
Save the Party!

An Appeal to All Members of the Communist Party!

A leaflet published as "Statment No. 1" by the Central Caucus fraction, circa Nov. 1921.
Copy in the Comintern Archive f. 515, op. 1, d. 33, ll. 75-76.

COMRADES!

A crisis has arisen in the party more grave and serious in its possibilities than any with which our party has been faced since its formation. Certain decisions have been made by the CEC which, if carried into effect, will result in the liquidation and disruption of our party as at present constituted.

Pretending to act under direct instructions of the Comintern, the CEC has ordered all branches of the party to immediately become dues paying branches of the "A" [American Labor Alliance for Trade Relations with Russia] which in turn is to be transformed into a LPP [Legal Political Party], thus making the membership in the underground party identical with the membership in the LPP, and the branches of the underground party parallel with the branches in the open organization.

This sweeping decision was made without so much as giving the membership an opportunity to discuss or consider so far reaching and vital a change in the organization and structure of the party. It is now proposed to enforce this suicidal policy under the rule of strict party discipline.

This statement is being issued by a committee representing comrades who realize that the life of the party is at stake. It now becomes the duty of every member, regardless of former affiliation before unity, to understand the situation which confronts us within the party today.

The CEC has never given the members an opportunity to discuss and understand the question of a LPP. Comrade Brown [Max Bedacht], ONE of the delegates to the Third Congress [of the Comintern], has been sent into every district to explain the attitude

of the Comintern on the question of legal work, but nowhere has he entered into a discussion with the comrades upon the FORM of organization for carrying on legal work. Comrade Brown claims to have instructions from Lenin to IMMEDIATELY organize a LPP, and it is upon Comrade Brown's interpretation of these instructions that the CEC bases its present action.

While the Comintern [has directed] a wide extension of legal activities including a legal political expression of the CPA, the FORM and STRUCTURE of the legal machinery to be established is, and must be, left in the hands of the party here. These plans should be carefully worked out, and in their preparation every effort must be made not only to safeguard our underground machinery and connections, but to present them to our membership for discussion and understanding in order to procure as nearly unanimous support in such an important undertaking as possible.

The question which each comrade must place before himself and act upon is this: Are we ready NOW to give up our present form of organization, and suddenly, without preparation, to come out in the open, thus exposing all our party machinery and the entire membership to a general assault by the enemy?

ARE WE READY TO LIQUIDATE THE COMMUNIST PARTY?

THIS IS WHAT THE DECISION OF THE CEC MEANS!

One of the first thoughts to present itself to most comrades upon reading thus far is that of DISCIPLINE.

The CEC is the supreme body between conventions. It derives its authority from the Convention and is bound to carry out all the decisions of the Conven-

tion and enforce the constitution of the party adopted at the Convention, which is the party's SUPREME body.

The decisions of the CEC are, and must be, binding upon every member of the party. Every member and all units of the party are under compulsion to obey and carry out all decisions of the CEC. The CEC must maintain the discipline of the party.

But the CEC is itself under compulsion to carry out the policies of the party as determined by the SUPREME body — the Convention. The actions of the CEC are limited by the constitution of the party, and the CEC cannot set this constitution aside except in case of an emergency so great as to involve the very life of the party.

The present CEC has issued an order which at one blow disrupts the entire underground structure of the party; revokes the constitution; and sets aside the decision of the joint Unity Convention [May 15-28, Woodstock, NY] and the policies laid down therein. No emergency exists that necessitates so drastic a procedure.

The members of the Communist Party of America are not under MILITARY discipline as are our comrades of the Russian Communist Party. When an entirely new departure in party policy and tactics is about to be carried out, it must be preceded by extensive discussion and the consent of the membership reached through understanding.

No comrade is under obligation to carry out an order which strikes at the heart of the Communist Party, which will, if obeyed, disrupt and destroy the party, even if such an order comes in the form of a decision of the CEC!

• • • • •

Since the CEC has denounced every comrade who does not agree with its insane plans for carrying on legal work as "leftists" and "sectarians," it becomes necessary to enter into a more detailed discussion of the question at issue. We agree that it is not sufficient to have an illegal organization as the sole means of carrying on communist propaganda in this country. We maintain that the underground party is the instrument, the machinery, with which to create the communist movement and that the basis of this move-

ment must be the realities of the class struggle because the workers are not moved by theoretical discussions but by their immediate and pressing needs in their struggle for existence and in resisting their oppressors. The Communist Party can achieve leadership of the exploited masses only through the direct and open participation in their everyday struggles.

Our contact with the masses must be direct and immediate. Where in the United States can this contact be effected? Where can the members of the Communist Party most directly and immediately participate in the everyday struggles of the workers? Where are the realities of the class struggle most apparent? Where do we find the workers mobilized to resist their oppressors and to solve the questions of their most immediate and pressing needs? IN THE TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL UNIONS! The first essential in all revolutionary tactics is that the Communist Party shall achieve the leadership of the trade unions. No revolution can be successful in this country without the active support of the organized working masses.

No LPP that we may organize will achieve any appreciable measure of success unless it has the support of considerable numbers of the workers organized in the trade and industrial unions!

Any legal political machinery that we may set up depends for its stability upon the strength and discipline of the underground organization — upon the Communist Party. The stream cannot rise higher than its source.

The first prerequisite for organizing a LPP is the unity of our underground forces. The only basis for a LPP is the trained and disciplined and closely-knit units of our underground organization. ONLY OPPORTUNISTS OF THE RANKEST KIND WOULD PROPOSE A LPP ON ANY OTHER BASIS, or a LPP that liquidates the underground basis.

The necessary form for a workable legal apparatus must be, in its initial stages, a CADRE, which will draw into itself and absorb such sympathetic elements as are already prepared to engage in active legal communist work through the work of party nuclei in the unions and other workers' organizations. Into this CADRE should be thrown as much of our underground forces as may be necessary to insure absolute and unequivocal control.

The CEC proposes to take our entire under-

ground membership and reorganize them into a legal form, and thus liquidate our entire underground machinery. Our members of the CP of A will be practically the ONLY MEMBERSHIP IN THE LPP!

THE THROW OUR WHOLE UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION AT ONCE, AND ALONE, INTO THE OPEN IS, ON ITS FACE, SUICIDAL!

• • • • •

We have said that the first condition for the organization of a LPP is the unity of the underground forces.

What are the conditions obtaining at this moment within the ranks of the Communist Party? Are all our units functioning as they should? Has the process of uniting the former UCP and the former CP been perfected? Has the present CEC the unquestioned support and the confidence of the membership?

Our party is still in the process of unification and reorganization. The greatest confusion exists in every district due to the crushing policies of the CEC. Three of the largest districts — 2 [New York City], 4 [Cleveland], and 5 [Chicago] — have been subdivided and entirely new districts created [10: Upstate New York; 11: Pittsburgh; 12: Minneapolis]. New DOs have been appointed in SEVEN districts. None of these districts are functioning properly and the members are divided in an intense factional struggle due to the dissatisfaction created by the CEC which issues its commands irrespective of the needs and rights of the membership.

In some districts the [required post-unification] district conference has not yet been held. In others they were held but recently. The Language Federation Conferences have only just been held and in many of them their newly elected Bureaus and appointments have not yet been approved.

The CEC is developing and practicing an outright anti-federation policy in line with its crushing policy. The Unity Convention adopted a constitution defining the rights and duties of the federations. Within this constitution the language federations must be allowed to function if the party's work is to be successfully carried on. Any attempt on the part of the CEC majority to cripple and disrupt the language federa-

tions is an act of insubordination and a betrayal of the interests of the CP by the party's highest body, an example which will undermine and destroy the confidence of the entire membership in the CEC.

The CEC has instituted a crushing policy for purposes of maintaining factional control. They have suspended "pending investigation" 19 delegates to the recent Russian Language Conference for protesting against the manipulation of elections to the Conference by DOs acting under the instructions of the CEC. They have removed four members of the recently elected Lithuanian Bureau for simply expressing opinions upon party controversies and because they happened to have been members of the old EC [Executive Committee] of the Lithuanian Federation. The CEC APPOINTED, in violation of the Constitution (which gives the CEC no right to appoint members of a Federation Bureau), four Lithuanian comrades to take the places of those removed.

This action of the CEC is directed against over two thousand Lithuanian comrades who have been in the Communist Party since it was organized. The attitude of the CEC toward our foreign language speaking comrades is one of supreme contempt.

The head of the Industrial Department, a member of the CEC, openly threatened at a meeting of the party nuclei in the needle trades held in New York, that two or three thousand members of the party ought to be gotten rid of because they were useless "dead wood." A representative of the CEC, speaking to a conference of comrades in Cleveland, said that "the comrades were mistaken if they thought that only two or three thousand members would be acted against, if necessary the CEC would expel FIVE THOUSAND."

The DO in District 1 [A.S. Edwards, pseudonym "Sullivan"] was removed after "investigation" by ONE member of the CEC. The reason given was that "the DO did not have the confidence of the members in his district." In District 2 the DO [George Ashkenudzie, pseudonym "Henry"] was removed because "the CEC had more important work for him" while the newly appointed DO of District 2 ["Funk"] is maintained over the repeated protests of the membership. The former DO of District 2 was given no work to do although he had to be kept on the party payroll, his removal being consummated for purely factional reasons. District 2 was divided into two dis-

tricts in order to get control of the DEC [District Executive Committee] and the work in the district suffers in consequence. The DO of District 3 [Morris Kushinsky, pseudonym “Hoffman”] was transferred to District 4 and the former DO of District 4 [“Anders”] removed in order to “reduce the party payroll.” In Sub-district 2 of District 2 [New Jersey], the SDO [“Liddock”] was removed without cause and the entire sub-district refuses to recognize the new SDO, who does not even live in that section. The same situation obtains in all other districts.

The present CEC has demonstrated its incompetency to carry on even the most routine work of the party. The demonstration and armed uprising of the miners of Mingo, West Virginia, which centered the attention of the whole working class of this country upon the class struggle, was allowed to pass without so much as a single leaflet having been distributed, or a single word of comment in our official press. The unemployment situation grows daily more acute. Even the capitalist politicians and the bourgeois press are reacting to the growing menace, to them, of unemployment. Our CEC, interested only in a crushing policy for factional control, has not prepared or distributed a single leaflet on this important development; they have formulated no program for action; they have not given out a single slogan; notwithstanding the fact that for the past three months there has been an **ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE CEC CLOSELY BOUND BY A CAUCUS.**

This majority on the CEC has run the party into debt to the extent of about **TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS! MOST OF THIS MONEY HAS BEEN SIMPLY THROWN AWAY — SQUANDERED!** Appointments were made to paid party positions, not on upon the basis of the needs of the party work, but for personal and factional reasons. There are now on the party payroll over **FORTY** paid workers (?) and at one time the party carried **FORTY-EIGHT** comrades on its payroll. Many of these paid officials are idle most

of the time.

• • • • •

This appeal to the common sense of our comrades is being promulgated by a group of comrades who are not interested in factional control. We sincerely believe that the work of the past two years is about to be undone and that our party faces disruption and disintegration **UNLESS THE MEMBERSHIP ACTS — AND ACTS AT ONCE!**

This question — **THE SAVING OF THE PARTY** — is important enough to demand the calling of an **EMERGENCY CONVENTION!**

TAKE UP THIS QUESTION IN EVERY GROUP! DISCUSS IT FEARLESSLY AND HONESTLY!

A convention of the party will cost a lot of money, but purely financial considerations cannot be allowed to stand in the way where the **LIFE OF THE PARTY IS AT STAKE!**

The present CEC is squandering huge sums of money with no apparent result. You have been called upon by this CEC to give one day’s pay and this demand is made almost compulsory.

The interest of the members of the party demand the calling of an emergency convention.

THE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY WILL PAY FOR SUCH A CONVENTION.

The CEC intends to call a convention of the LPP immediately upon its being organized. Such a convention of the LPP can only be for the purpose of liquidating the Communist Party. **DO NOT BE FOOLED!**

PASS RESOLUTIONS IN YOUR GROUPS AND BRANCHES!

DEMAND AN EMERGENCY CONVENTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA!

SAVE THE PARTY!

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2005. • Free reproduction permitted.