

Statement by Chicago District Committee

To the Members of the Communist Party

Comrades:—

The attempt made by the majority of the Central Executive Committee, in the name of party discipline, to disrupt the Chicago District Organization, precipitated a collision between the aggressive rank and file of the Communist Party and the hollow phrase mongers who have stultified our organization by a policy of inaction.

Since the formation of the Communist Party not a single plank of the party program has been developed. Much less than being taken as a basis for action, not one plank of the program has even been discussed by the C. E. C. None of the most important tactical problems before the Communist movement of the country has been solved or even seriously considered. The Communist Party became stagnant because its central body has never shown the necessary initiative and ability to develop the party policy; or to build up an organization, except as the party took over bodily previously developed units of organization. The membership has never been presented with the chance to study the party problems, nor given any channels for expression of views.

Does the party program fulfil itself? Making a pamphlet out of the party manifesto and program is not the building of a Communist Party. This program must be brought to life in the class struggle in the United States.

Mass Action.

The members of the party clearly understood that the manifesto and program adopted at Chicago were conceived in the understanding of mass action; that "the Communist Party prepares itself for the revolution in the measure that it develops a program of immediate action, expressing the mass struggles of the proletariat."

The "immediate action" promised by the program has never been initiated by the C. E. C., whose watchword was inaction. This body devoted little of its thought and time to the mass struggles of the American proletariat which, according to the program, must be developed into revolutionary mass action for the conquest of the state power. This must be done, as the program points out, through political campaigns based on revolutionary propaganda, mass strikes, shop agitation, industrial unionism, workers' councils, workers' control of industry, unionization of the unskilled and of the agricultural laborers, organization of the negroes, propaganda and action against militarism, internationalization of proletarian thought and action.

Now, after eight months of silence and inactivity, we are presented by the majority group of the C. E. C. (in their issue of "The Communist") with an explanation of mass action which directly denies the essence of the party program. They deny that "the Communist Party is fundamentally a party of action." They say that our party "cannot afford to attempt to get contact with the masses" because "one must beware of the danger that lies in trying to come to the masses at a time when the masses are not receptive to the message of Communism."

If, as it would thus appear, the party program is a betrayal of mass action, how is it that this majority of the C. E. C. has managed to maintain complete silence about it until this time?

Did not the Russian Bolsheviks approach the masses of Russian workers for the purpose of developing their struggles into revolutionary mass action long before these workers were receptive to the message of Communism? Are the real Bolsheviks not trying at the present moment to come to the masses of Chinese, Hindu and other Asiatic workers, or are these workers to be considered more "receptive to the message of Communism" than the American workers?

For what purpose did we adopt our program at Chicago? To make a dialectical play of revolutionary phrases, or to lay down the guiding principles for a Communist Party activity in developing revolutionary mass action?

The majority of the C. E. C. is afraid to test the principles of Communism in action because, in their opinion, contact with the masses will endanger these principles. The truth is that they are an impotent group of talkers who never could organize a party of the revolutionary proletariat. They only come out of their hiding places to foment prejudice, suspicion and strife within our ranks, depending upon phrase-heroism and upon cheap appeals to nationalistic prejudice. Joined by a handful of sentimental adventurers, who seek emotional thrills in "strong" phrases, the politicians of the C. E. C. do not hesitate to destroy the essential meaning of the most vital tactical concept in the world proletarian movement.

There is not now and never has been an issue within our party on the question of the part of force in the proletarian revolution. If the question was avoided at the Chicago convention, assuming that the party then had something to say upon this subject, that could only be the fault of this same group which dominated the C. E. C., since it was the same group which largely controlled the convention. A Communist Party must teach the necessity of the use of force in the proletarian revolution, the inevitability of armed conflict between the workers and the capitalist state, but this teaching must not be allowed to be confused with terrorist anarchism, a stressing of force as of unique virtue in the revolutionary propaganda and conflict. What we must stress, now and always, is Communist understanding; and conscious organization along the lines most suitable for the revolutionary struggle and also for the Communist reconstruction, as the industrial unions, shop committees, workers' councils, etc.

Communist Party and Industrial Unionism.

One who reads our party program, however superficially must discover that its major concern is with the development of political action through strikes. More than half the program — by far the most important sections — lays down a basis for party action through strikes. Industrial unionism is emphasized above everything else as the organization basis for militant industrial mass action in the United States.

Where is there any least indication that our C. E. C. ever concerned itself with the fulfilment of this crucially important part of our program? Even in half a year, if it be answered that the time was short, was it too much for the C. E. C. ever once to look at the party program at least for the purpose of initiating a discussion of the basic party problems? There were many, many days, at the cost of hundreds of dollars, to discuss over and over again the question of one man going to Europe in addition to the International Secretary, to discuss aimlessly the logical correctness of the Russian Federation demands of last year for the control of the Martens Bureau, but there was no time to discuss the party policy as to industrial unionism and strikes!

This majority of the C. E. C. has the nerve to assert that Communist "principles" are only safe in its hands, when it is glaringly clear that its only conception of "principles" is an empty playing with phrases.

Nothing has been done. Even the question known to be foremost in the minds of so many of our members, the question of the relation of our party to the I. W. W., has been ignored by the C. E. C.

How can we develop a political consciousness in the industrial movement without Communist permeation of the labor movement? That is what we mean by action, that the party members shall function as Communists in the shops and unions,