

# The Plea for Communist Unity

**T**HE Communist Labor Party continues its meaningless pleading for Communist unity—by uniting the two Communist parties “on a basis of equality” (whatever this may mean). It has already been made clear that the very creation of the Communist Labor Party was a calculated act against Communist unity; that the bolting delegates from the Socialist Convention were quickly whipped into shape of a “party” so as to be in a bargaining position with either the Socialist Party or the Communist Party.

Always the reservation is made that about two dozen delegates were caught in the flux of the breakup of the Socialist Convention, with no least intention to set themselves in opposition to the Communist Party, in this miserably designed *coup d'état* to out-Communist the Communists.

It is not a question of individuals, nor of one group as against another group. It is a question of representation of membership and principles. When 70-odd delegates, with no relation to one another except that for as many as 70 reasons they did not like the Socialist Party Convention, proceed to start a new party at the moment when practically all of the Left Wing is unitedly engaged in starting the Communist Party, this manoeuvre can only be described as dastardly and traitorous on the part of those conscious of the situation.

The Communist Labor Party represents just exactly this: the trick of about a dozen reckless individuals who were in a strategic position to mislead about thirty delegates who were kept away from the Communist Party Convention by deliberate delay and misinformation. The other thirty in this Communist Labor Party gathering were drifters of one kind and another, men and women incapable of decision, and at the moment representing no membership and no set of principles. The dozen conscious misleaders were notorious Centrists; a few were guided by personal venom.

There is said to be no difference between the two Communist parties. The Communist Labor Party has no vestige of principle, Communist or any other kind. Its Convention simply made a poor copy of the program work done at the Left Wing Conference at New York. The few changes in text show in every instance a looser understanding of what is involved. The entire Program Committee of the Left Wing Conference sat in the Communist Party Convention, Fraina, Ruthenberg, Stoklitsky, Batt, Ferguson.

The only new feature in the Communist Labor program is the clause against “autonomous federations.” What is meant by “autonomous”? This is a free-for-all phrase, and can only have definite meaning as defined in a party constitution. We are confident that any careful student will realize that the Communist Party met the federation question with an understanding at once realistic and yet absolutely uncompromising on the principle of party centralization. The Communist Labor Party, on the other hand, has issued a flourish to the effect that it desires to be a revolutionary proletarian party without the proletariat. Because it is a fact that nearly 60 per cent of our wage-workers are of foreign birth, and can only be brought into the Communist movement in this country through the device of language federations. But the Communist Labor Party stands for an American movement—an American Communism! And this party protests its thorough internationalism!

In the work of the Communist Convention, by contrast, will be found not merely a copy of former programs, but the incisive development of a Communist program in relation to actual party functioning; the

development from a program merely in criticism of the Socialist Party to a program of the broader scope of the actual working-class movement in its revolutionary tendencies. Not by vague phrases upon which everything can be appended, but in precise, cogent propositions.

The leaders of the Communist Labor adventure were all fully informed of the Left Wing reunion. Some of them came to Chicago for no purpose other than to fight against the complete reunion of Left Wing forces, realizing that they were bound to be automatically ousted in this amalgamation of forces. There was Gitlow, one of the minority of two on the National Left Wing Council, in opposition to the Joint Call. Also John Reed, an associate editor on *The Revolutionary Age*, in close touch with the situation. Both these individuals were obsessed with a passionate hostility against any move to deal patiently and in the light of the general movement with the problem of the federations (or rather, with the Russian Federation). Both were persona non grata to the federation leaders, and it appeared that these leaders would play an important part in the organization of the Communist Party, therefore Gitlow and Reed turned against the Communist Party. The same of Wagenknecht, Katterfeld, Lore, Lindgren and others.

Whatever was justly chargeable against the Minority Left Wing group which first

## To the Workers of the World

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The time for indecision has passed. Now it is clear to each one of us that it cannot be worse, that the government of social-traitors has brought you to the edge of the precipice.

Workers of Germany and Austria! Know that proletarians of other countries will never believe in the German Social-Democracy, that Social-Democracy which did not utter one word of protest at the moment when the government of Wilhelm Hohenzollern forced upon Soviet Russia the Brest-Litovsk peace.

Workers of Germany and Austria! Know that if the Brest-Litovsk peace forced upon Russia in 1918 collapsed so soon, it is because the Russian workers and peasants overthrew the government of the bourgeoisie and social traitors and took the power into their own hands. Only due to this were they able comparatively quickly to break the Brest-Litovsk noose.

World proletarian revolution—this is the only saviour for the oppressed workers of the world!

Dictatorship of the proletariat and the organizations of Soviet Power—this is the only escape for the proletariat of the whole world from the Versailles methods.

While Capitalism exists there can be no real peace. Permanent peace will be possible only on the ruins of the bourgeois state.

Long live the uprising of the workers against oppression! Down with the Versailles peace, down with the new Brest-Litovsk! Down with the government of social-traitors!

Long live Soviet Power throughout the entire world!—The Executive Committee of the Communist International, G. Zinoviev, Chairman.

issued the call for the Communist Convention, it was only the National Left Wing Council which undertook an actual combat against this Minority in respect to these charges, without making that combat one against the Communist Party. It was this part of the Left Wing which made the fight against secularism within the Communist Party Convention, that is, the National Left Wing Council and over 30 delegates who joined themselves with the Council members. This group fought against Federation extremism and against Michigan scholasticism — and fought to a successful finish, while the others ran away from the fight, calling their foolish little side-show an opposition camp! The Federation majority in the Communist Convention yielded to principle, and the clear-cut work of this Convention was made possible because of the effective criticism by the organized minority. It was the opposition of the National Council group to the Federation extremists which won them respect; while the Michigan truckling to the same group won them nothing but contempt. There is no Russian Federation dominance in the Communist Party. There is a clear case of control in the spirit of the general movement, without tinge of secularism or cliquism.

The 10,000 members unrepresented in either of the two real conventions at Chicago, most of these members from the Western States, will settle the question of unity without need for diplomatic negotiations. They will not abide by the illusion of a Communist Labor Party, which is bound to disappear as quickly as it came to life. These members will join the Communist Party, or remain with the Socialist Party. A few locals, hearing a garbled version of what happened at Chicago, may join for a short time the third party. But the party will have no more cohesion than its Convention, which fell apart within three or four days, after a few preliminary skirmishes.

Of over 70 delegates for whom the “unity” pleaders profess to speak, more than half were at all times more interested in a dicker with the old Socialist Party than in joining themselves with the Communist Party. That was the significance of the 37 to 31 vote against consideration of joining with the Communist Convention as the first order of business for the bolting delegates. There was the further intent not to open any negotiations until it could be made a gang proposition instead of a delegate proposition, regardless of the palpable fact that most of the bolting delegates were absolutely without mandate or membership to bring them into the Communist Convention.

The Communist Party is started in repudiation of the old Socialist ideal of numbers regardless of understanding or activity. The Communist Party wants only Communist unity. The Communist Labor Party is no organization with which the Communist Party could ever have any dealings. The Communist membership which failed to obtain representation at the first Communist Convention, because of the short time intervening between the publication of the Joint Call and the Emergency Socialist Convention, is rapidly aligning itself with the Communist Party, in spite of the *coup d'état* of the Centrists.

It is only the membership unity which makes the least difference. And for this unity the Communist Party is striving every day. Nothing more complicated is needed for this consummation than applications for charters and for membership in the Communist Party.