

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

Issued by the  
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY  
116 University Place, New York City

---

Vol. V No. 3

August 1943

---

DISCUSSION  
— of the  
CHICAGO UNITED FRONT PROPOSAL

	Page
The Chicago Proposal for the United Front by M. Morrison	1
Discussion of the Chicago United Front Proposal by Lydia Bennett	10
The Motion on the Chicago Proposal by George Breitman	14

---

Price 10 cents

---

THE CHICAGO PROPOSAL FOR THE UNITED FRONT

By M. Morrison

The following are the relevant excerpts from two communications sent by the Executive Committee of the Chicago branch to the Political Committee with reference to a proposal for a united front action against the "Mission to Moscow" film.

---

Chicago, Illinois  
June 8, 1943

"With regard to our forthcoming demonstration against 'Mission to Moscow', the EC of the branch wishes to submit for the approval of the P.C. a proposal that we negotiate for a conference of the SWP, the WP, the SDF, the PP and, possibly, the SLP, for the purpose of organizing protest demonstrations at the theater and a public meeting. We would, of course, reserve the right to the use of our banners, leaflets and speakers' presentation of our position. The committee considers that certain advantages would accrue from such a united front, namely, that it would: (1) provide larger forces for a demonstration; (2) result in considerably more publicity; (3) enable us to reach the audiences of the other organizations with our position on the Soviet Union and the nature of Stalinism; and (4) tend to isolate the Stalinists on the question, insofar as working class political organizations are concerned.

"We should appreciate your communicating the attitude of the P.C. toward the proposal as soon as possible, as the film will in all probability be shown here within the next few weeks."

---

Chicago, Illinois  
June 9, 1943

"With reference to our letter of June 8, regarding the 'Mission to Moscow' united front proposal, the letter merely stated that the united front would protest the film. It failed to state that the conference would be called to organize protest against the film 'as a frameup in continuation of that of the Moscow Trials.' We would enter into no agreement except upon this basis."

---

The Political Committee, after discussing the matter, passed the following motion:

"That we advise the Chicago comrades against the proposal for a united front action with the Social Democrats and similars on 'Mission to Moscow' for the reason that it is not practicably feasible or advantageous, and that the principled differences between us and the Social Democrats, etc., on the question of the Soviet Union is the basic reason why advantageous united front actions with them on this question are not realizable."

While I do not consider the matter raised by the Chicago comrades of primary importance and the difference of opinion on this question as fundamental in nature, I consider the attitude of the majority of the Political Committee to be mistaken, the motion a product of very careless thinking and the whole matter of sufficient importance to justify a discussion in the party branches.

This discussion is in the nature of a post mortem and for future reference. By the time the discussion is over or, even by the time it is launched, the opportunity for a united front against the "Mission to Moscow" film will have passed.

Unfortunately, the arguments of those who favored the motion are not in written form. I must, therefore, do something that I have always disliked doing -- refer to arguments made during an oral discussion. I prefer to take up only those arguments that have been put down in writing, so that there can be no question as to the exact statements that were made. This is not possible now, and I simply want it understood that if anyone denies making any of the statements upon which I base any argument, that particular argument can be disregarded. It is my policy not to enter into any "sub-arguments" as to whether a certain statement was or was not made. If anyone claims that it was not made, then it is best to drop the argument involving that point.

It would have been better if the proponents of the motion had stated their case first, but no great harm can come from following the contrary procedure, since there will be a further opportunity to meet the arguments and statements of those who favored the motion.

\* \* \*

The first question to be settled is whether there is any principled reason preventing us from entering a united front against the "Mission to Moscow" film.

When the proposal first came to the members of the Political Committee, there was a tendency to oppose the Chicago proposal on a principled basis, namely, that we cannot enter into a united front on this question with people who do not believe in the principle of the defense of the Soviet Union. At the P.C. meeting only

one comrade expressed that view.

I shall first discuss this point of view because there is a possibility that some comrades will have the same reaction to the proposal as did some members of the Political Committee. A further reason for discussing this aspect of the question is my opinion that the motion, as passed by the P.C., implies the acceptance of that viewpoint.

I consider the motion only a half-retreat from the principle position that no united fronts are possible against the "Mission to Moscow" film with organizations that do not believe in the defense of the Soviet Union.

\* \* \*

A general definition of the united front is as follows: the united action of different organizations with reference to some immediate question upon which they agree, although they differ on fundamental principles. The question of the united front was first raised in connection with the immediate demands of the workers who were divided between the Social-Democratic and the Communist parties. If both the Social-Democrats and the Communists are in favor of a certain demand, such as a 6-hour day, then, even though they disagree on fundamental principles they should join together in action for that demand. It took a long discussion with the Leftists to get this simple and correct principle across.

While the fundamental principle of the united front was first raised in connection with demands that the working class as a whole was interested in, there can be no reason why that principle should not be applicable, with certain modifications, to more limited questions confronting working-class organizations.

Thus, it has been recognized as correct and necessary to have a united front between different organizations on defense matters. While it is true that on such matters there are no huge working-class organizations involved, and the workers on the whole are not set into motion, no one has raised any objections to such a united front on that ground.

\* \* \*

In the case of the film "Mission to Moscow" the united front is necessarily limited to those working-class organizations that are opposed to the Stalinist regime and to the Roosevelt administration's desire to whitewash Stalin's crimes by means of the film. Why should there be any objection in principle to a united front of working-class organizations, to include even liberals, on questions involving Stalin's crimes against the workers?

Would anyone contend that it would be impermissible for different organizations to unite in defense of a revolutionist hounded by the Stalinist bureaucracy because these organizations do not agree in their attitude towards the Soviet Union? By what logic

can the principle of the united front be limited to actions against the capitalist class so long as the Stalinist bureaucracy exists and persecutes workers?

As a matter of fact, we have recognized the validity in principle of the united front against Stalinism in many ways. The Trotsky Defense Committee was not a united front of organizations but the principle of the united front came into play there in the sense that individuals, disagreeing on fundamental questions, including the question of the defense of the Soviet Union, worked together for the purpose of defending Trotsky against a frameup.

We have recognized the validity of the general principle of the united front with reference to the campaign against "Mission to Moscow" -- for Trotskyists participated in the formation of the joint committee which organized the campaign against the film. It was not a united front of organizations but of individuals. Obviously if we recognize the permissibility of a united front of individuals disagreeing in their attitude towards the Soviet Union, logic and common sense demand the recognition of its permissibility as to organizations that differ in their attitude towards the Soviet Union.

\* \* \*

The Executive Committee of the Chicago branch proposes a united front of organizations for a specific purpose -- a demonstration and a meeting against "Mission to Moscow". It further indicates the basis upon which the united front should be organized-- in essence, against the use of frameup and violence in the labor movement. It should be noted that this united front proposal differs from the united front committees in two respects; one, in that it is a united front of organizations; two, in that it is to be organized for a specific purpose -- a demonstration and a meeting. In the sense that we have here a proposal for a united front of organizations for a specific purpose with specific practical objectives, based upon a clear issue, it may be said that we have an ideal proposal for a united front. It must be admitted that no great masses will be involved, and that therefore a united front in this case is relatively unimportant. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that the principle of the united front is applicable.

If there is no principled objection to such a united front, the next question that should be dealt with is whether or not it is desirable. Would it in any way aid our campaign against the film? The Executive Committee of the Chicago branch is of the opinion that it would, and it presents the reasons for its opinion.

There is no need to discuss these reasons. In the discussion in the P.C. they were not even mentioned. In general I would say that if a much larger meeting and demonstration could be organized on the basis of a united front than we ourselves could organize, and, if as a result of the united front, more publicity against the film could be achieved, it would be desirable.

Whereas in the case of the united front involving a large number of workers, its desirability can almost always be affirmed in advance, in the case of a united front such as is proposed by the Executive Committee of the Chicago branch its desirability must be discussed on the basis of all the factors present in the local situation.

The third question that we must ask ourselves is whether it is practical. This is, in reality, part of the second question dealing with its desirability; but it is possible to separate the factors of desirability from those of practicability.

Are the organizations that are to make up the united front large enough in size and influence to justify the united front? Is their leadership of a type that we can expect to participate in a united front without turning it into a debate and a squabble?

\* \* \*

The motion of the P.C. states that the united front is not "practicably feasible or advantageous" and cites the principled difference between us and the Social Democratic and other organizations as the reason.

First of all, let me point out that the motion does not limit itself to any time, place or circumstances, so that it would appear from it that under all circumstances and conditions a principled disagreement between us and other organizations on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union makes a united front against Stalinism impracticable and disadvantageous. The motion might just as well have said; no united front against Stalinism with organizations that do not believe in the defense of the Soviet Union. That is why I stated that the motion is only a half-retreat from the flat position that a united front on the "Mission to Moscow" is impermissible in principle because of the difference between us and other organizations on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union.

\* \* \*

If, however, one insists that there is a difference between the statement: "we are opposed to the united front because we have a principled difference" and the statement: "we are opposed to the united front because the principled difference makes it impracticable and disadvantageous," then it is necessary to analyze the factors making the united front impracticable or disadvantageous and what the relationship is between these factors and the principled difference.

The discussion in the P.C. centered around the proposition that the united front is not practicable because of the principled difference on the defense of the Soviet Union. If we mention specific practical factors we can see whether there is any possible relationship between non-belief in the defense of the Soviet Union and any of such practical factors. The size and influence of an organization is a practical factor but no one would claim that it has any relationship to the principled difference. The practical factor mainly discussed and insisted upon by the proponents of the motion was that those who do not believe in the defense of the Soviet Union will utilize the united front to attack the Soviet Union.

Let us bear in mind that the united front would be preceded by an agreement containing clauses describing the exact purpose of the demonstration and meeting, the basis upon which the demonstration

and meeting would be held and a promise to refrain from any attack on the Soviet Union. This agreement would be published in the press of the organizations participating. The attitude of the different organizations on the question of the Soviet Union would, of course, be made public and it would be emphasized that in spite of the difference on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union the organizations agree to act together against the film "Mission to Moscow."

Someone may raise the objection: But you cannot get such an agreement. The answer to that is: There will then be no united front.

Proponents of the motion contended further that even if the organizations who do not believe in the defense of the Soviet Union would enter into such an agreement, they would break the agreement. In other words, because an organization does not believe in the defense of the Soviet Union the individuals of that organization will inevitably break an agreement not to attack the Soviet Union at a particular united front demonstration and meeting.

In passing it may be said that the breaking of a united front agreement by any organization would be to its detriment and to our gain. In the case of a united front involving great masses of workers that kind of an objection would have no validity at all. However, I would certainly agree that, practically, a united front against "Mission to Moscow" would be worse than useless if any agreement entered into was broken and the demonstration or meeting degenerated into a squabble.

A "theory" which says that those who are opposed to the defense of the Soviet Union will break an agreement not to attack the Soviet Union at a united front demonstration or meeting must, if it has any validity at all, be based on some experience.

Let us take the Workers Party as an example. This party is in principle against the defense of the Soviet Union. What justification is there to conclude that because the W.P. is against the defense of the Soviet Union it will not carry out an agreement not to attack the Soviet Union during a united front demonstration or meeting? If we assume that all other factors favor a united front demonstration or meeting with the W.P., then there is no experience whatever to justify a "theory" that the W.P. would break such an agreement.

From my knowledge of how the W.P. people have conducted themselves at other semi-united front meetings, and knowing that they have had a good training in the theory and practice of the united front, I would expect them to observe scrupulously every agreement they entered into.

As far as the Social Democrats or Socialists are concerned, I do not know of a single instance where, having made a united front agreement in which they promised to refrain from attacking the Soviet Union, they broke their promise.

At the P.C. meeting where the question was discussed, a comrade tried to prove the "theory" that they who do not believe in the defense of the Soviet Union will break an agreement not to attack the Soviet Union by pointing to the difficulties that we have had with certain people in the united front committee set up to defend Trotsky and the one organized to campaign against "Mission to Moscow."

All that he succeeded in proving was that individuals who do not agree with us on fundamental principles, but who unite with us on a specific issue, do not always accept our proposals -- which is quite natural. When there are many individuals functioning in a united front committee, one is obliged to find the lowest common denominator upon which all will agree. As it is, I seriously doubt whether anybody can produce proof, even in the case of individuals, that a promise not to attack the Soviet Union was broken. And one must not forget that there is a considerable difference between a group of individuals acting as a united front committee for a lengthy period and a united front of organizations agreeing to carry out one or more specific actions.

\* \* \*

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that a proposition like the one enunciated in the motion is at best a mere hypothesis which must be subjected to a test and every so often verified. Even if someone should show me that two or three or four years ago a certain group broke its agreement not to attack the Soviet Union, I would hold that, with the passing of time, another test should be made, because under no circumstances can I accept the proposition that there is something so directly connected between non-belief in the defense of the Soviet Union and breaking a promise not to attack the Soviet Union that it operates at all times and under all conditions.

It was also argued that the Social Democrats and the Socialists will reject any united front proposal because they do not agree with us on the defense of the Soviet Union. One can only shrug his shoulders at such an argument. It may be correct, but we are confronted with a very questionable hypothesis which must be subjected to some test. These organizations may reject our proposal for reasons other than their differences with us on the Soviet Union. It may be that they would reject it because of those differences, but how can one tell before investigating?

As I indicated before, it would be silly for us constantly to make proposals which would be rejected. It is only in the case of a united front on questions involving great masses that the repeated rejection of a proposal should not cause us to refrain from making such proposals, for then the proposals serve to educate the masses. This aspect of the united front has no application to a case such as the united front against "Mission to Moscow."

But it is impossible to state beforehand, simply on the basis of a difference in attitude on the defense of the Soviet Union, that a proposal for a united front against the "Mission to Moscow"



would be rejected. If we consider the W.P. -- the organization which at present is the only one taking a principled position against the defense of the Soviet Union -- I am one hundred percent certain that it would accept the proposal for a united front against "Mission to Moscow." I am not saying that we should make such a proposal, but I am pointing out the absurdity of connecting a possible rejection of the proposal with the principled difference on the defense of the Soviet Union.

\* \* \*

There is one factor pertaining to the advantage or disadvantage of a united front with organizations that do not believe in the principle of the defense of the Soviet Union that can be said to have an indirect relationship to that principle. This is the question of the possible effect such a united front would have on Stalinists who tend in our direction and to whom the defense of the Soviet Union is a very important principle.

This factor was not discussed at the P.C. meeting because the P.C. did not, as it should have done, concern itself with the possible advantages and disadvantages of a united front against the "Mission to Moscow" film. It concerned itself with the proposition that no united front was practicable because we differ with the other organizations on a principled question.

I am of the opinion that this factor by itself is not at all sufficient to outweigh factors that make the united front advantageous. It simply means that the Stalinists who tend in our direction and who may possibly be alienated by such a united front, will have to be educated in the theory and practice of the united front.

I made no motion at the P.C. meeting when the question was discussed. As a matter of fact I voted for the motion as stated above because the word "advise" was used instead of the word "order", leaving the whole question open. I also made a statement that the theoretical justification of the motion is meaningless.

In my discussion on the Chicago proposition I indicated what kind of a motion should be passed.

1. That we approve in principle the proposal of the Chicago E.C.:
2. That we caution the comrades to consider carefully all the practical factors, together with possible advantages and disadvantages, before launching the formal proposal for the united front.

I am not prepared to say whether the Chicago E.C. is correct in its conclusion that the united front in Chicago against "Mission to Moscow" would be advantageous. That decision must be left to the local comrades because it is a decision which must be based on an examination of all the practical factors, such as (1) size and influence of the other organizations, (2) the possibility of a much larger demonstration or meeting than would be the case without the united front, (3) whether or not there is any danger of the united

front being transformed into a debate, (4) the possibility of alienating sympathetic Stalinists, etc. It would also be necessary to advise the comrades to enter into a written agreement setting forth the specific objectives of the united front and including a clause obligating the other organizations not to utilize the united front for an attack on the Soviet Union or Communism.

\* \* \*

To comrades who may raise the objection that it is necessary for us, in the campaign against "Mission to Moscow", to present our whole viewpoint on the Soviet Union, I can only say:

Any united front demonstration or meeting does not preclude us from holding our own meeting where our own interpretation and program can be presented.

## DISCUSSION OF THE CHICAGO UNITED FRONT PROPOSAL

By Lydia Bennett

In response to a request by the Chicago Local for permission to make approaches to other working class political organizations for a united front demonstration against the moving picture "Mission to Moscow", the Political Committee rendered an adverse decision and offered two reasons therefor in its letter of June 23, 1943;

1) that the action is "not practicably feasible or advantageous," and

2) that the "principled differences between us and the Social Democrats, etc., on the question of the Soviet Union is the basic reason why advantageous united front actions with them on this question are not realizable."

The first of these reasons springs from a consideration of time and circumstance and, since it does not involve principle, can be argued and decided without influencing party attitude at another moment when a similar circumstance may arise. Error in this instance, therefore, would not tend to predispose the party toward repetition of a mistaken attitude.

In respect to the second reason, however, we face a formulation which constitutes an interpretation of the purpose of the United Front tactic and the circumstances determining its applicability.

The tactic of the United Front is the most powerful political instrument available to a Bolshevik party. Its usefulness is inestimable in effecting the growth in size and political influence of the party and in weakening the hold of non-Bolshevik ideas and parties upon the politically organized as well as unorganized workers.

Very briefly stated, an effective United Front must meet the following conditions:

1) It must offer an opportunity for a specific demonstrative action either for a desired objective or against a working-class menace. (I think it needs no argument to demonstrate that this condition existed in connection with the film.)

2) It must draw workers who might otherwise remain passive into political motion and broaden the base of action beyond the narrow one influenced by the Bolshevik party alone.

3) It must permit the Bolshevik party to present its line uncorrupted by the political views of other members of the United Front. I believe no one can contend that the slogans we carried

and the literature we distributed were of such a nature that they could not be agreed to by any other working class organization; since, therefore, we conducted the campaign alone, we must have considered these slogans adequate to the political objectives of the occasion.

(I do not here wish to deal with other aspects of the details of the United Front -- method of approach, limitation of slogans, termination of action, etc., since these are not the subject of controversy.)

First let us consider the important question of the permissibility of United Front action in this case. We, the Trotskyists, are today confronted with a concerted drive against us involving slander, frame-up, even murder. Unhappily for the Stalinites, their method of assault upon us drives them to violence against other individuals and political groupings in the labor movement. Witness their crazy labeling of anyone who disagrees with them as "Trotskyite fascists" and consider the assassination of Carlo Tresca. An important part of this campaign of vilification is the film "Mission to Moscow."

The moving picture vilely and openly slanders us and at the same time deeply offends a large section of the political labor movement. It is important for us to concretize in the minds of the workers thus offended an opposition to the political methods of Stalinism; this can be done best by drawing them into demonstrative action. It is equally important for us to demonstrate to all who can see that the attack is being made not upon a numerically insignificant political group but upon principles vital to all enlightened workers. In other words, we have an opportunity to identify ourselves (in the public eye and especially in the minds of the non-Bolshevik workers participating in the action) with the basic interests of the entire working class.

An important consideration in this matter, of course, is whether or not a basis of approach to other organizations existed. Two organizations immediately spring to mind as being large and influential enough and of such an internal composition as to make the concluding of a United Front action important to us. They are the Social-Democratic Federation and the Socialist Party with its youth section, the YPSL. Because of their political character, our attitude to one of these is very different from our attitude to the other.

The S-D F has been the most vociferous of all organizations in its denunciation of the film. It is unabashedly anti-Soviet. Its membership would not have picketed (senility being an important factor) but the Federation would have sent a speaker and constituted a goodly section of an audience had a symposium been arranged as part of the United Front action. Its name would undoubtedly have been mentioned in any press notice a public demonstration would have received and in my opinion this would be a definitely positive factor; every organization thus mentioned would help to remove the demonstration from the realm of a purely Trotskyist action. We could not expect to influence strongly any part of the membership

of this organization but its ideas (in the case of a symposium) would be an excellent foil for our speakers.

The Social-Democratic Federation, however, would not be the real objective of United Front action in this case. We would invite it into the United Front for the purpose of broadening the base, but our eyes would be upon the Socialist Party and the YPSL.

We have evidence -- the voluntary statements of more than one member of the YPSL -- that political differentiations are evolving within the S.P. and its youth auxiliary and that the "left wing" tends to adopt our line on some questions, especially on a political appraisal of the Soviet Union. We know also that there was an expressed desire on the part of some members of the YPSL for participation with us in the "Mission to Moscow" demonstration. One of our members was actually embarrassed by a young S.P. member who reproached us for not having made a United Front advance to his organization, adding, when our comrade raised (incorrectly, I believe) the question of the nature of the Soviet state, that he and others agreed with us on this.

I contend, therefore, that the concluding of a United Front action in this matter was urged (1) by the demonstrative nature of the action, (2) by our need to broaden the stratum of politically conscious workers involved, (3) by the inner political conditions in one very important working class organization which would have made it possible for us to increase our influence upon its best section.

Now for the objections. Here I think the motion of the P.C. in some respects needs clarification. What, for instance, is meant by "advantageous united front actions?" What is the measure of advantage in such political action? I think I have above indicated some very important advantages which the simple conclusion of a United Front agreement would have brought. But I shall not go further on this until the P.C. has elucidated its point in this respect.

The deep political differences between us and the Social-Democrats are cited as the decisive reason for avoidance of a United Front approach. These differences are basic and permanent. We shall have to face them as long as the organizations exist as political entities.

The logic of this position is that we are forbidden to use the United Front instrument in any action which hinges upon a question on which principled differences between us and other working class political organizations exist. Not only does this preclude united action with any other organization on any question involving Stalin or the Stalin regime (no other organization of noticeable size agrees with us in our estimation of the Soviet state) but, carried to its absurd end, means that we are similarly stymied on the war question where we have principled differences with all other organizations.

Now the serious aspect of this lies in the fact that Lenin and Trotsky designed the United Front approach precisely so that united action could be effected between working class organizations which differed in principle on basic issues. Insist upon agreement in principle and the United Front withers away!

It should be borne in mind, too, that the closer history moves to decisive proletarian action, the sharper and more irreconcilable the principled differences become between working class organizations, while at the same time the need for the incessant application of the United Front becomes ever greater. What becomes then of the greatest of all United Front instruments -- the soviets?

It is not given in the motion, but we have been informed that one of the reasons submitted in the P.C. discussion was that the volume and quality of the Social-Democratic writings on the subject of the film would put us in the position of reflecting the unhealthy light of their ideas if we and they appeared in a joint demonstration. I can't take this argument seriously; to the theatre-going and theatre-passing and newspaper-reading public, the S-D F and its ideas are as little known as the S.W.P. and its ideas; and the concluding of a United Front action gives us the valuable opportunity of clarifying our ideas before the membership of all participating organizations.

But aside from all of this, the logic of this latter argument puts us in a position where we (destined for some time to be a minority group even among working class organizations) cannot enter into a United Front with organizations whose programs are more widely known than ours for fear of corrupting our own reputation. Again I must say -- it is precisely to help us out of the minority state and to broadcast our ideas beyond the limits of our own press and speakers that the United Front was designed.

I feel that the P.C. was wrong in this decision. To raise such barriers against the United Front is to come dangerously close to treading -- in error -- the ground which the Stalinites, with their theory of Social-Fascism, soaked with the blood of the European proletariat.

July 8, 1943

The Motion on the Chicago Proposal  
by George Breitman

After re-reading the motion on the Chicago united front proposal adopted by the Political Committee, I can see that it is subject to misinterpretation, particularly by comrades who were not present at the meeting where it was discussed. This is often the case with motions which are necessarily brief and drawn up to summarize a position rather than to expound all the reasons for arriving at it. That there are sometimes difficulties in formulating a motion is shown by the fact that Comrade Morrison, himself, who is and was critical of the motion adopted, did not offer a motion on the issue at the PC meeting. Just as later, thinking over the question, he was able in his article to elaborate his position and formulate a position which he considers satisfactory, so could the PC motion have been made more explicit and clear.

Comrade Morrison considers that the PC motion "implies the acceptance of" and represents "only a half-retreat" from the "tendency to oppose the Chicago proposal on a principled basis, namely, that we cannot enter into a united front on this question with people who do not believe in the principle of the defense of the Soviet Union." As Morrison points out, however, only one comrade at the PC meeting made remarks in any way approaching this position. I cannot tell what goes on in the minds of people; there may have been a number of comrades present at the meeting who held this position, as Morrison seems to fear, but since they did not speak up for it, I do not know. I know that I am and was opposed to such a "principled position" and that for me the motion did not imply the acceptance of such a position.

It is not only permissible but often advisable for us to seek united fronts with other organizations over immediate actions on which both we and they can agree. United front action enables us to advance campaigns in which we are engaged; they also enable us to come into closer contact with the rank and file of other organizations whom we are trying to influence. What generally guides us in our decision to press for such united fronts is the question of realizability and the question of advantageousness.

Of course, on certain occasions we might attempt united front action even if we thought it wasn't realizable, because it might give us the opportunity to reach and educate the rank and file of a rival organization. In 1939, for example, we issued united front appeals to the CP, asking it to join us in action against the Bund, the Coughlinites, etc. We had little hope of realizing a united front with CP; the Stalinist leaders ignored our appeal, but our activity in this connection opened the eyes of many rank and file Stalinists as to the role of their leaders and of the Trotskyists, and thus was advantageous though not realizable.

No one will deny that united fronts should be so arranged and limited that they are advantageous to us. For example, we would not enter into united front action with the Social-Democrats in a union to push for the creation of a labor party so that Roosevelt could be elected. Our principled differences with them over the support of

capitalist candidates would prevent that. However, we might unite with them against attempts by a conservative or Stalinist group to prevent the union from supporting a labor party if the agreement was strictly limited to persuading the union members of the necessity for creating a labor party, even though we knew that fundamentally the aim of the Social-Democrats was to aid Roosevelt while ours was to break the workers away from Roosevelt's influence. Thus the question of advantageousness cannot be considered by itself; it must be taken up with an eye on the question of principled differences.

The PC motion explains that it is the principled differences over the USSR between us and the Social-Democrats, etc., which make advantageous united front actions with them over "Mission to Moscow" not realizable. Comrade Morrison takes this to mean that WE would not agree to a united front with the Social-Democrats because of these differences. That is not the case. Under most circumstances we certainly would agree to such a united front if it would be advantageous to us, that is, if it would further the fight against "Mission to Moscow" from our point of view or from a point of view not contradictory to our own. But these same principled differences over the defense of the Soviet Union WOULD AND DO prevent the Social Democrats, etc., from entering into a united front on "Mission to Moscow" on a basis acceptable to us.

Like us, the Social-Democrats attack "Mission to Moscow" and Stalinism. But they do not attack them for the same reason that we do. They attack them for the purpose of discrediting Bolshevism and the workers' state and of glorifying capitalist democracy and the Allied war aims, while we attack them for the purpose of defending Bolshevism and the workers' state. Leaving practical factors aside, we would be willing, in most cases despite our differences over these questions, to hold a united front meeting with them for the specific purpose of calling attention to the lies and frameup character of "Mission to Moscow." But would they be willing to do the same? Would they agree to withhold their attacks on Bolshevism and limit themselves just to exposing "Mission to Moscow"?

No one, including Comrade Morrison, would favor a united front with them if they didn't. Nobody in our ranks would agree to hold a united front meeting which we knew would be used to attack the things we are organized to defend and to defend the things we are organized to oppose. If the Social-Democrats would not agree to limiting the purpose of the united front meeting in the manner in which he indicates in his printed remarks, Comrade Morrison too would say that an advantageous united front was not realizable. As he puts it in the second paragraph on Page 6, "Someone may raise the objection; 'But you cannot get such an agreement. The answer to that is; Then there will be no united front.'" Wouldn't it be correct then to say that Morrison is opposed to united front action (without the proper agreement) because of principled differences over the USSR?

Still leaving aside such practical questions as whether the Social-Democrats, etc., would materially swell the meeting, the question resolves itself for me to this: Can we obtain a united



front with these organizations at the present time on a basis acceptable to us? I am positive from everything they say at their meetings and write in their press that we can not. When Comrade Lydia Bennett of Chicago was in New York a few weeks ago, shortly before the PC considered the Chicago proposal, she told a story which I think illustrates this. A protest meeting was being held under the leadership of the Social-Democrats on the Alter-Erich murders. I am not sure whether it was a purely Social-Democratic meeting, or one run in the name of some AFL unions. At any rate, the Social-Democrats were in charge and one of their leaders approached Comrade Bennett, saying, "You people are always good at drawing up resolutions. Suppose we sit down and work one out on this case." And they did, with our comrade presenting a good resolution. When they were done, the Social Democrat thought it over and said: "Yes, that's a good resolution, very good. But I think it needs another paragraph." And sure enough, at the meeting he added another paragraph, praising and pledging support to the United Nations and their war effort. Of course this was not a united front, but nevertheless it indicates an attitude: these people, especially in war time, do not have a pure interest in the murder of their own people like Alter and Erlich. They don't see any point in just protesting against the crimes of Stalinism; they also want, they above all want to utilize these crimes to advance their own treacherous program.

In connection with another aspect of the question, Comrade Morrison says: "As far as the Social-Democrats or Socialists are concerned, I do not know of a single instance where, having made a united front agreement in which they promised to refrain from attacking the Soviet Union, they broke their promise." Neither do I. And the reason neither he nor I nor anyone else can recall an instance where they broke such a promise is because none of us can recall when they ever MADE such a promise.

Comrade Morrison says he can only shrug his shoulders at the argument that the Social-Democrats and the Socialists will reject any united front proposal because they do not agree with us on the defense of the Soviet Union. "It may be correct," he says on Page 7, "but we are confronted with a very questionable hypothesis which must be subjected to some test. These organizations may reject our proposal for reasons other than their differences with us on the Soviet Union. It may be that they would reject it because of these differences, but how can one tell before investigating?" Yes, they might reject the proposal for other reasons, but from what I know and see of them I firmly believe that in 98 cases out of 100 that would be and is their principal reason. Comrade Morrison has been in the movement for many years during which he has had plenty of opportunity to observe and "investigate" these people; perhaps it is because of what he has learned in this time that he prefers to shrug his shoulders instead of enumerating some other important reasons.

The motion of the PC is not for all time and for all conditions. I too can conceive a number of cases where it would be advisable to investigate. For example, a difference over the attitude toward the USSR might begin to arise within the SDF or SP. Or the organization as a whole might change its position. Or a local branch might change its attitude. In such cases I would be in favor of

investigating and trying to take advantage of the situation. But nobody told us of any such developments at the time of the PC meeting. All we had to go on, all we had the right to go on was the same old situation that has prevailed for many years. When someone shows us things have changed, I am willing to reconsider my position and subject the new conditions to a test.

Even now of course there could be no great harm in subjecting things to a test. I personally see nothing to be gained from such a test at the present time because I have no doubt what the outcome would be. Because I believe it would be a waste of time and effort, I would advise against it. Furthermore, while Morrison agrees that it would be foolish for us to become known as united front fiends, people who are always running around asking for united fronts no matter how often rejected, the trouble with his approach is that it would give very little guidance to the branches on this question and might even inspire some to initiate a policy of "testing" that can only be fruitless under present conditions.

#####