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# 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.

As published in *The Worker* [New York], v. 4, whole no. 208 (Feb. 2, 1922), pp. 1-2  
and v. 4, whole no. 210 (Feb. 18, 1922), pg. 4.

The Executives of the Communist International and the Red Trade Union International have in three joint sessions considered the international situation and the situation of the international working class, and have come to the conclusion that this situation demands the union of all the forces of the international proletariat, the establishment of a united front of all the parties of the proletariat, regardless of the differences separating them, if they desire to fight in common for the immediate urgent needs of the working class. The Executive of the Communist International has convoked a meeting for the 19th of February 1922, to which all the Communist Parties are to send a delegations twice as large as usual. At the same time it calls the workers of all parties to do all in their power to induce their parties to take part in a common proletarian action.

## **Working Men and Women!**

Three years have passed since the end of the great imperialist war in which you offered your lives for the interests of capital. For three years international capital has had a free hand to show whether it is capable of introducing any sort of human order which would assure the masses of the people the minimum of safety, the minimum of the conditions necessary for life.

## **The World's Economic Chaos.**

The result lies before you.

Six million unemployed in America, two million in England, and increasing unemployment in the neutral countries enriched by the war, as the result of

the disappearance of their export markets.

However, in the ruined countries of Central and Eastern Europe, in Russia, in the Balkans, and in Turkey there prevails the greatest misery. They need billions of dollars' worth of goods from the industrial countries in order to revive their production and again to be able to supply grain and raw materials to the industrial world. Hemmed in between East and West, Germany is uninterruptedly at work and is flooding the world with quantities of goods at prices which crowd other countries out of the market. It has practically no unemployment but the workers of Germany are worse off than the workless of England. They are against their will reducing the wages of the workers of other countries. The housing shortage and the tax burden is continually growing. The world, cleft and torn apart, through which the cry has resounded up to now, "Woe to the vanquished!", and which will soon hear the call, "Woe to the victors!", can not be set in order and at peace by the bourgeoisie. Germany's reparations task is the reconstruction of Soviet Russia. The ruins of Northern France, Belgium, Serbia, Romania, Poland, and Russia have not yet been cleared away. The capitalists of the victorious countries are seeking to burden one country with the costs of their reconstruction and the result is that Germany must collapse under the strain and will become a heap of ruins. And wherever the bourgeoisie takes up the work of reconstruction, it makes it the object of speculation and of exploitation, which must inevitably lead to new conflicts.

Three years of imperialist war, followed by three years of armed intervention of the Allies in Soviet Russia, have turned this granary of Europe into a desert

in spite of all the heroic resistance of the Soviets. The drought last summer, which threatens 25 million human beings with death by starvation, has made the question of the reconstruction of Russia a question of life or death of millions of Russian workers and peasants. And more and more is it becoming clear even to the stupid bourgeoisie that neither the world economic crisis nor the great political tension between the different countries can be overcome even temporarily without the recognition of the undefeated Soviet government and the economic reconstruction of Soviet Russia. If Russia does not again take its place in the world market as furnisher of raw materials and market for finished products there will be an irremediable gap in the world's economy. And as long as Soviet Russia is not guaranteed against new attacks, it will have to keep the Red Army under arms and the danger will always be present that the world may again be set on fire as the result of the military ventures of the watchdogs of World Capitalism — the Polish White Guards and the Romanian Boyars. The world bourgeoisie refuses to aid the starving millions in Russia, for it expects that Hunger will make them more accommodating to the demands of World Capital. These demands are that as the price of recognition, the Soviet government deliver Russia up to an international financial syndicate, which will administer Russia as it has done in China and Turkey. The Russian people, which for four years defended itself with arms in its hands against the establishment of the rule of World Capital in Russia under the mask of the dictatorship of the Russian Whites, will, of course, defend itself with all its power against the "peaceful" attempt at its enslavement. The question of Russia's return into the world's economic system and the question of general peace will become the pivots of new conflicts.

### **The Washington Conference.**

However, the relations of World Capital to Germany and to Soviet Russia are not the only sources of great new disturbances. The Conference which attempted to solve the problem of the Far East has not solved it. The great Chinese people of 400 million human beings has remained the object of further haggling and of new conflicts. Feeling their impotence, their incapacity of either renouncing the exploitation

of China or of carrying it through, the Allied Powers have concluded the Four Power Treaty, which only manifests one thing — that they realize how great the danger of war is and therefore are attempting to mutually restrain one another by the spiderweb of an agreement from undertaking independent measures. They were not able to reduce land armaments, even on paper, the entire cry for naval disarmament ended in the elimination of obsolete ships and the limitation of the number of super-dreadnoughts, in order to arm in the air and under water. At the same time they are seeking for new poison gasses which will be able to destroy entire peoples.

### **The Failure of Reformist Policies.**

For three years in spite of all your experiences in the war, you hoped that matters would become better, that the capitalists would fulfill the promises they made during the war and that they would give you Democracy, Self-Determination, Bread, and Freedom. Your hopes have been deceived. Instead of the nationalization of coal, the English miners were compelled to look on while the coal barons reduced their wages. The German workers believed that if they would submit to the rule of the bourgeoisie, they would obtain the socialization of industry in a peaceful manner. Today they must look on while the kings of German industry, Stinnes & Co., are getting hold of all the productive forces of the land, while they prepared to get control of the railways, while they export the wealth of the country in order to deposit foreign currency in foreign banks to protect their property from seizure of the German people. France is today more than ever under the control of capital united in the war. In America the rule of the Republican Party means the naked and unmasked sovereignty of the trusts. Even the governmental subsidies for the cheapening of the price of bread are being abolished in all countries; whoever cannot afford the high price of bread can die of hunger. Postwar Democracy is nothing but the mask for the rule of the war speculators and the curtain behind which a brainless diplomacy forges plots against the people of the world. In a number of the capitalist countries the White Terror rages. In India and Egypt the British world oligarchy has turned this terror, which up to now it has only used against small groups, against

the masses. In America, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia, the fighters of the proletariat have been outlawed. The promises of the Second, 2-1/2, and Amsterdam Trade Union International have turned to water. All these international associations have demonstrated their incompetence to lead you in the struggle even if only for Democracy and reforms, because they have been condemned to helplessness through their coalition with the bourgeoisie and if they wish it or not must assist in the strengthening of the rule of the bourgeoisie.

### **The United Front is Needed.**

Your experience up to now must have shown even the blind that the Communist International was right when it said, "The working class can only free itself by breaking the power of the bourgeoisie and establishing the rule of the working class, by clearing away the ruins of the war and, closely united internationally, beginning the work of reconstruction."

But we know how strong the chains of the past — the capitalist school, press, and church — still are. We know how timid and afraid large proletarian masses still are to seize power and forge their own destiny. We know how much great proletarian masses still fear defeats such as Communist minorities have suffered in their struggle to free the masses from the fate of slaves. We know how the capitalist press of the entire world is trying to rob you of your courage by pointing to the wounds of the isolated Russian proletariat, received in its duel with the entire capitalist world. And therefore we say to you, "You are not yet ready to renew your struggle, you do not yet dare the armed conflict for power, for the dictatorship, you do not yet dare the great attack on the citadels of world reaction. Then at least join forces for the struggle for a bare existence, for the struggle for a bit of bread and peace. Join your forces in a battle front, unite as a proletarian class against the class of the exploiters and pillagers of the world. Tear down the walls which have been built up between you, take your place in the ranks — whether Communist, Social Democrat, Anarchist, or Syndicalist — for the battle against the misery of the hour."

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The Communist International has always demanded that the workers who stand on the platform of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviets join together in independent parties. It retracts not a word of what it said at the time of the foundation and the building of independent Communist parties. It is convinced that each day greater and greater masses will realize how much it was right in all its actions. But in spite of all that separates us, it calls, "Working men and women of all countries, close your ranks in the battle for the cause that unites you, in the battle for that which all of you recognize as a common goal."

All workers, whether Communists, Social Democrats, or Syndicalists, even if Christian or Liberal trade unionists — do not desire to permit any further reduction of wages. They no longer desire to work while hungry and freezing, and therefore they must unite in a common front against the offensive of the employers.

### **Fear Loss of Work.**

All workers, whether Communists, Social Democrats, or Syndicalists, Christian or Liberal trade unionists — do not want to bet day in and day out from factory gate to factory gate for work; they all fear being thrown out of work. Therefore they must unite in the fight against everything which increases unemployment. And unemployment will be made perpetual in all industrial countries if the German proletariat, enslaved to the Entente and to German capital, will have to toil as international wage-reducers so that German capitalists will be able to flood the world market with German goods at coolie prices in order to pay the tribute of Versailles. Unemployment will grow if the capitalist world puts conditions of enslavement and subjugation to Soviet Russia and forces it to continue to starve or to defend itself with arms in hands. Therefore unite in the struggle for the cancellation of war debts, for the recognition of Soviet Russia and its building up on the basis of conditions which are in accordance with the interests of the international proletariat.

Not only unemployment is oppressing the working class. It is threatened by the anarchy of production and is threatened by the fact that the capitalists can produce and export whatever they desire. The impoverished world requires a methodical distribution of raw

materials and their methodical utilization. It demands the control of prices. All that is impossible as long as the working class does not conquer for itself control over production, as long as the organs elected by the workers have not the opportunity of checking the free reign of the capitalist disorganizers. All workers must unite for the struggle, for this control of production which is not only in the interest of the proletariat, but also of the broadest strata of the petty bourgeoisie, which groans under the Bacchanalia of high prices.

All workers, whether Communists, Social Democrats, or Syndicalists, and Christian or Liberal trade unionists, are interested in preventing capitalist diplomacy from starting a new world conflagration, in depriving it of its occupation. Therefore, unite in the struggle against armaments, against capitalist intrigues.

### **Prepare United Front in the Shops.**

The Communist International demands of all Communist workers, demands of all sincere workers everywhere, in the entire world, in the shop and in the meeting hall, that they unite in one family of workers, who will stand together against capital in all the questions of the day. Create an iron will for proletarian unity, on which all attempts to separate the proletariat will shatter, come they from whatever side they may. Only when you, proletarians, in shop and factory so unite, will all parties which rest upon the proletariat and wish to be heeded by it, be compelled to unite for a common defensive fight against capitalism. Only then will they be forced to break their alliance with the capitalist parties.

However, if the proletariat unites, it will then be able to utilize the niggardly rights granted it by capitalist pseudo-democracy in the struggle for the improvement of the condition of the proletariat and for the strengthening of its positions. We say to you, "The proletarian giant cannot stretch its limbs and cannot raise itself to its full stature under the roof of the capitalist chicken-coop. When you begin to fight you will

see that you need the sword of the dictatorship in order to win. But we know that this dictatorship is only possible when the great majority of the proletariat arrives at it through its own experiences, and therefore the Communist International and the Communist parties will patiently and fraternally march together with all the rest of the proletariat, even when they fight on the battlefield of capitalist democracy.

We know that when you have united your forces, when the entire proletariat advances together, it will learn how great its forces are, it will see that the bourgeoisie which feels itself the lord over the ruins of the world will become as nothing against you.

In the iron conviction that you will go the way that your elite have marked with their blood, the way for which hundreds of thousands of Russian workers, for which Rosa Luxemburg, Leo Jogisches, Karl Liebknecht, and hundreds of other unknown fighters have fallen, for which tens of thousands suffer in prisons, in the firm conviction that the fighting proletariat will be compelled to follow the path of Communism, we call to you, "Workers of the world, unite!"

Long live the common battlefield of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie!

For the counterattack against the offensive of capital!

For the struggle for the control of production!

Down with capitalist armaments and plots!

Away with the chains of slavery for laboring Germany!

Hands off Soviet Russia!

Bread and machines for the Russian Proletariat!

Long live proletarian solidarity in every country and in the whole world!

The Executive of the Communist International

The Executive of the Red Trade Union International

Moscow, January 1st, 1922.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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