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# Report of the CLP Ohio State Secretary to the Ohio State Executive Committee, November 8, 1919.

by A. Wagenknecht

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COMRADES:—

Many events have taken place since the State Executive Committee of the Ohio party last met. The great change taking place in the world has demanded new adjustment in every walk of life, and new adjustments have also been forced upon the revolutionary movements of the working class.

The split in the Socialist Party, the consequent organization of two communist parties, and the activities of all three parties call for study on the part of the membership. Many comrades need a goodly amount of time before they can mentally digest the causes for these controversies, and as a consequence there are many comrades yet in the transition stage, gradually growing into revolutionary Socialists, gradually accepting the program of the Third International.

To the comrades who look askance at the inter-party differences, we have this to say: The same divisions are occurring in all European countries. In Sweden, England, France, Italy, Norway, Germany — in all European countries in which a Socialist movement existed before and during wartime, a division has occurred, the comrades dividing themselves into right wing Socialists, those who are pure political actionists and parliamentarians, and into left wing Socialists, those who realize that we participate in political campaigns for purposes of propaganda and education, and who make the industrial struggles the major campaign, and who know we can never hope to establish industrial democracy by having legislators make a motion for it in Congress. The slogan of the left wing Socialists is “all power to the workers” and their one immediate demand is “workers’ control.”

In the United States the situation among the left

wing Socialists is somewhat complicated because of a split in the left wing movement. This split occurred in New York in June, when certain comrades demanded that a new party be organized at once, whereas others, a majority, demanded that the fight for left wing principles be continued in the old Socialist Party until the national convention. The result of this split was that some comrades began immediately organizing a new party, whereas others continued their fight in the Socialist Party for left wing principles. This resulted in two left wing conventions in Chicago, out of which were organized the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party.

The Communist Labor Party, while in convention and thereafter, made sincere attempts to unify the two communist groups, but without success. The national officials of the Communist Party seem determined to perpetuate their clique control and to do so, they do not feel inclined to unite with the Communist Labor Party upon a basis of equality. The last unity attempt on the part of the Communist Labor Party was made October 13th. The answer to the call for a unity conference resulted in another refusal by the national officials of the Communist Party. The Communist Labor Party now intends to give its full time to the important work of propaganda and organization and await the time when the membership of the Communist Party will force national officials into unity with our party.

In this state the Communist Labor Party is gathering strength at a satisfactory rate. As the committee knows, the constitution of the party adopted by membership vote provides that the state organization affiliate with that section of the Socialist Party which adopts

the left wing program. The Socialist Party national convention of August 30th split into left and right sections. That section which adopted the left wing program was subsequently named the Communist Labor Party. Therefore, by membership mandate, we are affiliated with the Communist Labor Party.

This does not mean that all locals in the state are so affiliated. The branches belonging to language federations joined the Communist Party: first, because of lack of information as to the split in the left wing ranks, the papers of the federations, controlled by those who organized the third party, the Communist Party, not being accessible to the comrades who followed the dictates of the majority of the left wing conference. And second, because these branches do, with few exceptions, follow the lead of their federation secretaries and executives.

The situation in this state in regard to Communist Labor Party organization is very favorable. New affiliations are being secured day by day. The comrades are beginning to understand that it is the Communist Labor Party, because it is best adapted to conditions in this country, which will be the virile and active revolutionary party in this country. The Communist Party, divided against itself, first by having two Executive Committees and second by being a loosely federated party consisting of federations, each federation an autonomous group, will disintegrate because of internal differences, and the best of its comrades will join the Communist Labor Party in time, unless the membership of this party eventually forces unity.

*The Ohio Socialist*, the official weekly of the party in Ohio, still maintains its popularity and its large subscription list. The issues per week are of between 16,000 and 20,000 copies, the variation depending upon the number of bundle orders received.

The Army of Liberators, organized by consent of the State Executive Committee, has done much toward propagandizing the workers to act en masse to free political prisoners. Many contributions have been

received, labor unions responding splendidly for this cause.

The financial situation of the party can best be judged by the financial report, which will be placed before you before you adjourn. The Ohio state party has assisted in financing the national office of the Communist Labor Party, and although this was done without sanction by the State Executive Committee, the state office hopes to have your approval of this action.

The present State Secretary, having been elected National Secretary for the Communist Labor Party, desires to resign his office in the Ohio movement, this resignation to take effect at once. The national office of the Communist Labor Party will remove to New York next week, and this will necessitate the removal from Ohio of the present State Secretary.†

At least two organizers, well posted upon the party controversy, should be placed in the field at once. Information of party differences should be carried to the locals first hand, and by so doing the minds of many comrades can be cleared as to the party situation.

In closing we desire to again state that the new adjustments which are taking place need time to mature. Members need time to think. Eventually the party which shows the greatest activity along the lines of revolutionary principles will gain the confidence and support of the membership. We claim that in time, the party which will show most life and action will be the Communist Labor Party. In it are amassed the hundreds of Jimmy Higginsons of the old Socialist Party. It does not lack for either platform, executive, or organization talent. Just as soon as this talent can be put to work, and this is being done gradually, the progress of the organization will be phenomenal.

Fraternally submitted,

A. Wagenknecht,  
State Secretary.

†- Wagenknecht was replaced by his brother-in-law, Elmer T. Allison, as acting State Secretary of the Ohio state organization of the Communist Labor Party. This same Nov. 8-9, 1919, meeting of the State Executive Committee voted to change the name of *The Ohio Socialist* to *The Toiler* and set Nov. 29-30 as the date for a state conference of the CLP, with the party's various locals to be advised of this conclave's location by mail.

*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.*

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