
Joint Appeal of the Comintern and Profintern on the United Front, January 1, 1922 †

As published in *The Red Trade Union International* [Moscow], whole no. 12 (Feb. 1922), pp. 41-46.

To the Workers of all Countries!

The Executive Committee of the Communist International and Executive Bureau of the Red Labor International have during 3 days discussed the questions connected with the position of the international proletariat and with the international situation in general, and have come to the conclusion that the present situation requires unity of all the forces of the international proletariat, the establishment of a single front of all parties backed by the proletariat, regardless of their differences of views; the only basis for unity being the wish to fight jointly for the immediate needs of the working class. The Executive of the Comintern has decided to convene an enlarged session on Feb. 19th, 1922, to which representatives of the Communist parties of all countries are invited, their representation being doubled. At the same time it urges the proletariat of all other parties to do all they can to influence their parties in the interest of common action.

Fellow-workers, 3 years have passed since the end of the imperialist war in which you sacrificed your lives for the interests of capital. During these 3 years international capital has had an opportunity of showing to what extent it is capable of establishing an order which can give at least the

minimum of human security and the most modest conditions of human existence to the broad working masses.

Chaotic State of Industries.

And now we see the result. There are 6 million unemployed in America, and 2 million in England, owing to the impossibility of exporting goods. Unemployment grows in those neutral countries which became rich during the war. The direst need reigns in Central and Eastern Europe, in Russia, in the Balkan States, and in Turkey. These countries need billions of tons of goods from the industrially developed countries in order to reestablish their industries and to gain the capacity of supplying bread and raw material to the industrially developed countries. Between East and West there is Germany, working without a break, flooding the international markets with goods at prices so low that any competition with her is quite impossible for other countries. There is no unemployment in Germany, but the position of its workers is worse than that of the English unemployed. Against their own will they lower the price of labor in all countries. Prices are growing, the housing problem is becoming more acute, and taxes are becoming unbearable. The

†- A substantially different and expurgated English translation of this document appeared in *The Worker* [New York], v. 4, whole no. 208 (Feb. 2, 1922), pp. 1-2 and no. 210 (Feb. 18, 1922), pg. 4. This alternate translation is available from www.marxisthistory.org as a pdf entitled "For the United Front of the Proletariat: The Call for the First Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, January 1, 1922."

very countries where the cry of “woe to the defeated” was heard will soon hear another cry: “woe to the conquerors.” And the bourgeoisie is unable to bring either peace or order to the tortured world.

The ruins of Northern France, Belgium, Serbia, Romania, Poland, and Russia are still unrepaired. The victorious capitalist countries expect to put all expenditure connected with the restoration of the ruined countries upon one country, Germany, and this policy will soon make Germany fall under the heavy load and become a ruin itself. And where the bourgeoisie does begin to think of restoring the dislocated industrial machinery, it makes it an object for speculation and exploitation, which again creates new conflicts. Three years of imperialistic war, three years of armed intervention which the Entente carried on against Russia, have emptied the granary of Europe. The drought of last summer, which threatens 25 million people with death, has made the question of restoring the economic life of Russia a question of life and death for the Russian workers and peasants. It becomes clear to even the most narrow-minded bourgeois that without recognizing unconquerable Soviet Russia, without restoring the Russian economic machinery, it is impossible to overcome either the crisis of world industry or the international political complications.

Until Russia appears again in the international market in the capacity of a buyer, and supplier of raw material, there will be a yawning abyss in the world's industries. Until Soviet Russia feels secure from new attacks, it will be compelled to keep the Red Army under arms and there will always be a danger that the adventures of the chained dogs of world capital and that of the Polish white guards and the Romanian landed aristocracy will again set on fire the whole world. But the world bourgeoisie leaves the starving millions of the Russian population without help because it reckons the hunger will make the Soviet yield to their demands, which amount to nothing less than that

the Soviet government should give up Russia to the exploitation of the international financial syndicates, which would govern in Russia as they have done in China and Turkey.

The Russian people, who with arms in hand defended themselves against all attempts to establish in Russia the reign of world capital under the mast of the dictatorship of the Russian white guards, will defend themselves against the new attempt to enslave them. The question of bringing Russia in to the field of world industry, the question of general peace, will become an object of violent struggle once more.

Washington Conference.

The attitude of world capital towards Germany and Soviet Russia is not the only source of further convulsions. The Washington Conference, which attempted to solve the Far Eastern problem, has failed in its object.

The 400 million people of China still remain an object of barter, and as before they are a source of further strife between capitalist nations. Being conscious of their weakness and unable to do away with the plunder of China, the Allied countries have concluded that a Four Power Pact, which testifies to the fact that they feel the danger of the coming war and try therefore, by a patchwork of treaties, to tie up one another's independence of action. They had not the courage to limit armaments except on paper. All talk of naval disarmament ended in a decision to remove the old ships and limit the number of super-dreadnoughts in order to increase the armament under the sea and in the air. Simultaneously they invent new gas in order to be able to poison whole nations.

Capital's Offensive on the Working Class.

The capitalists, incapable of uniting for restoring the world's industries, incapable of securing the world with bread and peace, are uniting

now for the attack on labor. They try everywhere to reduce wages, the buying capacity of which is now insufficient to secure the workers with that meager standard of living on which they somehow existed before the war.

In spite of unemployment they try everywhere to lengthen working hours. The capitalists have taken the offensive against the working class over the whole world. And they attack because they are compelled to do so. The war has left behind great state debts and the imperialists have still further increased them. The capitalists have not the courage to annul these state debts. Someone is to pay for them, and as the capitalists do not wish to do it, they try to shift these burdens on the shoulders of the working class. What is a state debt? It is the right of the capitalists, without any labor, without taking any part in industry, to appropriate part of the products produced by the workers. In their offensive the capitalists aim to force the workers to increase production and thus enable the profiteers who grew rich during the war, as well as those of peacetime, to get hold of the greater part of the products of labor. The proletariat, by its work in the shops and its acquiescence to the demands of the capitalists during the war, gave them license to turn the whole world into ruins, and is now compelled to provide a gay living for the hyenas of war.

“Achievements of the Reformist Policy.”

Comrades, in spite of the lessons that the war taught you, you hoped for 3 years that the capitalists would fulfill the promises given you during the war, that they would bring you democratic government, right of self-determination, bread, and freedom. But you are disappointed in your hopes. Instead of nationalization of the mines, the English miners witness how the coal magnates cut down their wages. The German miners, who believed by submission to the capitalists to achieve socialization of industries, wit-

ness now how Stinnes & Co., the German industrial kings, take all the productive forces into their hands, how they try to take over the railways and export the riches from the country in order to hide from the German people their deposits in foreign banks. France is now more than any other country in the grip of the capitalists who united during the war. In America the Republican Party is in power, and this means the reign of the big trusts in all their brutal nakedness. Even the government bread subsidy is being removed in all countries. Those who cannot buy bread at high prices must die from starvation. The democracy of the post-war period is nothing but a mask behind which is hidden the rule of the military profiteers, the screen behind which the brainless diplomats are scheming their black deeds against the people. The White Terror is raging in a number of capitalist countries, and in India and Egypt the English world oligarchy has turned these terrors, up till now directed against small groups, towards whole nations. In America, Holland, Romania, and Yugoslavia, the fighters for the workers' cause are outlawed. All the promises of the Second International, Two-and-a-Half International, and of the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions have vanished like smoke. All these international organizations have shown their incapacity to lead you in the struggle even for the slogan of “democracy and freedom,” because their coalition with the bourgeoisie has made them weak and has forced them to strengthen the power of the bourgeoisie whether they wish it or not.

Necessity of Single Front.

Previous experience was required to make even the blind see to what extent the Communist International and the Red International of Labor Unions were right when they said to you: “The working class will emancipate itself only when we break down the power of the bourgeoisie and establish our own government. Only when it will

unite internationally and remove the military parasites will it be able to restore the industrial life of the various countries.” But we know how heavy are the chains of the past, how strong is the influence, of the capitalist schools, press, and church. We know how much the working masses dread to take over the power single-handed, to become the molder of their own destinies. We know how great is the fear of the large proletarian masses for the defeats which the Communist minority has suffered in their struggle for the emancipation of the masses from slavery. We know how the capitalist press of the whole world is trying to destroy your confidence in the cause, showing you the injuries which the Russian proletariat has suffered in the lonely fight with the whole capitalist world. And therefore we say to you now: “Well, do you still hesitate to begin the fight on the whole front? Do you still hesitate to fight for power, for the dictatorship? Do you still hesitate to make a decisive attack against the stronghold of the whole reaction?”

“Then unite at least in the struggle for your bare existence, in the struggle for bread and peace. Form a single front for this struggle, unite as a proletarian class against the class exploiters and the devastators of the world. Break the barriers which were put between you, enter the united ranks whether you are Communists, Social Democrats, Anarchists, or Syndicalists, in order to fight against the great destitution of the present day.”

The Communist International has always advised the workers who stood for the dictatorship of the proletariat to unite in independent parties. The Communist International does not retreat from what it has said with regard to the necessity for the formation of independent Communist Parties; it is convinced that every coming day will more and more convince the working masses of the correctness of its action. In spite of all the differences which exists among us, it says: “Workers of the whole world, close your ranks to fight for all that unites you, for all that you con-

sider your common cause.”

All workers, whether Communists or Social Democrats or Anarchists, even if they belong to the Christian and Liberal unions, do not wish to allow a further reduction in their wages. They do not wish any longer to starve, and besiege the factory offices in search of work; and, therefore, they must unite and close their ranks in reply to the attack of the employers. They are all threatened to be thrown out into the street. That is why they must unite in order to fight against everything that increases unemployment. Unemployment will grow in all industrial countries if the German proletariat, which has been turned into a slave of Entente and German capital, will be forced to lower the standard of international wages in order that the German capitalists get the opportunity to flood the international markets with cheap labor, and thus pay off the Versailles tribute. Unemployment will grow if the international capitalists will still put before Soviet Russia conditions of plunder and oppression and thus force her to starve or to defend herself with arms. Unite in the fight for annulling the war debts, against the policy of strangling Germany, for recognition of Soviet Russia and for its restoration on conditions which are in the interests of the international proletariat. The impoverished world is in need of a well-planned distribution of raw materials, it is in need of control over prices. All this is impossible until the working class attains control over industry, until the elected bodies of the workers are in a position to control the activities of the capitalist disorganizers of industry. All the workers must unite to fight for control of industry. This is not only in the workers’ interests but also in the interests of the large masses of the petty bourgeoisie, who are being choked by ever growing taxes.

All workers, whether Communists or Social Democrats or Syndicalists, whether they belong to the Christian or to the Liberal unions, are interested to prevent the attempt of the capitalist diplomacy to set the world on fire anew. Unite,

therefore, to fight against capitalist armaments, against the capitalist war machinations!

Prepare the Single Front in the Workshops.

The Communist International and the Red Labor International urges all Communist workers and all members of revolutionary trade unions to unite everywhere, in the workshops or at meetings, to form a single family of laborers which will be able to defend itself and repulse all attacks of the capitalists at any critical moment. Forge the iron will towards proletarian unity, on which every attempt to disunite the workers, from whencever it may come, will be broken to pieces. Only if you, the workers, will extend your brotherly hands to one another in the workshop and in the mines, will all parties which are backed by the workers and which make appeal to them find themselves forced to unite for a joint offensive war against capital. Only in this case will they be forced to break their bonds with the capitalist parties.

And when the proletariat will close its ranks, it will be in a position to utilize its limited rights, given by so-called capitalist democracy, to fight for the improvement of its lot, and reinforcement of its position.

We say to you: Under the roof of the bourgeois chicken coop the proletarian giant is unable to stretch out to its full length. When you begin the struggle, you will see that you need the whip of the dictatorship in order to triumph. But we know that the dictatorship is possible only when the great majority of the proletariat will, taught by experience, become convinced of its necessity. And therefore the Communist International and all Communist Parties on the one hand, and the Red International of Labor unions, with all the revolutionary trade unions on the other, wish pa-

tiently to march forward in brotherly union will all other workers even in the daily struggle under the present circumstances of capitalist democracy. We know that when you will unite, when the whole proletariat will start moving in closed ranks, it will comprehend its own strength and will see that the bourgeoisie, which thought itself the master of the situation among the ruins of the world, will appear, in comparison with you, a mere dwarf. Being convinced that you will have to follow the same path upon which the best of your kin have shed their blood, upon which hundreds of thousands of Russian workers have sacrificed their lives, upon which Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Leo Jogisches, and hundreds of other unknown heroes fell, for the same of which tens of thousands have languished in prisons, being firmly convinced that the struggling proletariat will finally be forced to take the path of Communism, we say to you: Workers of all lands, unite!

Hail to the single proletarian front against the bourgeoisie!

On to the counterattack against the capitalist offensive!

Down with the slave-chains of Germany!

Hands off Soviet Russia!

Bread and machinery for the workers!

Long live the solidarity of the proletariat of the whole world!

*The Executive Committee
of the Comintern.*

*Executive Bureau of the
Red International of Labor Unions.*

Moscow, January 1st, 1922.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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