

# The Left Wing and the Communist Party

THE purpose of this statement is to set forth the position of the National Left Wing Council in relation to the Socialist Party; also in relation to the controversy which has arisen within the ranks of the Left Wing.

The National Left Wing Council came into existence on June 23rd, 1919, by action of the National Left Wing Conference held in New York June 21st to 24th. Since this Council was created by the National Left Wing Conference, the most exact way of arriving at an understanding of the character and purposes of the Council is by reference to the proceedings of the Conference.

On June 23rd (fifth session) the Conference Committee on Organization reported, among other matters, as follows:

"This Conference shall organize as the Left Wing Section of the Socialist Party and shall have as its object the capturing of the Socialist Party for revolutionary Socialism."

(Adopted by vote of 43 to 14; recorded as not voting, 14.)

"Toward this end the Conference shall elect a National Council of nine members to act as the executive of the Left Wing Section. The National Council shall elect an executive secretary."

Whereupon the Conference proceeded with the election of the Council, the following being declared elected: Ruthenberg, Fraina, Ferguson, Ballam, Wolfe, Cohen, Gitlow, Larkin, MacAlpine. Announced as not taking part in this election, 24 delegates.

"The National Council is authorized to publish one or more educational and propaganda papers; issue declarations; print literature; route speakers and undertake such other activity as will place the principles and program of the Left Wing Section before the rank and file of the Socialist Party membership.

The National Council shall co-ordinate all suspended and expelled branches, locals, state organizations and Language Federations, issue a temporary dues stamp to these organizations and do all in their power to keep these organizations intact until such time as they may again function as sub-divisions of a national organization."

"The National Council shall direct an agitation to realize the following results and conditions at the National Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party:

a) It shall assist in all ways within its power to secure the election of Left Wing delegates to the Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party.

b) It shall call upon all suspended and expelled sub-divisions of the Socialist Party to elect delegates to the Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party; shall insist that these delegates be seated at this convention and that the convention organize as if no suspensions or expulsions had occurred.

c) The National Council shall exert every influence to the end that the Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party may adopt the Left Wing Manifesto and Program as the basis for the Party's platform and policy.

d) It shall insist that the Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party affiliate the Socialist Party with the Communist International which affiliation has in fact been decided by referendum vote.

e) It shall demand that the Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party shall recognize the validity of the National Referendum elections for a new National Executive Com-

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mittee, International Delegates and an International Secretary.

f) However, there may come a time when by the ready assistance of capitalist courts the Right Wing reactionaries will retain legal possession of the party machinery and property. Should therefore the National Emergency Convention prove reactionary and in the control through the assistance of capitalist police powers, of the moderate and despotic officialdom of the party; should this Emergency Convention rule in favor of the shameful acts of the present autocratic National Executive Committee, then the Left Wing Delegates to this Convention shall immediately organize a new Communist Party, representing the vast majority of the present Socialist Party, a party which shall speak the will of the rank and file of the more than 50 per cent of the party already expelled and suspended, a party which will be true to the Communist International and revolutionary Socialism.

g) The National Council shall be instructed to call delegates from all branches, locals, state and Socialist Federations to meet in Chicago or any other place designated to which the Emergency Convention is summoned. In the event that such Convention refuses to seat the Left Wing delegates—the delegates accepting the Left Wing Manifesto—the Council shall call such delegates, expelled to call delegates from all branches, locals, party based on the call summoning the Convention in Moscow on the initiative of the Communist Party in Russia.

(Note: this call is incorporated in the Platform adopted by the Left Wing Conference.)

h) In the event that the National Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party is not called on August 30th, as at present scheduled, the National Council is instructed to call the delegates who have already been voted upon, and hold a convention that will organize a new party then and there at Chicago on August 30th, the Communist Party. (Unanimously carried.)

At a further stage of the Conference (eighth session) a resolution was adopted that we call a conference in Chicago on September first of all revolutionary elements desirous of uniting with the revolutionary Socialist Party, or with the Communist Party to be organized by the Left Wing delegates who may secede from the convention of the Socialist Party on August 30th. In explanation of this resolution reference was made to a group of expelled members of the S. L. P. who might be desirous of joining themselves with a Bolshevik party; also it was stated that this provision would include such Federation groups as might want to join with the Left Wing on September first.

The final motion of the Conference was as follows: "That all business that may be left over, if any, shall be referred to the National Council, and that we do now adjourn to meet in Chicago September first."

From the foregoing it is clear that the National Council carries over the Left Wing Conference of June 21-24 to September first. Meanwhile its central task is to bring together at Chicago delegates from all groups desirous of establishing in the United States a party of revolutionary Socialism.

The instructions to the National Council cover: 1) co-operation with delegates elected to the Emergency Convention under the regular party methods who are recognized and

instructed by the Left Wing groups within their respective States; 2) co-operation with delegates elected by expelled and suspended Left Wing groups, aside from the regular party elections; 3) co-operation with delegates from groups not within the Socialist Party, who desire to affiliate themselves with us on the basis of the Left Wing Manifesto and Program.

From the side of the machinery to be used by the National Left Wing Council, the instructions of the Conference cover: 1) the Emergency Convention; 2) an August 30th Convention in case the Emergency Convention is put off; 3) a special conference on September first with all elements desiring to unite on a Communist basis; 4) the reconvening of the Left Wing Conference on September first.

Finally, from the angle of the actual tasks to be fulfilled there are two clear-cut alternatives: 1) control of the Emergency Convention by the Left Wing delegates regularly elected, seating by them of Left Wing delegates elected by suffrage of expelled and suspended locals, States and Federations, and transformation of the Socialist Party into an organization of revolutionary Socialism; or 2) formation of a new party regardless of the Emergency Convention, on August 30th, or on September first, to be called the Communist Party.

The National Council is now engaged in gathering information, mobilizing the Left Wing forces, and carrying on the propaganda which will assure a party of revolutionary Socialism, by nation-wide co-operation of the Left Wing elements, by September first. Those who have attempted to raise the contention that the National Left Wing Conference did not sufficiently lay the basis for a Communist Party by September first deliberately misstate the plain facts.

There is no part of the Left Wing Conference program which is open to legitimate attack by any member of the Left Wing. That the National Left Wing Council is acting upon this program with a view to making the broadest possible preparation for the launching of a new party of revolutionary Socialism on August 30th and September first is conclusively shown by the record of our work and statements in *The Revolutionary Age*.

The main argument of the minority group in the Left Wing Conference was that it is impossible to expect the Right Wing to surrender control at the Emergency Convention. How then can there be any question, under the instructions above quoted, of the formation of a Communist Party outside the Emergency Convention? How could the National Council, assuming it were so disposed, which is not the fact, evade the responsibility for opening a convention to start the Communist Party.

Also, under these instructions, how could a Left Wing Emergency Convention—seating all Left Wing delegates—fail to establish a Communist Party?

Obviously there is no sincere argument that the Left Wing Conference did not completely cover the situation.

Let those who favor a Communist Party realize once for all, on the face of the Conference record itself, that so far as the question of a new party is concerned the minority group was defeated in the Conference on but one point: *the immediate formation, at New York, of a Communist Party*. Such an action would have been without mandate from the party membership; it would have been without