

The Communist International to the American Socialist Party.

Dear Comrades:

The official notification from the Socialist Party of the United States of affiliation to the Communist International, accompanied by the resolution adopted by referendum, has been brought before the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

We are in possession also of the report of the National Convention of the Socialist Party held in New York in May 1920, containing the resolution upon international relations, adopted by the Convention in place of that previously adopted by referendum—also the resolution presented by Victor Berger.

Since these resolutions will be submitted to referendum once more, it is necessary to examine all three. All that can be said of Berger's Resolution is, first, that it is honestly reactionary; and second, that we are surprised that it could be offered in a convention of a party which calls itself Socialist.

Concerning the minority resolution—which, except for the addition of George Lansbury's opinion of what Lenin thought, about conditions of affiliation to the Communist International, is the same as the resolution adopted by referendum—there is more to say.

It begins with a long preamble condemning the Second International—a formula which has become so common, even to the parties of the Right, that it has ceased to have any meaning. The section dealing with the Communist International reads as follows (italics ours):

"The Socialist Party of the United States, therefore, declares itself in support of the Third (Moscow) International, NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE ITS SUPPORT OF THE 'MOSCOW' PROGRAMS AND METHODS, BUT BECAUSE: a) 'Moscow is DOING SOMETHING which is really challenging to world imperialism.

b) 'Moscow' is threatened by the combined capitalist forces of the world simply because it is proletarian.

c) Under these circumstances, WHATEVER IT MAY HAVE TO SAY TO MOSCOW AFTERWARDS, it is the duty of Socialists to stand by it NOW, because its fall will mean the fall of Socialist Republics in Europe, and also the disappearance of Socialist hopes for years to come."

The reasons stated for affiliation to the Communist International have nothing to do with Communism, and indeed imply very serious reservations concerning what the author calls "Moscow" programs and methods—by which we take it Communism is meant.

It is of course, very gratifying to have the sympathy of the American Socialist Party because the Communist International is "threatened by the combined capitalist forces of the world". This is, however, hardly a valid reason for a party's wishing to join the Communist International, or for the Communist International to accept such a party, but there is no other reason given except that the Communist International is "doing something" which is "challenging world imperialism" just what the author evidently prefers to conceal from the American proletariat.

This resolution evidently is based on a misconception of the role of the Communist International. The Communist International is in no sense a defensive organization. It is an organ of aggression, the General Staff of the World Revolution, for the forcible overthrow of the capitalist state everywhere, and the setting up of the dictatorship of the Proletariat. Concerning questions of principle and fundamental aims, it is impossible to consider what the American Socialist Party "may have to say to Moscow afterwards".

On the contrary, the Communist International has something to say to parties desiring to affiliate, BEFORE they are accepted.

The Communist International is not "Moscow" but a centralized and disciplined organization now comprising the great majority of the revolutionary working class parties of the world. The Second Congress, just ended, contained representatives of the revolutionary vanguard of the workers of all countries. There were also present delegates of the French Socialist Party and the German Independent Socialist Democratic Party, which only a few months ago were engaged in trying to form the "Two-and-a-half" International, by means of a conference at which the centrist parties would dominate, which would establish a basis for resistance to Communism, a center of sabotage of the World Revolution. It is this idea which animates the Hillquit, or majority-resolution adopted by the Socialist Party Convention, with the exception that neither the Germans nor the French Party have ever dared to declare themselves against the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, as has been done by the Socialist Party of the United States.

This scheme has failed, because the working class of the world is in favor of placing itself under the leadership of the Communist International and the leaders of the centrist

parties, pushed onward by pressure of the masses, now come to us desiring admission to the Communist International. This is even more true of the Hillquits and Lees of the American Party, who even while they declare themselves opposed to the principles of the Communist International, yet do not dare to withdraw from it.

And to all these parties the Communist International replies:

The Communist International is not a hotel, where travellers may come with their own baggage and carry on their private affairs. The Communist International is an army in wartime; volunteers who join the Army of revolution must adopt its principles and obey its orders, submit to its discipline. None but revolutionary Communist Parties are accepted in the Communist International. They must adopt as their program the program of the Communist International—open revolutionary mass-struggle for Communism, through the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, by means of Workers' Soviets—accepting as binding all resolutions of the Congresses and Executive Committee of the Communist International. They must create a strongly centralized form of organization, a military discipline; all Party members in public office, in the Labor Unions, in all forms of public activity, must be absolutely subject to the full-powered Central Committee of the Party, which is the supreme organ directing all the phases of Party work.

They must constantly denounce bourgeois democracy and social patriotism, and also the falsehood and hypocrisy of social pacifism; they must systematically demonstrate to the workers that without a revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist state no talk of disarmament, no international arbitration, no League of Nations can save mankind from new Imperialist wars.

They must immediately break with reformism and policy of the centrists; they must expel from their ranks all non-revolutionary elements, all opportunist leaders; they must sever all connections with the petty-bourgeoisie, and prepare for revolutionary action, for merciless civil war.

The report of the May Convention of the Socialist Party proves very clearly that this party is very far indeed from specification above outlined.

The Declarations of Principles is an affront to the working class. It alone, if endorsed by the membership, is sufficient to separate the Socialist Party of the United States from the revolutionary movement.

The rejection of the resolution endorsing the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is of course inadmissible in any party seeking to join the Communist International. And we do not know a single Socialist Party in the world which has equalled the action of the American Party in ABOLISHING FROM ITS CONSTITUTION TWO YEARS AFTER THE WORLD WAR, THE PROVISIONS FORBIDDING LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES TO VOTE FOR MILITARY APPROPRIATIONS.

Up to the present, the American Socialist Party has been considered a centrist party, but it definitely abandons all Socialist pretensions, it definitely enters the ranks of the bourgeois reform parties, with the adoption of the following declaration:

"Its (the Socialist Party's) ULTIMATE AIM in politics is to secure a majority in Congress and in every state legislature, to win the principal executive and judicial office to be principal the dominant and controlling political party of the country, in order to accomplish Socialism"

If this childish and antiquated conception of the task of a Socialist Party, which even the yellow Second International—from which the American Socialist Party has indignantly withdrawn—did not dare openly to proclaim is the actual honest attitude of the membership of the Socialist Party of the United States, after all that has happened, after the World War the Russian Revolution, and in particular after the year of black reaction in the United States, the persecution of revolutionists, the expulsion of the Socialists at Albany—then we do not understand why the American Socialist Party wishes to enter the Communist International, why it does not endorse the League of Nations, as Meyer London advocates.

The centrist parties, the German Independents and the French Socialists are not yet acceptable, for entrance into the Communist International. Yet they accept the program of Mass Action and Dictatorship of the Proletariat based on the Soviets. Any party which still advocates political democracy is a thousand times worse than these Parties. It is a counter-revolutionary, a Scheidemann Party.

The Convention was dominated by centrist and reactionary elements—by the yellow "reformist-politicians", Hillquit, Lee, Stedman, C'neal, Block, Panken; by the "one-hundred per cent Americans", Meyer London, Solomon; by

the "State Socialists" and inverted social patriots, Victor Berger; by Cannon and Saltz, Karlin and Berlin—all of whom have no place in a party affiliated to the Communist International. There was a "Left Wing"—Engdahl, Kruse, Tucker, Holland, etc.—which demanded affiliation to the Communist International and a revolutionary re-statement of Party principles; but this group was a pitiful minority, its ideas were confused, permeated by cowardly compromise and petty bourgeois prejudices. In all the convention not one Communist voice was heard.

But perhaps the most significant action of the reactionary machine, was to stifle debate and refuse to answer questions concerning the defense of the Socialist assemblymen expelled at Albany.

For example, the testimony of assemblyman Louis Waldman—still a member of the Socialist Party—shows that he declared himself opposed to the establishment of a Soviet Government in the United States, that he preferred the Government of the State of New York—which is a "people's government"—to the Soviet Government; that he urges all workers to take part in a war of defense; that he would vote for military appropriations etc.

This, however, is only the statement of an individual member. Take the official defense of the Party, the "Brief for the Socialist Assemblymen". It apologizes for the presence of foreigners in the Party by calling them "potential voters, and hastens to explain that a new rule requires all Party members immediately to become citizens. It rejects the general strike as a political weapon, on the ground that if there are enough workers to strike for a political reform, there are enough to win it by voting. 'The Soviet form of government', it says, "seems to be good for Russia. The parliamentary form of government seems to be good for the United States. . . ." But the most base betrayal of Socialism occurs in the passage explaining why the Socialist Party supports the Soviet Government:

"We sympathize with the Russian workers, the Russian peasants, the Russian Socialists, the Russian Communists, in maintaining their Soviet Government—NOT BECAUSE IT IS A SOVIET GOVERNMENT, BUT BECAUSE IT IS A GOVERNMENT OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING. SUPPOSE THEY HAD ADOPTED A DIFFERENT FORM OF GOVERNMENT, SAY ONE THAT HAD SPRUNG FROM THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, WE SHOULD NOT SUPPORT IT ANY THE LESS".

Is this, perhaps, what the American Socialist Party "will have to say to Moscow afterwards?" Noske and Mannerheim, Lloyd George and Wilson could endorse this treacherous logic with a clear conscience.

The "Socialist" aldermen of New York, who voted for the Liberty Loan, who voted for money to erect the Victory Arch, the "Socialist" congressman Meyer London, who congratulated the King of Italy upon his birthday, who voted for the war credits; the "Socialists" legislators at Albany, who declared publicly against Communism, the "Socialist" district-attorney at Milwaukee who imprisoned workingmen for breaking up a religious meeting; the "Socialist" officials who called the Chicago police to expel the Communists from the 1919 Convention—all these "comrades" are still members of the Socialist Party of the United States: in fact they controlled the May Convention.

It will be pointed out that the selection of Eugene Debs to presidential candidate proves that the American Socialist Party is a revolutionary party.

It is a characteristic tactic of centrist parties to make use of revolutionary phrases, of revolutionary personalities, to deceive the working masses, to persuade them to follow opportunist leaders.

Comrade Debs has a fine revolutionary record. All the more shame to "Socialist" leaders of the American Party, who have exploited the imprisonment of Debs for their own selfish, non-revolutionary purposes, and who, in nominating him for president, once more attempt to cover up and justify their compromising and cowardly attitude—at the same time refusing to consider comrade Debs's proposal for unity with the Communists.

Nowhere in the world is the persecution of Communists, of true Socialists, more bitter on the part of the capitalist class. Thousands of our comrades have been deported, imprisoned for long terms, tortured and beaten, in the United States. In America alone, out of all the non-revolutionary countries, the Communist movement is illegal, must function underground—those who are Communists remain so at their risk of their liberty, their lives.

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