

THE COMMUNIST

Official Organ of the Communist Party of America.

SECTION OF THE THIRD COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Vol. II, No. 18

MARCH 1, 1921

PRICE 5 CENTS

REPORT OF THE THIRD CONVENTION.

Thirty delegates and seven fraternal delegates met somewhere in the U. S. A., and for ten days thrashed out the problems of tactics and organization of the Communist Party, made history, and passed another milestone of the Communist movement in America. The arrangements for the holding of this convention, made by our technical committee, the silent and secret gathering together of the comrades from all parts of the country, and their safe return to their homes, is in itself a story which some day will be told when the annals of the proletarian revolution in America are compiled.

After waiting in vain for the U. C. P. to comply with the mandate of the Communist International to hold a joint convention upon the basis of proportional representation with the Communist Party, in order to effect unity between these two parties, the convention was called by the C. E. C. in compliance with the twenty-one points for affiliation to the Communist International, and to revise its program and constitution, in conformity with the Theses and Statutes of the C. I.

The convention was called to order by the party secretary, and after a preliminary speech by the party editor, reviewing the history of the labor movement in America, permanent organization was effected by the election of a presidium of three and the various standing committees. The report of the Credentials Committee showed six districts, Canada, and the Pacific Coast, which sent thirty delegates who represented 6819 members having paid the convention assessment. The first order of business was the reading of the twenty-one points for affiliation to the C. I. point by point, which were adopted unanimously by roll call vote of all present. A resolution to the same effect, as presented by the Resolutions Committee later on, was adopted unanimously and appears elsewhere in this issue. The secretary made his financial report covering the period from July 1920 to Jan. 1921, which was accepted as recommended by the Auditing Committee. The secretary made a lengthy and exhaustive report on membership, literature, and propaganda, giving in detail the progress of the party for the past six months. The report of the C. E. C. was divided under the following heads: Important decisions as appearing in the minutes of the C. E. C. On general progress; Developments and decisions on organization questions; On Communist Party Nuclei; On attitude toward Y. P. S. L. and Independent Y. P. S. L.; On attitude towards legal workers' societies; On editorial policy; On removal of Allen from editorship; On Allen's expulsion from the C. E. C. and from the party; On the stand of the C. E. C. on Unity. All these reports and recommendations were accepted. On the question of Allen's removal from the editorship and subsequently from the C. E. C. and the expulsion from the party, the old C. E. C. was closely questioned by the delegates, all the facts in the case were laid before the convention, and it was shown that Allen was expelled for wilfully attempting to block and disrupt the party work; for refusing to accept and carry out the decisions of the party; and for flagrant breaches of party discipline; and his expulsion was confirmed by the convention,

unanimously, upon a roll call vote. The former C. E. C. had kept the membership so well informed upon the unity question during the entire period of negotiation with the U. C. P. that the delegates, being in possession of all the facts, and having previously debated them in the various sub-district and district electors' meetings, that the C. E. C.'s report on this question occasioned little discussion and the stand of the C. E. C. was unanimously approved by a roll call vote of all present. The recommendation that a weekly agitation paper, a monthly theoretical magazine, and an official Party Bulletin, to be issued every two weeks, free to the membership, was adopted.

Resolution on Unity with the U. C. P.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA, IN CONVENTION ASSEMBLED, UNANIMOUSLY DECLARES:

THAT WE ENDORSE AND CONFIRM THE POSITION TAKEN BY THE FORMER C. E. C. OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AGAINST HOLDING OF A UNITY CONVENTION WITH THE UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY UPON THE ARBITRARY BASIS OF EQUAL REPRESENTATION.

WE MAINTAIN THAT REAL AND ORGANIC UNITY BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA AND THE UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY CAN BE REACHED ONLY UPON THE BASIS OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

WE INSTRUCT OUR CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO MAINTAIN THIS POSITION, WHICH IS INCLUDED IN THE MANDATE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, UNLESS THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL SENDS OTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

The reports of the Federations showed the following as to membership: Jewish, 350; Lettish, 700; Lithuanian, 2700; Polish, 400; Russian 1800, Ukrainian, 1500. These reports were given in detail as to literature and propaganda, and showed better than volumes of argument the really constructive work that these federations carry on. The only discussion was occasioned by a demand that the Russian Federation publish a legal paper, a delegate prominent in Russian Federation, maintaining that there were no proletarian Russian masses in this country. This point of view was repudiated by the convention which went on record demanding that the Federation publish an agitation paper as soon as possible.

The Statutes and Theses of the C. I. were read ad seriatum. This was no mere perfunctory matter. The convention spent nearly two days in discussion and debate. The delegates realized that these Theses were the basis of the program of the Communist Party and were adopted by the Second World Congress of the C. I. to be applied and adapted to the needs of the communist movement of the various countries. Stormy debates centered around the

question of our attitude toward the trade and industrial union movement in this country, and it was plain that this convention which had voted and acted with such unanimity on the question of unity and the expulsion of Allen, was not satisfied to have the policy of the party decided by one or two individuals. The whole debate upon the Theses showed that the Communist Party had passed the period of incubation, that it had a thorough understanding of communist principles and tactics, and was prepared to carry these principles into life, and to take its place as the leader and vanguard of the working class of America.

The discussion of the Theses paved the way for the consideration of the draft of the new program, which had been prepared by a committee of the old C. E. C. This draft was presented to the convention by the Committee on Program who included those changes indicated by the discussion of the Theses.

Conventions are like revolutions they Section by section the program was and with minor changes, each clause was adopted, without any serious clash, until the clause on "armed insurrection" was reached. This clause, as originally presented by the Program Committee, read as follows:—"The Communist Party of America will systematically and persistently propagate to the working class the necessity for armed insurrection for the destruction of the bourgeois state and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat based upon soviet power" A delegate made the amendment to be inserted after the word "insurrection" "as the only means for the destruction of the bourgeois state," etc.

The editor of the Novy Mir immediately took the floor, arguing that there were other means, such as the revolutionary use of parliament, the soviets, mass action, etc., etc. After this speech, another delegate made the point of order that the amendment was contradictory to the Theses which had been adopted, and the chairman ruled that the point of order was well taken. Against this decision the reporter for the Program Committee immediately appealed, and the chairman was sustained by a roll call vote of 15 to 14. Another amendment was made to insert the words "for the final destruction of the bourgeois state" and this was accepted by the chairman, and around this motion the question was thrashed out in heated debate. Many new formulations were offered until finally a new committee was elected to reformulate the entire clause. This concluded that day's session, and the next morning the clause was adopted as follows:—"The Communist Party will systematically and persistently propagate to the working class the idea of the inevitability of, the necessity for a violent revolution and will prepare the working class for armed insurrection as the only means for the destruction of the bourgeois state and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship based upon soviet power." This clause was unanimously adopted by roll call vote by all present.

The next and the most serious clash came upon the adoption of the new constitution-