

# THAT "MENSHEVIK CALL"

From certain quarters has come ignorant denunciation and vague criticism of the Michigan State Convention's call for the organization of a new party. We are publishing below the full text of the call, reprinted from the Michigan State Bulletin, for the information of our readers. We heartily invite opponents of the call to point out its alleged Menshevik character.

Although this call has been superseded, first by the Communist Call and later by the joint call of the Organization Committee of the Communist Party and the National Council of the Left Wing, we deem its publication necessary in fairness to the Michigan movement.

## TENTATIVE PROGRAM AS BASIS FOR THE CALLING OF NATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF A NEW SOCIALIST PARTY

Whereas: Some thirty-five thousand members of the Socialist Party have been expelled or suspended because of their attempt to gain the party for socialism; and

Whereas: The indications are that, the bourgeois socialists now in control of the party, will not even stop at the ruination of the organization in order to maintain their control thereof:

Therefore be it resolved: That a call be hereby issued by the Socialist Party of Michigan, through its Emergency State Convention in session June 15th, 1919, at the House of the Masses in the city of Detroit, for the convening of a national convention in the city of Chicago on the 1st of September for the purpose of organizing a Socialist Party in the United States of America.

The tentative basis upon which delegates will be seated in this convention will be as follows:

That a program, platform and constitution conforming thereto be adopted, which will express only the uncompromising principles of revolutionary socialism as the theoretical expression of the American proletariat in its struggle for the conquest of political power.

That the delegates work for the adoption of a policy and tactics, that will express in action the one and only aim of revolutionary socialism, the complete abolition of the capitalist system.

### Objects and Methods

That the object of such an organization be for the purpose of running for political office candidates representing the aforesaid, and to propagate socialism in conformity with the economic conditions and social institutions of the United States of America, along the lines of the struggle of the proletariat against the exploiting class, who through their political power hold possession of the means of life, the machinery of wealth production. This propaganda to be carried out in such a manner as to educate the proletariat and bring them to an understanding of their class interests and class position, and the nature of the historic task they are called upon to perform namely, the complete overthrow and abolition of all forms of exploitation.

In order to aid the working class in the attainment of this aim the proposed new party will confine its propaganda to this object alone, and leave all reform agitation, which has so characterized so-called socialist parties in the past, to the organizations and groups who consider the present social order worth reforming.

The Socialist Party of Michigan in issuing this call, after due deliberation, contends that only through an organization along the lines proposed, can the American proletariat be successfully headed to the desired goal; that the attitude of the party towards the capitalist class be one of unceasing hostility, and toward all other political organizations, whether alleged socialist or avowed defenders of the present social order, one of scathing criticism and militant opposition. For we must regard all attempts to defend and buttress institutions that support in any manner the present ruling class to be a betrayal of the workers in their struggle for emancipation.

As a political organization in a highly developed capitalist country like the United States of America, we shall endeavor to elect representatives wherever possible, to governmental offices, not to perpetuate the present form of government, but to be in a position to assist in the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship for the purpose of socializing the land and industries of the United States.

In addition to this revolutionary struggle for the possession of the state power, we shall carry on agitation and education on the broader aspects of political action. Conscious of the fact that all power, constitutional or otherwise, rests upon force, we shall endeavor to arouse the workers to a full consciousness of their mighty powers which now lie latent, so

that in the event of the capitalist class abolishing or nullifying constitutional procedure, they can have recourse to the revolutionary political action of the mass.

Our propaganda attitude toward present day institutions and social phenomena shall be to explain, criticize and attack if necessary, without exception, each and everyone of the institutions that prop up, apologize for or defend the capitalist class in their privileged position.

In this respect, religion as a social phenomena and the church as an institution shall be explained in the light of the materialist conception of history. The functions of the state with its forces of repression and its institutions of entrenchment, the courts, the judiciary, democratic-capitalistic law and order, to be explained and mercilessly exposed by all means within our power.

Our attitude toward other workingclass organizations, such as labor unions, craft or industrial—shall be to explain to the workers their origin and functions, by pointing out that so long as the working class is forced to live by the sale of its labor power, that it is necessary for them to carry on a guerilla warfare on the industrial field for redress of grievances and to prevent further encroachments upon their present standard of living.

In this daily struggle with their employers, we should point out to the wage-workers that the most efficient method of carrying on the struggle between the master class and the working class is through the industrial form of unionism, which is the most powerful, most efficient and most militant form of organization as against the craft form—a survival of the days of craft production with its tendencies to divide the workers into small, conflicting, inefficient groups.

But in endorsing the industrial as against the craft form of unionism, we should on all occasions point out the characteristics and limitations of unionism at its best. To do otherwise would be a betrayal and a stultification of the position of the proletariat and the revolutionary object that confronts it. Explaining to the workers that so long as the unions confine themselves to the struggle over the wages and conditions of employment, their circle of activities revolves within the confines of the capitalist system, and it is only when the organized mass takes steps that are calculated to strike a blow at the political entrenchment of the capitalist class that their activities take on a revolutionary aspect.

The withholding of their labor-power (strikes) and the tying up of industry cannot be in itself the means of emancipation. So long as the powers of government remain in the hands of the exploiting class, the path that must be pursued—whatever its characteristics—must be a political one, and the first step to be taken is the capture of political power.

It is upon the basis of an understanding and acceptance of these principles that the new party shall formulate its platform and program of action, with a constitution adapted thereto, with a party-owned press that will propagate these principles and with a uniformity of expression throughout the entire country. The proposed new party shall align itself with the recently organized Third International, which held its first congress at Moscow, Russia, on the 2nd of March, 1919.

To all organized States, Locals or organized groups this call is made, and to all other groups whatever their present affiliations may be, that are ready to abandon their present allegiance—of any—to existing organizations and join with the socialists of Michigan, on the basis of this call for the formation of a real Socialist Party that will function with and through social institutions and social forces as they now exist in the United States of America for the complete emancipation of the working class from the yoke of capitalist slavery.

The basis of delegation will be one for each group, local or part thereof, with one for every additional 500 members and major fraction thereof. Credential form inclosed, same must be completely filled according to instructions thereon and duly signed by Chairman, Secretary or both of groups selecting delegates to this convention.

(Signed) ALBERT RENNER, Chairman,  
LOREN B. TEAL, Secretary,

Michigan Emergency State Convention, June 15, 1919.

An "American Socialist Party," which the old N. E. C. favors, will no doubt be able to serve this country much better than one which lays emphasis upon its international character. Then we have the AMERICAN Federation of Labor, dontchaknow.