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"THE UNITED FRONT"

"The Way of the 'United Front' leads to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

Radek (1922)

"The tactics of the 'United Front' is only a method for agitation and the revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat for considerable periods. The tactics of the 'United Front' were, and remain, a revolutionary, and not a peaceful and evolutionary method."

"Communist Thesis on Tactics." (1925)

"The determining factor is that the tactics of the 'United Front' must always be pursued in a Bolshevik manner."

"Report of the XIII Plenum of the
Communist International." (1933)

"The Communist Parties must, in reliance upon the growing urge of the workers for a unification of the Social Democratic Parties, or of individual organisations, with Communist Parties, firmly and confidently take the initiative in this unification. The cause of amalgamating the forces of the working-class in a single revolutionary proletarian party, at the time when the International Labour Movement is entering the period of closing the split in its ranks, IS OUR CAUSE, is the cause of the Communist International."

"There are wiseacres who will sense in all this ('The United Front') a digression from our basic position, some sort of turn to the Right of the straight line of Bolshevism. Well, in my country, Bulgaria, they say that a hungry chicken always dreams of millet." (Laughter, loud applause.)

"Let those political chickens think so!" (Laughter, loud applause.)

"We want all this because only in this way will the working-class at the head of all the toilers, welded into a million-strong revolutionary army, led by the Communist International, and possessed of so great and wise a pilot as our leader Comrade Stalin, be able to fulfil its historical mission...."

(Extracts from Speech by Dimitrov as reported
in "The Communist International," No. 17-18,
September 20th, 1935.)

"Only downright scoundrels can assert that in fighting for the unity of the working-class, the Communist International is obscuring the fundamental differences that divide the Communists from the Social-Democrats...

"It would be sheer madness to obscure these disagreements..."

"Only hopeless idiots can think that by helping the Social-Democratic workers to come over to the position of the class struggle by means of the 'United Front' tactics we are facilitating the capitulation of Communism to Social-Democracy."

(Extracts from Report of Manuilsky on
"The Results of the Seventh Congress of the
Communist International" published in
"The Communist International" for November,
1935, pages 1058-1059.)

"THE UNITED FRONT"

"If the Socialist leaders refuse to make a united front, the Communists will appeal to the national parties of the Second International, and if they refuse, then to the local organisations, and, if they in their turn refuse, then to the members of the Social-Democratic organisations, and will establish the united front over the heads of the Social-Democratic leaders. This, in turn, will not fail to compel some of the obstinate Social-Democratic Party officials to give up their policy of openly breaking the united front. Thus the workers will be shown in actual practice that only the revolutionary road of struggle leads to victory."

"Connected with the question of the united front, there is the QUESTION OF TRADE UNION UNITY. Our Red trade-unions are fighting for unity and meeting with stubborn resistance....

If the trade unions unite, the revolutionary workers will have an opportunity of fighting inside them for their own proposals."

(Extract from "Some Problems of the Present International Situation (Part II)" by O. Piatnitsky, Page 621, The Communist International, Vol.XII, No.13, July 5th, 1935.)

France

"As a result of the municipal elections, the Communists obtained a majority in 52 new municipalities, losing the majority in 9 municipalities out of a total of 47. The Communist Party of France now has a majority in 90 municipalities (the Socialists in 168 instead of 175 as formerly). In the Seine department the number of municipalities led by Communists has increased from 9 to 26. In the Seine and Oise districts, the Communists obtained a majority in the municipalities of over 20 industrial towns. In the North and the Pas de Calais region, the number of municipalities won by the Communists increase from 17 to 50. In the Paris municipality the Communists were only represented by Comrade Marty previously whereas now the Communist Party of France has secured the election of eight comrades."

"No less important was the victory of the Communists at the Canton elections in the Paris region. Hitherto the Communist Party of France has had four councillors in the Paris region; now it has 25. Together with the eight Paris councillors, the Communist Party of France now has 33 representatives out of 140 in the General Council of the department of the Seine (this General Council is composed of 90 councillors of the Paris municipality, and 50 councillors elected in the areas around Paris.)

The results of the elections testify to the success and the increasing influence of the Communist Party over the masses.

Thanks to the work of the Communists in conducting the united front, broad masses are now aware that the Communist Party is not only fighting actively against Fascism and war and for democratic liberties, but that it is heading this struggle."

(Extracts from "Practical Experience of the Struggle of the Communists for the United Front (Part I)" by O. Piatnitsky, Page 642, The Communist International, Vol XII, No.14, July 20th, 1935.)

Great Britain

"From the beginning of 1932, with the assistance of the Comintern, we changed this policy. We worked to conquer the lower organs of the unions for a militant policy; we worked to associate the militant branches within a given union and with the Shop Stewards' organisation in pursuit of a common policy, and we immediately began to get a measure of success. We have in a number of unions developed rank-and-file movements and there are important differences between these rank-and-file movements and the old Minority Movement or opposition movement which we were trying to develop previously. The Minority Movement was constructed, for example, in such a way that it appeared as a body outside the trade unions, dictating to the trade unions as to what they had to do. But the new rank-and-file movement is a grouping of militant branches and shop-stewards springing out of the growing life of the unions themselves and expressing all the militant and progressive tendencies of the rank-and-file. The old Minority Movement, and this applies to opposition groups in many countries, was a movement of close communist sympathisers, many of them people who ought to have been in the Party if they had been prepared to accept Party discipline. It repeated not only all that the Party said on questions of immediate demands, but it repeated all the Party said on the seizure of power, of a revolutionary workers' government, and so on.

The new rank-and-file movement is a broader movement of the workers; it embraces the workers willing to fight for immediate demands that will carry the struggle forward and express the needs of the workers. Further, the Rank-and-File Movements are better adapted to the level of development of the various sections of the workers. They do not start out as the old Minority Movement did, with the presupposition that the workers of all industries have reached the same level of development and the same type of programme will do for them all. The rank-and-file movement is more flexible; it could adapt itself to the actual level of the workers, which, in a given situation, varies from industry to industry. The old Minority Movement also had an apparatus outside the trade union movement and appeared as an alternative apparatus to that of the unions. This enabled the officials to raise the question of loyalty and discipline and to ask "to which apparatus are you loyal, to the one you have elected inside the union, or the one which is set up outside the union." This made it easier for the bureaucracy to isolate the militant workers inside the unions. It is not so easy with the rank-and-file movements, because they grow up from within the unions and cannot be open to the same charge and can defend themselves against expulsion tactics in a way that rallies a greater amount of support than the old form of opposition movement could."

"But a still more notable feature of a flexible Left Wing movement is the development of proper work by the Party fraction. In the old Minority Movement, the Party trade union leadership consisted of a special group of Party comrades who specialised in trade union work, who tended to live somewhat apart from the general political life of the Party, to develop tendencies toward trade union specialism.

And many Party members did not regard it as being their duty to gather the militant forces within the trade union movement and lead them forward to the development of the struggle. Now we must have the conception that the entire membership of the Party within a given industry must be mobilised in the Party fraction, organised in the factory cells, organised in the branch fractions, in contact as individuals with the sub-District fraction leadership, with the District fraction leadership, with the National leadership, so that in every phase of our trade union work the central responsibility for leading our trade union fractions is not a group of specialised comrades, but the leading organs of the Party, the Central Committee, and the districts, the sub-districts, etc., working through the fractions as instruments for carrying out that leadership within the rank-and-file movements and within the trade unions."

"We see the prospects for the development of a broad Left militant movement within the reformist movement, under the leadership of our Party, as being exceptionally good and as being exceptionally important in the period that lies immediately before us.

Now, a word on the state of our Party. Our Party has increased its membership by 33 per cent. since the beginning of this year. That is a fairly good advance as far as our Party is concerned. We have 3,200 members who work actively in the reformist trade unions; we have, according to the figures before me, 448 Party members who hold trade union office of some kind in the reformist unions in all the districts outside London. The London figures are not available in this report that I have, but, on my own knowledge of the London district, I should say that the inclusion of the London district in those figures would show that at least 600 of our Party members are holding trade union office of some kind, either in the branches, the district committees, and, in one or two exceptional cases, in the executives of the reformist trade unions in Great Britain. And yet our membership in Great Britain continues to be very small. Our total membership is only 7,700 - a membership that is not only altogether inadequate to our tasks, but is altogether an inadequate expression of the influence we have already won in sections of the British working class movement."

(Extracts from Speech by Campbell, Pages 802 and 803, The Communist International, Vol XII, No. 16, August 20th, 1935.)
7th World Congress, C.I.