



# All Out to Madison Square on May Day!

## Revolutionary Workers! March Under the Banner of the Communist League of America!

### May Day

**Important Notice!**  
League members and sympathizers mobilize on May Day at 126 East 16th Street at 11 A.M. sharp.

On May Day this year New York will witness the most imposing demonstration of the workers and the most tangible advances toward their united struggle against the common enemy that has been seen for many years. The participating workers' organizations will march together in a single parade and hold a common demonstration at Madison Square. The Communist League (International Communists) will march in the parade under its own banner and will be represented by its own speakers at the demonstration.

The idea that the political and economic organizations of the workers, regardless of their differences in principle, must form a united front of action against the class enemy—this idea, which was rejected with such fatal consequences in Germany, has brought a host of organizations together and governs their practice in carrying out all the arrangements of the united front May Day parade and demonstration. The no less important condition—that each organization shall preserve its own identity and march under its own banner—is likewise respected and observed by the participants.

These features of the demonstration signify a victory for the idea of the workers' united front and the beginning of its realization in action. For these reasons alone, the Communist League, which insistently fights for the united front of the workers' organizations, would be duty bound to take part in the work and actions of the May Day Labor Conference which culminates in the parade and demonstration on May Day. But there are other reasons of no less weight and importance which make the course we have taken mandatory upon us as Communists.

The Stalinist Party (C.P.) and the organizations under its control are conducting a separate parade and demonstration at the same hour. Thus, although the preponderant weight of forces is with the Labor Day Conference, a serious element of division remains in the workers' ranks. Such a division is not of our making. We stand for the united front of all the workers' organizations and will continue to fight for it in the future. Nevertheless, the division, and the holding of the demonstrations at the same hour, compel each organization, and each individual militant to make a choice.

We have made our choice in this matter with full deliberation, and our decision is not an isolated one, applicable only to a single occasion. It corresponds, rather, to the trend of developments in the labor movement. And this, in turn, determines the tactical course of the revolutionary Marxists.

#### MADISON SQUARE AND UNION SQUARE

The Stalinists, who reject the united front with all organizations not under their direct control, demand that the workers demonstrate on May Day only under Stalinist auspices. This ultimatum is repeated by their camp followers of various kinds in varying stages of confusion and demoralization.

The ultimatums of the Stalinists have no interest for us. We reject the "leadership" of these political hooligans and condemn them as a menace to the labor movement. But to the conscientious left wing workers, who may have the mistaken impression that the conflicting May Day demonstrations present a choice between Communism and reformism, we owe a frank explanation of the course we have taken. Our remarks on the question are addressed especially to them.

It is argued by the Stalinists and their camp followers that the parade and demonstration at Madison Square, organized by the Labor Conference, will be composed predominantly of the socialist political organizations and reformist trade unions while

the Union Square demonstration represents the revolutionary workers. The workers who want a united front of action and defense are called upon to choose between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. This ultimatum contains three propositions which have to be dealt with separately.

#### SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS

It is quite true that the Madison Square demonstration will be predominantly socialist and trade unionist and that these organizations have by far the main weight in the conference. But that is not a reason for communists to stay away from the demonstration. On the contrary, it is the duty of the communists to march with the socialist workers and the trade unionists and to raise the banner of communism in their midst. As long as the communists are permitted to march with their own banner and to be represented by their own speakers at the demonstration—and these rights have been expressly provided for all the participating organizations by the joint arrangements committee—they have no need and no right to present any other demands as a condition for united action. March separately, strike together—this is the fundamental basis for the united front of the workers.

We do not demand that the socialist workers leave their organizations as a condition for common action with us. We do not demand that they cease to be socialists in order to make a united front with communists. We do not demand that our "leadership" be recognized beforehand, and we do not repeat the insane gibberish about the "united front from below". It is such ultimatums, which the Stalinist bureaucrats are in the habit of laying down to the workers, which negate the very idea of the united front and make it impossible. We hope to convince the workers, in the course of common action, of the inadequacy of reformism and the necessity for revolutionary policy and leadership. But we do not demand that they be convinced of this in advance. Therein lies the fundamental difference between the Stalinist and the revolutionary communist conception of the united front.

#### WHO ARE THE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS?

The second false assumption in the ultimatum of the Stalinists and their ideological captives is the argument that the Union Square demonstration is a demonstration of "the revolutionary workers", that the Stalinist leaders are the representatives of Communism. This contention, false to the core, is especially repugnant today in the face of the cynical united front of Stalinism with world reaction in the hounding of the organizer of the Russian Revolution.

Many workers with the impulse to be revolutionaries will undoubtedly participate in the Stalinist demonstration. But Stalinism is a political current contributes nothing to the labor movement but ideological disorientation, demoralization and defeat. The Stalinist hooligans corrupt every principle of Communism and defile its very name. They always subordinate the interests of the working class to the special interests of a bureaucratic apparatus. The Stalinists disrupt and sabotage every attempt of the workers to unite their forces for a common fight against the class enemy. Stalinism is a poison in the veins of the labor movement, and its harmful influence derives precisely from the assumption by many workers that it represents Communism.

It is necessary to attack this illusion in deed as well as in word and to put the question as it really stands: Stalinism is a reactionary force in the labor movement of the whole world.

The Madison Square demonstration will be predominantly reformist in composition and leadership.

That is true. But it is no less true that the unfalsified doctrine of revolutionary internationalism will also be represented there this May Day, and only there. Not the banner of Stalinism, spotted with crimes and treacheries, but the banner of the International Communists—this is the banner of Communism. Every revolutionary worker ought to march behind it and no other.

#### PARTY MEETING OR UNITED FRONT?

The third fallacy in the ultimatum of the Stalinists and their apologetes consists in the posing of the question of a united front on May Day as a rivalry and conflict between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, and the demand that the workers choose between the two parties. "March with the Communist Party, not with the Socialist Party", is the formula of this ultimatum. For our part, if it is a question of party preference, we choose neither the C. P. nor the S. P. and follow neither. If the May Day meetings are to be construed simply as meetings of different parties then the revolutionary workers supporting the Communist League would have no choice but to abstain from both demonstrations and to organize their own, however small it might be.

But this is not how the question presents itself to us. Quite the contrary. General political meetings of the parties can be conducted apart from the demonstration under the auspices of the respective parties—the Communist League, for example, will hold its own meeting in the evening. But the demonstration and parade on May Day ought to represent a united front of all the parties and workers' organizations in a single demonstration against war and fascism and for the immediate needs of the workers.

It is precisely the inability of the Stalinists even to comprehend the question in this sense, their shopkeeper's conception of the special interest of their own party apparatus and their fear of "competition", that impelled them to organize the Union Square demonstration as a demonstration for the Communist Party. Their stubborn refusal to merge their party interest, for a single occasion on May Day of all days, with the general class interest condemns the demonstration to isolation as an affair of the C. P. and its auxiliaries, despite all the crooked ballyhoo about "unity" and the "united front".

And by the same token this policy of the Stalinists and the whole line of conduct flowing from it, not forgetting the Madison Square Garden affair,—this policy and conduct made it easy for the Socialist leaders, who are no more in favor of an all-inclusive fighting united front than the Stalinists, to counteract the pressure of their own members for a single united demonstration.

#### THE STAND OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

The fact that the Socialist leaders felt obliged to agree to joint action with every other group and organization except the Stalinists, to give up their original demand that the May Day Labor Conference be labeled as "Socialist and Labor", their agreement that all the participating organizations be represented with their banners at the head of the parade as well as on the arrangements committee and on the speakers' platform—all this is powerful testimony to the deep-rooted sentiments of the Socialist workers for a genuine united front.

The Communist League fought in the conference and arrangements committee for an invitation to the Stalinists, but without success. We also sent delegates to the Stalinist conference to propose that a direct approach be made to the May Day Labor Conference for a single demonstration. Our proposal was rejected with the usual barrage of epithets and slander. Nevertheless, it can be asserted, so pressing

is the need for unity and so powerful the sentiment of the rank and file workers for it, that if our proposal had been adopted and carried out honestly and consistently it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the Socialist leaders to refuse.

We shall continue to fight for this policy as we have fought consistently for it in the past. For years, as a faction working for the reform of the C. P., we continuously advocated the adoption by the party of the policy of the united front in the same sense that we present it today. The victory of fascism in Germany is directly due to the rejection by the Stalinist leadership of the united front with the Social Democracy and the reformist trade unions which the Left Opposition insistently demanded. The weakness and disorganization of the working class movement in this country, after four and one-half years of the unprecedented crisis, is in large part also the result of the same fatal mistakes, systematically repeated.

Breaking with the Comintern because of its obvious and irremediable bankruptcy, and taking the path toward new parties and the Fourth International, the International Communists (formerly the Left Opposition) in no way alter or modify the principles, strategy and tactics with regard to the broad labor movement which they formerly proposed for the adoption of the official Communist Parties. The only difference is, that we carry out in practice now, as a completely independent organization, the tactics which we previously recommended to the C. P. This is the meaning of our decision to participate in the Madison Square demonstration and parade with the Socialist Party, the trade unions and other political groups and tendencies.

#### THE ROAD TO THE UNITED FRONT

The parade and demonstration organized by the May Day Labor Conference, lacking the inclusion of the Stalinist organizations, is obviously not a complete united front and should not be represented as such. But this is not reason to abstain from participation. After all the divisions and demoralization it is utopian to expect that the idea of the united front will take hold everywhere with the same force and that it can be realized organizationally overnight.

The building of the united front of the workers is a process. This process involves agitation for the idea, experiments in cooperation and tests in action. Including all the tendencies of the more or less progressive section of the labor movement, with the single exception of the Stalinists and their satellites, the May Day Labor Conference represents a tremendous step forward. From this point of view it must be hailed and supported by the revolutionary workers. At the same time efforts must be made to broaden out its composition and extend it to other fields of activity in the class struggle.

Needless to say, our participation at Madison Square does not imply in any way the slightest reconciliation with the Socialist Party. The united front of action on concrete questions does not signify political collaboration. No blurring of principle issues. No mixing of banners.

Our principle differences with social reformism remain. We shall fight them out to the end. Not by lies and slander, not by hooligan violence, but through argument and example we shall endeavor to convince the Socialist workers of the necessity of a revolutionary policy and leadership. In intransigent principled struggle against social reformism we shall work for the new party and the new international.

Meantime, now as always, we shall stand for the united front in concrete struggles of the day with the Socialist workers through the medium of their chosen organizations.

—JAMES P. CANNON.

## LENIN'S MAY DAY APPEAL TO THE RUSSIAN WORKERS

This May Day leaflet of the League for the Struggle for the Emancipation of the Workingclass was written by Comrade Lenin in prison in the year 1896, and was distributed among the Petersburg workers in forty factories to the then tremendous amount of 2,000 copies.

"In preparing and distributing this leaflet we felt that we were accomplishing a great revolutionary act. A month and half later there developed the great strike of the spinners and weavers that began and grew precisely under the influence of the May Day leaflet and only waited for the occasion to go forward in more active form. This strike showed to us and to the whole world that our feelings had not betrayed us. The strike began precisely in those places where accidentally our leaflets had been particularly well distributed." B. Gorow-Goldmann. "Out of the Party Past."

#### COMRADES!

Let us consider our position very carefully—let us examine the conditions in which we spend our lives.

What do we see? We work long and hard. We produce endless wealth, gold and apparel, satins and silks. From the depths of the earth we extract iron and coal. We build machines, we outfit ships, we construct railroads. All the wealth of the world is the product of our hands, of our sweat and blood. And what kind of wages do we get for this forced labor? If things were as they should be, we would be living in fine houses, we would wear good clothes, and would never have to suffer any need. But we know well enough that our wages never suffice for our living. Our bosses push down wages, force us to work overtime, place unjust fines upon us—in a word oppress us in every way. And then when we give voice to our dissatisfaction, we are thrown into prison without further ado.

We have convinced ourselves only too often that all those to whom we turn for help are the servants and the friends of the bosses. They keep us ignorant so that we should not dare to fight for an improvement of our conditions. They keep

us in slavery, they arrest and imprison every one who shows any signs of resistance against the oppressors—we are forbidden to struggle. Ignorance and slavery—these are the means thru which the capitalists and the government that serves them oppress us.

How can we then improve our conditions, raise our wages, shorten the working day, protect ourselves from insults, win for ourselves the opportunity of reading good books? Everybody is against us—and the better off these gentlemen are, the worse off we are! We can expect nothing from them, we can rely only upon ourselves. Our strength lies in unity, our method is the united stubborn resistance against the bosses. Our masters realize of course in what our strength lies and they try in every way to divide us and to hide the identity of interests of all workers.

But it's a long road that has not turning—and even the best of patience comes to an end. In the past few years the Russian workers have shown their masters that the cowardice of slaves has changed into

the courageous sturdiness of men, who refuse to submit to the greed of the capitalists. A whole series of strikes has swept thru various Russian cities. Most of these strikes ended successfully, especially in that they threw the bosses into terror and forced them into concessions. They showed that we were no longer cowardly paupers but that we had taken up the struggle.

As is well known the workers of many shops and factories have organized the League for the Struggle for the Emancipation of the Workingclass with the aim of exposing and removing all abuses, of struggling against the shameful oppressions and swindles of our consciousness exploiters. The League distributes leaflets at the sight of which the hearts of the bosses and their servants, the police, tremble. They are not frightened by these leaflets—they are terrified at the possibility of our united resistance, the sign of our great power that we have already manifested more than once. We, Petersburg workers, members of the League, call upon all the rest of our comrades to join

the League and co-operate in the great task of unifying the working class in the struggle for their interests. It's time that we Russian workers smashed the chains that the bosses and the government have placed upon us. It is time that we joined our fellow workers of other lands in the struggle—under a common flag bearing the words: "Workers of all countries, unite!"

In France, England, Germany and other lands where the workers have already closed their ranks and won important rights, the First of May is a general holiday of all labor.

The workers leave the dark factories and parade the main streets in well-ordered lines with flags and music. They show their masters their power grown strong and join in numerous crowded assemblies to listen to speeches in which the victories achieved over the bosses are recounted and the plans for future struggles are developed.

Because they are afraid of strikes no individual boss dare fine or punish the workers who are absent from work on this day. On this day the workers also find their chief demand in the teeth of the bosses: "Eight-hour day." In other coun-

tries the workers are already proclaiming this. There was a time—and not so long ago—when they also didn't have the right to give voice to our needs, when they were in such slavery as we are in now. But thru relentless struggle and heavy sacrifice they have won the right to take up collectively the affairs of labor. Let us wish our brothers that their struggle soon lead to the desired goal, to a society in which there will be no masters and no slaves, no capitalists and no wage workers, but all will work together and all will enjoy the good things of life together.

Comrades, if we fight unitedly and together, then the time is not far off when we too will be in a position openly to join the common struggle of the workers of all lands, without distinction of race or creed, against the capitalists of the whole world. Our strong arm will rise and the chains of slavery will fall. The toilers of Russia will arise and terror will strike the hearts of the capitalists and of all other enemies of the workingclass.

LEAGUE FOR THE STRUGGLE FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKING CLASS. Petersburg, May 1, 1896

#### Result of False Policies

The result of these policies was, as could have been and was again and again foretold, the victory of black reaction and, worse than that, the ignominious capitulation, without any struggle, of the powerful German labor movement. For this defeat, for the tortures, humiliations, exiles and death sentences heaped on the German working class, the treachery of the Social Democracy and the criminal blunderings of Stalinism bear the blame.

Refusing to learn by the bitter experiences of Germany the leadership of the Austrian Social Democracy followed the same treacherous and cowardly course, until the wrath of the aroused working class forced action. It was then too late for a victorious battle. But to the everlasting credit of the Austrian proletariat, they went down fighting, fighting heroically, men and women side by side, and by their action awakened again the militant spirit of the workers throughout the world.

The French Fascists in their (Continued on Page 4)

# May Day Mass Meeting

Madison Square and Union Square—Why Two May Day Demonstrations?  
Who Is Responsible for the Division of Forces?  
What Is the Road to the United Front?

IRVING PLAZA HALL (GRAND BALLROOM)  
15th St. and Irving Place  
Tuesday May 1st - 8p.m.

Speakers:  
J.P. Cannon - A. Swaback  
Carl Cowl - Geo. Clarke - Reva Craine