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Call for a National Convention For the Purpose of Organizing the Communist Party of America

In this the most momentous period of the world's history capitalism is tottering to its ruin. The proletariat is straining at the chains which bind it. A revolutionary spirit is spreading throughout the world. The workers are rising to answer the clarion call of the Third International.

Only one Socialism is possible in the crisis. A Socialism based upon understanding. A Socialism that will express in action the needs of the proletariat. The time has passed for temporizing and hesitating. We must act. The Communist call of the Third International, the echo of the Communist Manifesto of 1848, must be answered.

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of America has evidenced by its expulsion of nearly half of the membership that they will not hesitate at wrecking the organization in order to maintain their control. A crisis has been precipitated in the ranks of revolutionary Socialism by the wholesale expulsion or suspension of the membership comprising the Socialist Party of Michigan, Locals and Branches throughout the country together with seven language federations. This has created a condition in our movement that makes it manifestly impossible to longer delay the calling of a convention to organize a new party. Those who realize that the capturing of the Socialist Party as such is but an empty victory will not hesitate to respond to this call and leave the "right" and "center" to sink together with their "revolutionary" leaders.

The majority of the delegates to the Left Wing Conference in New York weakly neglected to sever their connections with the reactionary National Executive Committee. Rendered impotent by the conflicting emotions and lack of understanding present they continued to mark time as Centrists in the wake of the Right. Their policy is one of endeavor to capture the old party machinery and the stagnant elements which have been struggling for a false unity, who are only ready to abandon the ship when it sinks beneath the waves of reaction.

The condition which confronted the minority delegates at the Left Wing Conference has been met by issuing this call for the formation of a Communist Party of America. The delegates issuing the call represented the following organizations: Socialist Party of Michigan, Left Wing State Convention of Minnesota, Locals Buffalo, N. Y., Chicago, Ill., Union Local, N. J., Cudahy, Wis., Rochester, N. Y., Rockford, Ill., Kenosha, Wis., New York, Providence, R. I., Nanticoke, Pa., Milwaukee, Wis., Boston, Mass. and the Polish, Lettish, Russian, Jewish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Esthonian Federations.

No other course is possible; therefore, we, the minority delegates at the Left Wing Conference, call a convention to meet in the city of Chicago on September 1st, 1919 for the purpose of organizing a Communist Party in America.

This party will be founded upon the following principles:

1. The present is the period of the dissolution and collapse of the whole capitalist world system, which will mean the complete collapse of world culture, if Capitalism with its unsolvable contradictions is not replaced by Communism.

2. The problem of the proletariat consists in organizing and training itself for the conquest of the powers of the state. This conquest of power means the replacement of the state machinery of the bourgeoisie with a new proletarian machinery of government.

3. This new proletarian state must embody the dictatorship of the proletariat, both industrial and agricultural, this dictatorship constituting the instrument for the taking over of property used for exploiting the workers, and for the re-organization of society on a communist basis.

Not the fraudulent bourgeois democracy—the hypocritical

form of the rule of the finance-oligarchy, with its purely formal equality—but proletarian democracy based on the possibility of actual realization of freedom for the working masses; not capitalist bureaucracy, but organs of administration which have been created by the masses themselves, with the real participation of these masses in the government of the country and in the activity of the communistic structure—this should be the type of the proletarian state. The Workers' Councils and similar organizations represent its concrete form.

4. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat shall carry out the abolition of private property in the means of production and distribution, by transfer to the proletarian state under Socialist administration of the working class; nationalization of the great business enterprises and financial trusts.

5. The present world situation demands the closest relation between the revolutionary proletariat of all countries.

6. The fundamental means of the struggle for power is the mass action of the proletariat, a gathering together and concentration of all its energies; whereas methods such as the revolutionary use of bourgeois parliamentarism are only of subsidiary significance.

In those countries in which the historical development has furnished the opportunity, the working class has utilized the regime of political democracy for its organization against capitalism. In all countries where the conditions for a worker's revolution are not yet ripe, the same process will go on.

But within this process the workers must never lose sight of the true character of bourgeois democracy. If the finance-oligarchy considers it advantageous to veil its deeds of violence behind parliamentary votes, then the capitalist power has at its command, in order to gain its ends, all the traditions and attainments of former centuries of upper class rule, demagogism, persecution, slander, bribery, calumny and terror. To demand of the proletariat that it shall be content to yield itself to the artificial rules devised by its mortal enemy, but not observed by the enemy, is to make a mockery of the proletarian struggle for power—a struggle which depends primarily on the development of separate organs of the working class power.

7. The old Socialist International has broken into three main groups: (a) Those frankly social patriots who since 1914 have supported their bourgeoisie and transformed those elements of the working class which they control into hangmen of the international revolution.

(b) The "Center," representing elements which are constantly wavering and incapable of following a definite plan of action, and which are at times positively traitorous; and

(c) The Communists.

As regards the social patriots, who everywhere in the critical moment oppose the proletarian revolution with force of arms, a merciless fight is absolutely necessary. As regards the "Center" our tactics must be to separate the revolutionary elements by pitilessly criticizing the leaders. Absolute separation from the organization of the center is necessary.

8. It is necessary to rally the groups and proletarian organizations who, though not as yet in the wake of revolutionary trend of the communist movement, nevertheless have manifested and developed a tendency leading in that direction.

Socialist criticism has sufficiently stigmatized the bourgeois world order. The task of the International communist press is to carry on propaganda for the abolition of this order and to erect in its place the structure of the Socialist world order. Under the Communist banner, the emblem under which the first great victories have already been won; in the war against imperialistic barbarity, against the privileged classes, against the bourgeois state and bourgeois property, against all forms of