

The Answer of the U. C. P. to the C. E. C. of the Communist International

REPRINTED FROM THE U. C. P. COMMUNIST

FOREWORD:

We reprint from the United Centrist "Communist", their reply to the Communist International's appeal for unity between the C. P. and the former C. L. P.,—because we want every member of the Party to read for himself or herself the pathetic Centrist apology which the U. C. P. mistakes for an answer. It dodges every issue—omits all important facts as bearing on the unity negotiations—it ignores the very thesis of the Communist International, which it reprinted in the same issue, relative to principles and tactics, which corroborates the entire position of the Communist Party especially on Unionism—it minimizes the role of the language federations, and deliberately neglects to state that it has abolished them in its party—it maliciously gives the impression that the Communist Party is, no longer in existence—and pretends to consider this mass of cheap demagoguery as a sufficient answer to the Communist International!

To cap the climax it gratuitously throws out a silly challenge to the "Federation Group" as it contemptuously refers to the Communist Party, to "dare" print the Appeal for Unity. What fools these Centrists be!

Editor Communist.

Dear Comrades:

Your mandate for unity between the two Communist parties of the United States, the former Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party, just now comes into our hands. No doubt your message was written some time ago, before any word had reached you of the organization, by a unity convention of the Communist Labor Party and the majority of the Communist Party during the latter part of May, of the United Communist Party.

The United Communist Party is a reorganization of the majority elements of the former two parties. But, as we have already reported to your committee, a minority faction of the Communist Party still stands outside this unity. This faction is composed of part of the membership of the English, Ukrainian, Russian, and Hungarian federations of the Communist Party. Practically all the members of the Communist Labor Party have come into the united party.

With this reorganization of the former parties it is apparent that there is only a change in the form of the problem of the American parties considered by your committee. There are still two parties; and, so far as Communist principles are concerned, there is no shadow of excuse for this duality. The harshness of this internal controversy has been intensified by the extreme governmental persecutions of the Communists which began with the November 7th celebrations of last year.

We accept your mandate for unity, therefore, as equally applicable to the present situation in our American section of the Communist movement. It is hardly necessary to add, since the united party is the result of the efforts

of those who have been for unity in the Communist ranks at all times, that we are in entire accord with the purpose and the arguments in your letter. We stand ready to consider and to act as promptly as possible upon any plan for a complete unity of American Communism which conforms to the fundamental principles of the Communist International, as stated in its program and as developed in your communication to us.

It is appropriate for the purpose of a complete understanding of the attitude of our party towards Communist unity that we indicate our general views upon the particular questions discussed in your letter.

1) As shown by its program the United Communist Party accepts "the unlimited struggle for the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the power of the working class, as stated in your message.

2) The United Communist Party is opposed to a narrow sectarian policy which fails to take into account and to strive for close contact with the mass of the workers in their constant economic struggles. Indeed, it was exactly this contention upon which the former Communist Party membership broke with the majority of their executive committee.

3) We are keenly conscious of the force of what is said about agitation outside the circle of our party, agitation which expresses Communist leadership in the immediate struggles of the American workers. Our own immaturity as a party, diversion of energies into factional controversies on inessential matters, the persecutions which have again and again disorganized our work, have limited the external agitation and influence of the Communist parties in this country. The formation of the United Communist Party will bring a change and a more aggressive policy in this respect. In addition to the intensive educational work among its members the party will make every possible effort toward prosecution of the immediate struggles and mass protests with Communist understanding and purpose.

4) Upon the subject of the labor unions the program of the United Communist Party stands as follows:

A) Opposition to the A. F. of L. and the other unions of this character. Agitation to break the power of the A. F. of L. and unions of the same character, by uniting the militant elements within them for a mass movement to split these reactionary organizations. The militant members of these unions must be reorganized along industrial and shop lines; the reactionary craft union organizations must be destroyed.

B) Agitation for industrial unionism, holding up the I. W. W. as the best type.

C) Cooperation with the I. W. W., conditioned, however, upon a criticism and permeation of the I. W. W. which will end its anti-Communist propaganda. At this time, unfortunately, the general propaganda of the I. W. W. has discredited this organization among the Com-

munist; but it is yet to be seen whether the I. W. W. membership will longer tolerate this propaganda. It is important for us to bring into the I. W. W. an understanding of Communism, through our educational work and through the influence of Communists who now belong to the I. W. W. As things now stand it is impossible for the United Communist Party to act in association with the I. W. W.

D) The development of a general industrial organization out of a unity of existing militant unions.

5) The United Communist Party is proceeding on a program to establish contact with the working masses by means of shop agitation groups and through shop committees. The shop agitation groups consist of our party members who unite themselves for agitation work in the places where they are employed; also within their union locals. The shop committees, initiated by the efforts of our members, consist of members and non-party members together, our members striving to give Communist direction to these committees and to the larger industrial and community councils into which these committees shall develop.

6) As to foreign-language groups within the party, it is our policy to confine the special activities of these groups to propaganda in the foreign languages. District agitation committees in the foreign languages are provided for, to be chosen out of the language branches; also occasional national conferences for advisory purposes are provided for by the constitution.

The federations protested within the Socialist Party against the vote-catching, reformist propaganda which was all that appeared in the party papers. The appeal was directed to citizens as voters not to workers as workers. No interest was taken in the foreign-language propaganda. It was this need which brought the federation into existence. The United Communist Party deals with all workers alike, regardless of language. And regardless of citizenship. There is no longer any special basis for a different propaganda among the alien workers, except that the editors of the foreign-language papers will naturally pay more attention to certain matters of news which are of greater significance to their particular nationality group. The policies, however, can only be those determined upon by the party conventions and by the Central Executive Committee.

Only through a centralized organization can a uniform propaganda be secured, also a loyalty of the member to the party rather than to their nationality group. The autonomous federations of the Communist Party constituted virtually separate national political organizations. Indeed, at this moment there are several former federation divisions of the Socialist Party and of the Communist Party which exist independently of any party. Our aim, on the contrary, is to build a Communist organization on a centralized basis, with membership as party membership and with a single system of discipline which will compel unified party action at all times. At the same time we do not mean to detract in the least from propaganda in all the languages, as our activity has already shown.

7) Our party organization is on an illegal basis only. Our open activity consists mainly of the publication of several (semi-legal) papers, (four are already established), and of other literature and to the collection of funds for legal defense.

We agree in principle with the suggestion of your committee that every recourse for open party work must be used in conjunction with and in a coordination to the illegal work. So far as our circumstances and energies allow, we must develop open work of propaganda alongside the illegal propaganda. In the present situation, however, our main energy must go into the building of our underground organization, so that disruption of our work will be beyond the power of the capitalist agencies.

8) In conclusion, we realize that the class struggle in this country is of the highest importance in the world conflict now going on between finance-imperialism and communism. It is apparent that the struggle in this country has already attained an extremely sharp character. The tremendous strikes of the last 2 years have torn away the veil of class harmony. There is an open campaign to weaken and crush all the labor organizations, even the most reactionary ones, since within these also militant tendencies have made their appearance. On the labor side there is a new militancy and a rapidly developing sense of class solidarity. More and more it is the government which speaks for the employers as against the workers. The capitalist political parties openly avow their purpose to outlaw all large-scale strikes, as has already been the case with the miners and the railway workers. On the other hand, the ever-increasing cost of living and the insecurity of employment are driving the workers into strikes by the hundreds of thousands. Inevitably these increasingly sharp divisions between the workers and the government must soon develop into the mass action for proletarian conquest of the political power.

Our task of building a guiding political organization to mould and direct the workers in this struggle is one of the gravest responsibility. We believe that the United Communist Party has within itself the elements and the understanding for this important task; and we are confident that our party action will soon show positive results in the class struggle in America. The Central Executive Committee of the United Communist Party. August 12, 1933.

of the membership should they discover it. This is indeed a policy of centralization without common sense—and the membership of the U. C. P. are beginning to wake up to it.

As we have pointed out time and time again we are not blind worshippers of federations. We merely recognize their temporary value, and utilize their possibilities in the present stage of the Communist movement in this country. The federations cannot be destroyed or abolished "at one blow" as the U. C. P. will yet discover to their chagrin. The abolition of federations is a PROCESS rather than a single act accomplished by fiat at a convention.

The federations within the Communist Party have never been and are not now "virtually independent political organizations" as the U. C. P. falsely claims. They have always been subject to the national conventions and the C. E. C. of the Party. Where they disagreed—like the Hungarian Federation—they left the party taking its non-Communist membership with them or they would have been compelled to abide by the party decisions.

On the contrary, the federations are closely integrated in the Communist Party and completely subordinate on all questions to the C. E. C. Even the policy of language propaganda is subject to the control and supervision of the C. E. C.—and is laid down the national convention and the Central Executive Committee.

The federation question in reality is no question at all except to those who fear control by the membership. As a matter of fact, the federations were always partial to English-speaking or American leadership, even when they knew that some of them (like Damon and Y. F.) had strong Centrist tendencies. When the Communist movement will attract English-speaking or American elements into its ranks the so-called federation problem will gradually fade away—leaving only their propaganda function. The control will then be exercised by members who understand English as well as Communism.

It is interesting to note that this Centrist ronglorification which always clamored about centralization versus federations brought to the Communist Congress in Moscow instructions to propose referendums within the movement of the Communist International and were severely condemned in the thesis published by the Executive Committee of the Communist International (published in the last issue).

The conclusion of this answer of the U. C. P., dealing with a survey of American political and economic conditions, is couched in such rosy colors as to lead to the unwarrantable assumption by those unacquainted with the real facts. The following quotation is characteristic: "Inevitably these increasingly sharp divisions between the workers and the government must SOON (Italics ours, editor) develop into mass action for proletarian conquest of the political power."

No doubt the Communist International has been receiving such hopeful pictures from all the delegates of the C. L. P. as well. And it is probably such kind of information which has blurred its prospective with regard to the American Communist movement, as a reading of their appeal for unity will disclose. We cannot blame them for news is difficult of access and they cannot verify such predictions with any degree of accuracy—especially when so-called Communist organizations help to spread them.

The American working class is only beginning to stir. They are as yet HOSTILE OR INDIFFERENT to Communism. They are an inert mass that swallows pro and anti Soviet propaganda with equal facility. Of course we do not include the more or less conscious elements which are in a hopeless minority. The great mass of them are still steeped in bourgeois prejudices, bourgeois lies and bourgeois "democracy". They have yet to travel the path of the British workers who are admittedly still far from a proletarian revolution. It is the sheerest self-delusion to build hopes for an immediate proletarian revolution in this country and it is a crime to disseminate such "profound predictions" to the Communist International.

The Communist movement as well as the American working class must go through some bitter experiences, heart-breaking defeats and salutary lessons, before we can begin to think of a proletarian revolution in America.

We would advise the U. C. P. to go a little slower in predicting proletarian revolutions and a little faster in learning Communist theory and practise if they really intend to become an influence in the American revolutionary movement. Instead of proving a message as sentimental Centrists have a habit of becoming, all their good intentions to the contrary notwithstanding.