
Letter to the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America in New York from the National Executive Committee of the Communist Labor Party in New York, March 9, 1920.

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New York City, March 9, 1920.

Central Executive Committee,
Communist Party of America.

Comrades:

The National Executive Committee of the Communist Labor Party learns with regret that the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party has again refused the opportunity to unite all Communist forces in the United States under one banner.

No other interpretation can be placed upon the proposal by the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party to hold a convention, in view of their insistence that “as a basis for the convention tentative acceptance of the Communist Party constitution setting forth the fundamental relationship of the language federations within the party is essential.”

The form of language federations has been one of the essential points of difference between the two parties. The fact that a small clique through their control of the autonomous federation groups controlled by the Communist Party convention in Chicago [Sept. 1919] prevented unity of all the Communist elements there. But now that the governmental persecution has forced both parties to ignore the constitutions that they adopted last fall, now that the Communist Party membership itself is violating those very provisions of the Communist Party constitution regarding federations, it is senseless and silly to bring acceptance of those principles as an essential preliminary to unity of Communist forces. The assumption is justified that they

are trotted out rather as an OBSTACLE to unity, so as to perpetuate the small clique control of the Communist Party by the present majority of the Communist Party’s Central Executive Committee.

The Communist Party committee maintains that cooperation in the work of defense, organization, and propaganda is “impracticable” and “inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the Communist Party.” But we know that the great mass of the Communist Party’s membership desire IMMEDIATE cooperation of all Communist forces in these endeavors to meet the forces of reaction. We know that in this attempt to postpone even the consideration of Unity to a distant convention, the holding of which is very problematical, the majority of the Communist Party Central Executive Committee (a bare majority of one) does not represent the will of the Communist Party’s membership, and we appeal to this membership to enforce their will.

We ask the membership not to be lulled into inactivity with the promise of a Unity Convention six months hence. Our acceptance of the Convention proposal was conditional upon an immediate uniting of all Communist forces to fight the common foe. Those that want unity can achieve it AT ONCE, much easier than six months from now. RIGHT NOW is the time to unite into one mighty army of all Comrades that will hold aloft the banner of the Third International. The persecutions have disrupted the old organization forms. The membership is now in a state of flux. New organization forms are being molded and built, adapted to the new conditions. While this process is going on ALL that are worthwhile can be united into ONE or-

ganization, will NATURALLY unite into one organization.

But if we wait six months, if we first go through a long period of steamroller building and wire-pulling to control convention delegates (as some of the Communist Party's Central Executive Committee's majority have already started to do against the members of their own party), if we now once more build TWO Communist organizations until they become set and rigid, and then pit them against each other in a convention, a unity of Communist forces will be almost impossible to attain. If the golden opportunity to unite NOW is allowed to pass, if the schism in the Communist ranks is perpetuated as the present majority of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party seems to desire, then those responsible for it will convict themselves of actual treason to the Communist International.

We stand ready at any time to discuss with the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party the problem of immediate merging of the Communist hosts, to bring into one great fighting organization all those who are for the Soviets and the Proletarian Dictatorship, as recommended by the Executive Committee of the Communist International. We hope sincerely that this consummation may yet be achieved.

National Executive Committee,
Communist Labor Party.

A. Wagenknecht,
Executive Secretary.

Max Bedacht,
Alexander Bilan,
Jack Carney,
L.E. Katterfeld,
Edward Lindgren.

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