percent; (14) Shorten school year not to exceed 12 per cent; (15) Discontinue evening classes; (16) Discontinue kindergarten; (17) Reduce elementary school curriculums by consideration from eight to seven years; (18) Reduce high school curriculums by consolidation from four to three years; (19) Transfer one-third of cost of instruction above high school levels from taxpayer to pupil; (20) Impose a fee on high school students."

This program is already being carried out. In Ohio, California and other states the school year has been cut; in some states drastically. In New York City and elsewhere salaries have been cut; in some places more than once and more than ten per cent. New building is virtually at a standstill. Classes have been increased in size all over. Similarly with the other items in this bill of particulars.

It is clear at a glance that the burden of this economy will fall on the teachers and pupils. The teachers have already begun to struggle against it. The militant demonstrations in Chicago and the protests and activities of the Left wing in the Teachers Union in New York are laying the foundations for a teachers movement in the United States.

But the scope of the Chamber of Commerce economy proposals transcends the interests of the teachers as teachers. It is an integral part of the attack of the capitalist class on the working class. In New York City the backbone of the organized labor movement are the Building Trades. They have a direct and immediate interest in new school construction. Imposing fees on high school students increases the cost of living for the workers. Increase in the size of classes places hardships on the children.

Under capitalism labor struggles to assimilate the culture which science and the arts place at the disposal of society. The labor movement has to fight the poisonous ideology which the capitalists inculcate in working class children in the schools. In the United States labor has a stake in the preservation and extension of the free school system.

This economy move on the part of the capitalist class is a reactionary one. The teachers by themselves will not, cannot be successful in defeating it. The experience of the Chicago teachers proves this. They must ally themselves with the working class movement. The teachers movement must steer in this direction.

—T. STAMM.

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