



**Working Class**

**U N I T Y**

**OR**

**FASCISM**

**?**

**BY**

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## Working-Class Unity or Fascism?

By I. AMTER

THE enemies of the working class are mobilizing and uniting their forces against the workers. Never before did the workers and exploited sections of the American population face a more urgent situation. The attacks are growing. The conditions of the workers are being lowered, unemployment continues at a high figure, the menace of fascism and war daily becomes greater.

Every worker today feels the need of *unity*. He feels the necessity of adding to his own force that of the entire working class. The workers speak for unity. The only question is, *What do they mean by unity?*

Millions of workers seriously placed their hopes in the National Recovery Act. They were told by Roosevelt that their buying power would be increased, wages would rise, unemployment and social insurance would be granted and, best of all, all the workers would have a right to organize, a right that would be recognized by the United States government. The leaders of the American Federation of Labor, led by William Green, declared that "a new day had dawned" for the American workers. Carried away by a false analysis of the N.R.A., Norman Thomas and Morris Hillquit, leaders of the Socialist Party, pronounced the N.R.A. "a step in the direction of Socialism." Reactionaries today who are fighting the N.R.A. still call it "socialistic."

### N.R.A. Has Collapsed

Today, however, the N.R.A. stands before us as a *huge fraud*. Instead of the workers having a right to organize freely into unions of their own choosing, they are being pressed into

*company unions*. Instead of having the right to strike and picket, they are being herded into jails on the basis of *injunctions*, *police attacks* and *vigilante terror*. As a result of the workers' eyes being opened, Green declared that the N.R.A. meant fascism, even though a few weeks later he again gave his support to the N.R.A. The Socialist Party, at its Detroit convention last year, in face of the false analyses that were made by the Socialist Party, had to declare quite definitely that the "National Industrial Recovery Act is not a step in the direction of socialism." Nothing was a sharper criticism of the whole false analysis of the Socialist Party leaders than this statement by the Detroit convention.

### Workers' Conditions Getting Worse

Perhaps never before were the workers in a worse situation than they are in today. At least in a decade they did not face such well organized enemies, determined to drive down their conditions. Seventeen million workers remain unemployed, but more than half of them are receiving no relief whatever. The exposure of conditions in New York City, according to the report of the New York Unemployment Relief Committee of LaGuardia, is typical of the whole country. Meagre relief, sales taxes out of the pockets of the workers to provide relief, hundreds of thousands denied relief—it is obvious that the mass of unemployed face no future of hope. Young workers, single workers denied relief except insofar as they are thrown into the semi-military C.C.C. camps. Foreign-born workers who henceforth will receive no relief whatever, even though they have been instrumental in building up the wealth of the United States. But above all, the Negro workers who are denied relief, subjected to persecution, and every kind of torture.

Wages today are lower than they were at the beginning of the "New Deal". Now facing the Roosevelt standard of \$50 a month to be applied on the relief jobs, wages will be cut still more. The cost of living today has mounted tremendously. Food costs 34 per cent more than it did in 1933, which results in a

cutting down of the food purchases of the working class family. No wonder therefore that 20 per cent of the children of the United States are undernourished. No wonder that the vitality of the working class population is being undermined. No wonder that the workers are being compelled to live in condemned tenements, fire-traps, which in 1934 resulted in the death by fire of 136 persons in New York City.

#### Government Subsidies to Rich

At the same time the government continues to heap subsidies and grants upon the big corporations of this country. Under the so-called Works Relief Bill the federal government will build gradings and road crossings at no expense to the railroads. Roosevelt contemplates subsidies of hundreds of millions of dollars to the shipping concerns. With profits that have risen to 150 per cent while the wages are still 63 per cent of what they were in 1926, the bosses of the country have been made bolder and have openly organized their fascist organizations to smash the workers' organizations. Not only in California, New Mexico and the far west, but in all parts of the country efforts have been made to break up the workers' organizations. Criminal syndicalism laws and other anti-labor bills have been adopted in four states, and have been proposed in fourteen more. Deportation threatens every militant foreign-born worker. The unions face more brutal attacks. *Although these laws are directed against the Communists, the purpose of them as in all capitalist countries, is to smash the most militant working class organizations while paving the way for destroying all the others, as in Germany, Austria, Italy.*

#### Fascism Raises Its Head

Vicious enemies of the working class are trying to bolster up the N.R.A. and the declining belief of the workers in the system under which we live. Father Coughlin, Huey Long, demagogic critics of the "New Deal", bring forward their program of fascism. William Randolph Hearst, seller of fascist ideas, uses

his fascist press to mobilize all fascist forces in the United States. He is carrying on a vicious campaign not only against the Communists and the Soviet Union but against every militant A. F. of L. union fighting in the interests of the workers. The American Liberty League, the American Legion officials, the K.K.K., Silver Shirts, etc., are doing everything in their power to destroy working class rights and help enslave the workers still more. No terror is too great,—lynching of the Negroes, persecution of the white workers, deportation of the foreign-born, starvation of the unemployed, child labor, in order that profits may rise. That is their program.

At the same time the preparations for war go on unrestrained. The mad plans of Hitler Germany will not and cannot be ended by any Stresa Conference. Such conferences can only act as a restraint, but with full preparations being made by every imperialist country, with war now going on in several parts of the world, with mobilization taking place against the Soviet Union, no one can tell when a world war will break out.

This is the situation that faces every industrial and white-collar worker, professional and poor farmer in the United States. This is the situation that demands *united action on the part of all those who are ready to fight.*

In the State of New York it is no better. With similar demagoguery, Governor Lehman, leader of the Democratic Party, with the support of the Republicans, has attacked the living conditions of the workers. Mayor LaGuardia, even more demagogic than Roosevelt, and his Fusion Administration in New York City, in spite of the election promises, has brought the City to the position that one-third of the population is in need of relief.

The workers of New York and of the country fell for this demagoguery. They could not understand that in the promises of Roosevelt, Lehman and LaGuardia there could be such treachery. *They accepted their promises at face value only later to have their eyes opened.*

#### Communists Correct on N.R.A.

Only the Communists correctly analyzed the N.R.A. Even while the N.R.A. was being heralded throughout the country as a "reform" of American capitalism that would bring about "recovery" and a "better distribution of wealth," the Communists declared that it was step in the direction of fascism, in preparation for another war.

The Communists were not believed. They were called too "radical." The workers decided to try out the "New Deal." They have tried it out, and today they know that what the Communists said was correct.

How shall we handle this situation? How will the workers be able to organize and obtain higher wages and better conditions? How will the unemployed on the relief jobs be able to force the government to grant them union wages? How will the workers be able to build their organizations to carry on struggle for their rights—rights that they have gained through decades of struggle in the United States?

#### Workers Have Conducted Struggles

The workers have fought. Millions of workers have gone out on strike, *in spite* of the N.R.A., *against* the N.R.A. Not only the workers that were organized before the N.R.A., but new groups of workers, workers in industries that before were almost completely unorganized, organized and went into the struggle. What was most remarkable about these struggles and particularly in the last year and a half—has been their *outstanding militancy*. Another outstanding feature has been *the drive of the workers to build united ranks excluding no one*. This is a natural instinct of the worker. Facing the whole machinery of the bosses and the government, from the police, through the courts with their injunctions, to the National Guard and the U.S. Army, in addition to the gangs of thugs and fascists who have been lined up with these forces, the workers feel weak unless they unite their forces.

As remarkable instances of these moves toward unity were the strikes in Toledo, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, San Francisco and New York. In spite of all the efforts that were made to break up their unity by the use of the "Red" scare, of terror, the workers carried on a splendid fight.

#### Workers Want United Front

Everybody today favors the united front. The question is, What is the united front? *The united front is the unity of all workers, irrespective of their political, religious, or national point of view, on certain concrete issues*. Surely today every worker, whether employed or unemployed, no matter what his nationality, religion or politics may be, wants unemployment and social insurance. We may differ as to the particular bill or proposal. Nevertheless, every worker feels the need of protection through unemployment and social insurance. Shall we weaken the struggle for genuine unemployment and social insurance by excluding certain groups of workers? To exclude one group would lead to the exclusion of other groups. This cannot but lead to dissension and confusion within the united ranks and to struggle that will break up the unity.

The workers certainly want to fight for the right to organize into bona fide trade unions. The elimination of one group can only bring disunity, making even more difficult the achievement of the right to organize into such unions. The workers want to fight against fascism and war. Cannot a Republican worker fight as well as a Socialist worker, a Methodist as well as a Catholic or Jewish worker? Cannot a Hungarian, British or Irish worker fight as well as an American worker? Cannot a Negro fight as well as a white worker?

#### United Front Must Admit All Workers

The Communists declare that the united front should admit *all workers and all workers' organizations*. Only in this way can the real force of the working class be mobilized to carry on a



real struggle. The Socialists declare that they will not make a united front with the Communists because they wish to build the united front with the trade unions. We ask, Who are in the trade unions? Are the trade unions the union leaders? Are the unions composed only of conservative and reactionary workers? Are there not Communists and militant workers in all the unions? Is it not a fact that the strikes and unemployment struggles of the last year have proven that the workers are militant and more and more are accepting the proposals laid down by the Communists, whether there are Communists in the unions or not?

The Socialists further declare that if the united front is to be formed with the A. F. of L., they, the Socialists, can have nothing to do with "dual" unions. It is unnecessary here to go into a discussion as to why the militant industrial unions, which the socialists and reformists call "dual" unions, were formed. In many industries the so-called "dual" unions were the only functioning unions. However, owing to the situation that is developing under the N.R.A. and the streaming of millions of workers into the A. F. of L., the Communists have changed their tactics and are organizing as far as possible the workers into the A. F. of L.

#### Militant Policies Needed

The policy of the Communists in the unions and among the unemployed is not that of the reformists and reactionaries. The workers have recognized through long years of experience and particularly under the N.R.A. that they must have *militant* policies in the unions built on the basis of militant action, militant mass picket lines. They recognize that only when there is *real democracy* in the union, the *right of full discussion*, and *rank-and-file control* of all activities of the union, can the union be a real union, and serve the interests of the workers.

There can be *no* class peace with the bosses. The interests of the bosses are *not* the interests of the workers. The bosses want profits. The workers want higher wages and better conditions.

The bosses want company control. The workers recognize that *they* must get control. There can be no harmony between these two positions, and it is the fight between these two positions that Communists call the class struggle.

Is this policy only in the interests of the Communists and militant workers? Do not Socialist and all other workers recognize that this is a policy in the interests of the whole working class?

#### Reactionary Leaders of A. F. of L. Have Betrayed Workers

If Socialist leaders prefer to work with the leaders of the A. F. of L., that is their affair. Certainly the reactionary leaders of the A. F. of L. have shown in their position toward the N. R. A., in the adoption of conditions in textile, auto, steel, rubber, etc., that they are ready to make compromise after compromise. They have shown in the so-called adjustments in the auto and rubber industries that they are ready even to recognize company unions, as they actually have done.

Do the workers in these unions, Socialists, Democrats, Republicans, Communists, want such compromises? Of course not. Every sincere worker belonging to a union must recognize that the proposals of the Communists are correct proposals. Therefore the proposal of the Communists for a united front irrespective of political, religious or national position, is a correct one and we are convinced that the Socialist workers approve such a proposal.

#### Socialist Leaders Do Not Favor United Front

The "old guard" Socialists are against the united front with Communists on principle. They have every reason to do so, since the "old guard" leaders, since the world war and before, have compromised the principles for which they pretend to stand. When today we witness a member of the City Committee of the Socialist Party of New York, Hyman Nemser, as the lawyer of a racketeer union; when we witness an editorial writer of the Jewish Daily Forward, Harry Lang, writing slanderous,

lying articles in the fascist Hearst press against the Soviet Union, then one can see how far the "old guard" leaders will go in lining up not in defense of the workers, but side by side with those who attack the workers.

The "militant" National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party pretends to be in favor of the united front with the Communists, but has not dared to take the steps to bring it about. They declare this is a matter that must be left to the next national convention of the Socialist Party, while at the same time they allow the state organizations of the Socialist Party to enter into the united front.

#### International Experience Favors United Front

Certainly the experiences of the International show that the united front is possible. In France the united front has extended and officially was approved once more at the conference of the French Socialist Party on March 2nd. This united front has built a *mighty wall against fascism* in France. It has helped bring workers together in the struggle for their rights. It is a united front that has helped raise the hopes of workers in every capitalist country that unity may be achieved.

There are Socialist leaders in the United States who dare to declare that the united front in France is based on the Soviet Union's foreign policy,—that the Soviet government has formed "an alliance" with the French government against war and that therefore the Communist International has compromised on the united front in France. This is a *bare-faced lie*. The same united front against fascism and war has been proposed by the Communists in every capitalist country. Only a few weeks ago the Communist International again made an appeal to the Socialist and Labor International to form the united front on an international scale against fascism and war.

In Austria the united front has been formed against fascism. In Spain *on the barricades*, Socialist, Communist, Syndicalist and anarchist workers fought against fascism. In Italy, under Mus-

solini's fascism, the united front has been formed. Also in the United States, in various parts of the country the united front has been formed.

#### Basic Programs Not Abandoned

Have the representatives of any parties that form the united front given up their basic principles? Have they been asked to do so? Of course not. The Communist Party has its program leading to the overthrow of capitalism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The Communist Party in fighting for this program fights for the daily needs of the workers, for unity in the ranks of the workers. The Socialist Party has its program, a program unlike that of the Communist Party, a program, however, that it fights for. In the united front do the Communists demand that the workers accept the full Communist program? This would be absurd, for workers who accept this program would join the Communist Party and there would be no need of a united front. Would the Socialist Party require the workers who joined the united front to accept the full Socialist program? They would not. Does the united front prevent the Socialist Party from propagating its whole program showing the workers the path that they, the Socialists, believe the workers must follow if they are to free themselves from capitalism? Of course not. This same right belongs to every group *on condition that all groups involved in the united front accept the united front and carry on the struggle on the issues and along the line agreed upon when the united front is formed.*

#### Why Do Socialist Leaders Fear the United Front

Then what fear have the Socialist leaders of the united front with the Communist Party? Are they afraid that the workers will not accept their, the Socialists', program if the Communist Party brings forward its program? Are they afraid that they will not recruit into their Party if the Communists speak to the workers? This then shows a fear and a disbelief in their own program.

The Communists declare that there are class-conscious work-

ers following the Socialist Party, workers who believe that Socialism can be accomplished along the lines laid down in the Socialist program. The Communists declare that the united front can best be strengthened if all the class-conscious workers are united and through their unity draw the politically less developed workers into their fighting ranks. If the class-conscious workers, both Socialist and Communist, cannot agree on a line of action on a concrete situation, on concrete issues, then surely today it would be difficult to unite the whole working class.

#### **Socialist and Communist Workers Want the United Front**

But the class-conscious workers, both Socialist and Communist, *do* want to unite on concrete issues. In every city in the United States they have shown this, on the picket line, in the struggle for unemployment relief and insurance, for the Scottsboro boys, for Tom Mooney, in the struggle against war. Everywhere they have proven that Socialists, Democrats, Communists, Republicans, Catholics, Methodists, Jews, Negroes, white, native and foreign-born workers, men and women, can unite.

What then keeps them apart? There is only one reason for the disunity of the working class. This is not the terror of the bosses and interference of the government. This terror and interference can have only one effect and that is to drive the workers into ever closer unity. The reason is that *leaders whom the workers still trust, in the American Federation of Labor and other organizations, carry on a malicious campaign against the united front and against the Communists for the purpose of keeping the workers split.*

Several times already the Communist Party of the U.S.A. has proposed the united front to the Socialist Party. On numerous occasions the District Committee of the Communist Party of New York has proposed the united front both to the State and the City Committee of the Socialist Party of New York. These united front proposals have been rejected or ignored. The most recent proposals for the united front for May Day, sent by

Comrade Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party, to the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party and to Norman Thomas personally; the offers of the District Committee of the Communist Party of New York to the local Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of New York, have been in the first case rejected and in the latter case ignored.

#### **Why Not One United May Day?**

*Would not one united May Day in the United States have been a tremendous victory for the whole working class? Would not this united front of the Socialist Party and all Socialist-controlled and influenced organizations together with the Communist Party and the militant organizations under its influence have drawn hundreds, nay thousands, of A. F. of L. locals and masses of unorganized workers into gigantic demonstrations in every city and town in the country! Would this not have been a brilliant step forward in the unity of the working class, in fighting for its rights on International Labor Day, and a warning to the bosses that the workers no longer will allow themselves to be split up, but are fighting in united ranks!*

This has not been achieved for May Day in all parts of the country, but the united front *must* and *will* be achieved. The Socialist workers have a tremendous task in building this united front. We Communists recognize that you still have faith in the Socialist Party and its leadership. Many of you hope that the Socialist Party will turn more to the left and become, as you trust, the leading working-class party in the United States. You hope that through your pressure you will be able to compel your leaders to change their position. We support your desire to exert this pressure, even though we know that many of your leaders will change their position *in words, although not in fact*, when they see how the masses are moving. Did they not do so in regard to the N.R.A.? But we Communists declare that if your leaders will not be moved, then this will clearly expose their position and you Socialist workers must draw the conclusions.

### Let Us Build the United Front

Therefore, Socialist workers: In the interest of what you declare you stand for, we appeal to you to help us build the united front that is necessary today. The issues are clear, they can no longer be evaded. *We must fight unitedly if we wish to prevent the establishment of fascism in the United States. If this unity is not built, then as in Germany, Austria and Italy, one by one all our organizations will be smashed and we will suffer the horrors of fascism here in the United States.*

What must we do, we Communist and Socialist workers? In the unions and shops we must *unitedly* build the united front, Socialist and Communist workers together, drawing in all the workers in the shop in the struggle for higher wages, better conditions. In the unions we must struggle together to make the unions *militant unions, democratic unions, rank-and-file controlled unions, fighting unions* of the workers, helping to organize all the workers through the unions. Among the unemployed organizations we must build the united front in the struggle for union wages on relief jobs, for unemployment relief, for unity of employed and unemployed, for *genuine unemployment and social insurance, for H.R. 2827*. In the struggle against fascism and war, we must build *one powerful organization embracing all working-class organizations* fighting unitedly in the interests of us all.

The Socialist Party declares it stands for Socialism. The Communist Party stands and **FIGHTS** for Socialism, the Socialism we are building in the Soviet Union. We are fighting for the rule of the working class, that rule which today in the Soviet Union stands as a mighty beacon light for the workers all over the world, that country of the working class that is today a mighty wall of peace against the counter-revolutionary efforts that are being made by the imperialists all over the world, to smash not only the Soviet Union but the working class of their own countries.

We Communists do not fear the working class, for we are

part of it. On the contrary, we know that the workers will not be liberated from the yoke of capitalism unless they are drawn into militant struggle, unless they unite their ranks. We declare that in the midst of the struggle, the workers will learn which policy to apply in order to overthrow capitalism—whether Communist or Socialist policy. Let us therefore build this unity, this unity which is in the interests of the American working class, this unity which with a fighting program and a fighting leadership will lead to the emancipation of the working class in the United States and in the whole capitalist world.





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