

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

After considerable negotiations seeking to eliminate the differences existing between the Communist elements of the Left Wing, as represented by the so-called minority and majority of the Left Wing Conference held in New York June 21 to 24, the National Council of the Left Wing Section Socialist Party realizing the necessity of the organization of the Communist Party of America, in accordance with the decisions of the National Left Wing Conference, realizing also the futility of participating in the proposed Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party, does hereby join with the National Organization Committee in issuing the following call for the organization of the Communist Party:

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 it will not hesitate at wrecking the organization to maintain 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 and Massachusetts, 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 leaders.

No other course is possible; therefore, we, the National Left Wing Council and the National Organization Committee, call a convention to meet in the city of Chicago on September 1, 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 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 the 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 Cap-

italism. In all countries where the conditions for a worker's revolution are not yet ripe, the same process will go on.

But within the 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, 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 the 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 Party is to carry on propaganda for the abolition of this order and erect in its place the structure of the Communist 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 social and national oppression—we call upon the proletariat of all lands to unite!

Program of the Call

1. We favor international alliance of the Communist Party of the United States only with the Communist groups of other countries, such as the Bolsheviks of Russia, Spartacists of Germany, etc., according to the program of Communism as above outlined.

2. We are opposed to association with other groups not committed to the revolutionary class struggle, such as Labor parties, Non-Partisan leagues, People's Councils, Municipal Ownership leagues, and the like.

3. We maintain that the class struggle is essentially a political struggle by the proletariat to conquer the capitalist state, whether its form be monarchistic or democratic-republican, and to destroy and replace it by a governmental structure adapted to the Communist transformation.

4. The party shall propagandize class conscious industrial unionism as against the craft form of unionism, and shall carry on party activity in co-operation with industrial disputes that take on a revolutionary character.

5. We do not disparage voting nor the value of success in electing our candidates to public office—not if these are in direct line with the class struggle. The trouble comes with the illusion that political or industrial immediate achievements are of themselves steps in the revolution, the progressive merging of Capitalism into the Co-operative Commonwealth.

The Basis of Our Political Campaign Should Be:

- (a) To propagandize the overthrow of Capitalism by proletarian conquest of the political power and the establishment of a Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

- (b) To maintain a political organization as a clearing house for proletarian thought, a center of political education for the development of revolutionary working class action.

- (c) To keep in the foreground our consistent appeal for proletarian revolution; and to analyze the counter proposals and reformist palliatives in their true light of evasions of the