

Report of Louis C. Fraina, International Secretary of the Communist Party of America, to the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

(Continued from last week)

ONE important thing was accomplished by the Left Wing Conference—it made definite the issue of a new party, which until that moment was very indefinite. The minority in the Conference emphasized the inexorable necessity for the organization of a new party. This was in the minds of practically all, but it now became a definite conviction. There were centrists in the Conference who still felt that the old party could be captured, who recoiled from a split; and these voted with the majority to go to the Socialist Party convention; but the majority in the the majority was convinced of the necessity for a new party, differing with the minority of 31 simply on the right procedure to pursue.

After the Conference, the minority of 31 issued a call for a convention on September 1 to organize a Communist Party, repudiating all participation in the Socialist Party convention.

In the course of its development the Left Wing, while Communist in its impulse, had attracted elements not all Communist. There were conscious centrists; comrades who had for years been waging a struggle for administration control of the party; and comrades who were disgusted with the gangster tactics pursued by the Old Guard in control of the party administration. The situation now began to clarify itself—Right Wing, Centre, Left Wing.

The important factor in this situation was the division in the organized Left Wing—the National Council, elected by the Left Wing Conference, and the minority which had organized a National Organization Committee and issued its own call for a Communist Party convention. This constituted more than a split in the Left Wing: **it was a split of the conscious Communist elements in the Left Wing.** This division if persisted in, meant disaster. Unity was necessary—not simply organization unity, which at particular moments must be dispensed with, but **revolutionary** unity. This unity was accomplished by agreement for the merger of the two factions on the basis of a Joint Call for a Communist Party convention on September 1.

The overwhelming majority of the organizations and delegates represented at the Left Wing Conference accepted the Joint Call.

The Left Wing had found itself, unified itself, determined upon the organization of a real Communist Party.

5. The Conventions and Revolutionary Reconstruction

The Socialist Party Convention met on August 30th. The repudiated National Executive Committee manipulated the roster of delegates to insure Right Wing control, dozens of delegates suspected of sympathy for the Left Wing being contested and refused admission to the convention. The police was used against these delegates—an indication of the potential Noske-Scheidemann character of the Old Guard of the Socialist Party. The Left Wing was stigmatized as anarchistic, as consisting of foreigners, as an expression of emotional hysteria. The

Socialist Party convention was ruthlessly dominated by the Right Wing, which used the camouflage of greetings to Soviet Russia and words about the "Revolution." It did not adopt a new program in accord with the new tactical requirements of Socialism, avoiding all fundamental problems. The Socialist Party convention adopted a resolution calling for an "international congress" to organize the "Third International," to include the Communist Party of Russia and of Germany, but ignoring the existing Communist International! A minority resolution to affiliate with the Communist International was decisively defeated. The two resolutions are submitted to referendum vote. (There is a group still in the Socialist Party styling itself "Left Wing" which is unscrupulously trying to garner sentiment for the Communist International to revitalize the old party.) The Socialist Party now represents about 25,000 members.

The delegates refused admission to the Socialist Party convention proceeded to organize their own convention, the first act of which was to proclaim itself the "legal convention" of the Socialist Party—a beautiful centrist twist! These delegates organized themselves as the Communist Labor Party. This was on Sunday, August 31.

On Monday, the Communist Party convention met with 140 delegates representing approximately 58,000 members.

A committee of five from the "Left Wing" convention met with a committee of the Communist Party to discuss unity. The C. L. P. offered unity "on a basis of equality," that is, to combine the two conventions as units, delegate for delegate. This the Communist Party rejected. The delegates in the Communist Labor Party convention were a peculiar mixture, some of them openly repudiating the Left Wing principles and tactics, others notorious Centrists. The Communist Party committee proposed that all delegates at the Communist Labor convention having instructions to participate in the Communist party convention (about 20) should come in as regular delegates; while delegates whose organizations had adopted the Left Wing Manifesto and Program but who were not instructed to organize a Communist Party (about 20) would be admitted as fraternal delegates. The other delegates, representing an unknown constituency, or no membership at all, who were simply disgruntled at the Old Guard for its gangster tactics, could not be allowed to participate in the organization of a Communist Party.

The Communist Labor Party convention refused this offer and proceeded to organize a permanent party. The delegates organizing the C. L. P. represented not more than 10,000 members, many of whom are now joining the Communist Party.

This third party adventure was the result of a number of factors: personal politics, centrism, and the fact that Communist elements from the Western States had not been in close touch with the more rapid developments in the East.

Having consciously organized a third party, the Communist Labor Party is now making "unity" its major campaign. The former Left Wing organizations are almost entirely accepting the Communist Party, achieving unity through membership action. One word more: the C. L. P. speaks much of "an American Communist movement" and fights our party on the issue of "Federation control." This is malicious. There has been one disagreement with the Federation comrades: concerning this, it might be said that the Federation comrades may have been too precipitate and the American comrades too hesitant. But the Federation comrades have worked earnestly for an uncompromising Communist Party. In any event, if the Federations offer any problem, it is a problem of internal party struggle and action. The sincerity of the Federation comrades, all other considerations aside, is attested by their yielding administrative power to the non-Federation comrades.

The Communist Party Manifesto is a consistent formulation of Communist fundamentals; its Program a realistic application of these fundamentals to the immediate problems of the proletarian struggle; its constitution based upon rigorous party centralization and discipline, without which a Communist Party builds upon sand.

6. The General Situation

The Communist Party appears at a moment of profound proletarian unrest. There has been strike after strike, developing larger and more aggressive character. There is now a strike of more than 300,000 workers in the steel industry, a really terrific portent to American Capitalism.

There is a revolutionary upsurge in the old unions: the longshoremen of Seattle have just refused to allow munitions for Kolchak & Co. to be transported. There is a strong sentiment in favor of the Russian Soviet Republic. In the unions the workers are becoming conscious of the reactionary character of their officials and movements of protest and a sentiment for industrial unionism are developing.

But the American Federation of Labor, as a whole, is hopelessly reactionary. At its recent convention the A. F. of L. approved the Versailles peace treaty and the League of Nations, and refused to declare its solidarity with Soviet Russia. It did not even protest the blockade of Russia and Hungary! This convention, moreover, did all in its power to break radical unions. The A. F. of L. is united with the government, securing a privileged status in the governing system of State Capitalism. A Labor Party is being organized—much more conservative than the British Labor Party.

The Industrial Workers of the World is waging an aggressive campaign of organization. It has decided to affiliate with the Communist International; but its press and spokesmen show no understanding of Communist tactics. The I. W. W. still clings to its old concepts of organizing all the workers industrially, gradually "growing into" the new so-