
Letter to All Branches of the Workers Party of America from C.E. Ruthenberg, Executive Secretary, [published Jan. 14, 1924]

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Detailed information on the immediate political struggles confronting the Workers Party have been sent to the party membership in a letter directed to all party branches by the party's Executive Secretary, C.E. Ruthenberg.

The work outlined will be carried on under the direction of the City Central Committees and District Organizations where such exist. The letter covers such questions as the Recognition of Soviet Russia, the campaign for the Protection of the Foreign-Born, the Labor Party Campaign, and the Membership Drive. It is as follows:

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Recognition of Soviet Russia.

The discussion in the Senate of the United States and in the capitalist press of the attack of Secretary of State Hughes on Soviet Russia and the Communist International has aroused general interest in the question of Recognition of Soviet Russia.

The Central Executive Committee of the Party has determined to take advantage of the situation to build up favorable sentiment for Soviet Russia and as a means of doing this, all CCCs of the Party are directed to arrange public meetings on Sunday, February 3rd [1924], which are to be RECOGNITION OF SOVIET RUSSIA meet-

ings. A Committee should be elected by each Party organization at once for the arrangement of such a meeting. The hall should be secured and the National Office notified and a speaker will be assigned immediately.

The advertising for these meetings should contain the slogans RECOGNITION OF SOVIET RUSSIA and THE WORKERS PARTY ANSWERS SECRETARY OF STATE HUGHES.

It should be possible for our Party to arrange at least 50 mass meetings on Feb. 3, and 50 mass meetings on a single day on this issue will be a triumph for our organization and will strengthen the support for RECOGNITION OF SOVIET RUSSIA. Prompt action is required for this work as only 3 weeks remain. The meetings should be well advertised both through leaflets and in announcements in the local newspapers.

Campaign for Protection of Foreign-Born.

The 3rd National Convention of the Party [Chicago: Dec. 30, 1923-Jan. 2, 1924] reaffirmed the declaration of the 2nd National Convention [New York: Dec. 24-26, 1922] pledging the Party to carry on a campaign for the protection of foreign-born workers against exception laws. The campaign becomes of immediate importance in view of the fact that President Coolidge

recommended in his message to Congress that all foreign-born workers be registered and legislation to this effect is now pending in Congress. There is also pending legislation which proposes that immigration to the United States in the future shall be on a contract basis; that is, that workers shall be brought from European countries under contract to work in certain industries.

Both of these proposed laws represent a great danger to the whole working class movement of this country, native-born and foreign-born, and it should be possible to rally wide masses of workers in protest against these laws.

To organize the opposition against these laws, the Party has decided to initiate organization of Councils for the Protection of Foreign-Born Workers. The method of procedure in organizing these councils should be as follows:

A. The Local Party organization should bring into existence a temporary committee representing the trade union movement, foreign-born organizations, and workers' political organizations. This committee should send out a call for a city conference to organize the opposition against the exception laws above described. All trade unions, fraternal organizations, and organization of foreign-born of every kind, and workers' political parties should be invited to send delegates to this conference. At the conference a representative Executive Committee should be elected which will conduct the work of fighting these laws through mass meetings, circularization of literature, resolutions, etc.

B. At the same time that this temporary committee is organized and proceeds with its work, each Federation of the Party represented in a given city should organize at once a conference of all organizations of their language group in their city. That is, the Russian, German, Jewish Party Branch or Party Branch of any other language section should surround itself with all the existing organizations of that language group in a language section of the local COUNCIL FOR

PROTECTION OF THE FOREIGN-BORN. The language section thus organized should then send delegates to the general city conference.

There will be sent to City Central Committees and District Organizers with this letter a proposed manifesto to be issued by the temporary committee in your city as the basis of organization of the local council for protection of foreign-born workers. This manifesto should be mailed to the various organizations invited to participate and printed in leaflet form for general distribution among the workers of your city.

The campaign for protection of foreign-born workers offers a great opportunity to build up a mass movement, but in order to take advantage of this opportunity we must act quickly, as the legislation may come before Congress any day for adoption. The whole Party strength must be thrown into this campaign immediately if we are to make a success of it.

Our Labor Party Campaign.

The 3rd National Convention of the Party approved of the work of the Central Executive Committee during the previous year in aiding to bring into existence a Farmer-Labor Party in this country and specifically approved the July 3rd [1923] Convention and the organization of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party.

The immediate work before our Party, to carry further the Labor Party Campaign, is of a two-fold character:

A. According to the decision of the National Convention, our Party must assist the Federated Farmer-Labor party in the work of organizing itself as a real political party. This means that in every place where a branch of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party can be built up without dividing the workers who are for a Farmer-Labor Party, we should immediately initiate a movement for organization of such a branch. It means further that our Party membership should, in all organizations

of which they are members, raise the question of affiliation with the Federated Farmer-Labor Party and secure affiliation or endorsement of that party by the respective organizations to which they belong. The Federated Farmer-Labor Party has already secured the affiliation of close to 200,000 workers. If our Party throws itself aggressively into the work of strengthening the Federated Farmer-Labor Party we can quickly double the number of affiliated workers, and this is one of the chief immediate tasks of our organization.

B. The Federated Farmer-Labor Party has united with the Farmer-Labor Parties of Minnesota, South Dakota, Washington, and other organizations, in calling a National Convention on May 30th [1924] at St. Paul, Minnesota, for the purpose of nominating candidates for President and Vice-President and adopting a national platform. This convention will be one of the most important events in the history of the labor movement in this country. Estimates of delegates likely to attend this convention range from 1500 to 2 or 3 thousand. However, the convention will not only have representation from workers' organizations and organizations of exploited farmers, but there are likely to come to the convention representatives of the middle class such as small businessmen, professional men, etc. The question whether the convention will represent the interests of the exploited farmers and industrial workers will depend upon the strength of this group in the convention. Our Party stands for a class farmer-labor party and not for a Third Party dominated by the petty bourgeoisie. We must help to carry on the work which will bring to the St. [Paul convention] workers' and farmers' organizations in such numbers that their ideas will be written into the decisions of this convention.

The call for the May 30th [1924] Convention will not be issued until February, but we can now begin our work of propaganda to build up favorable sentiment for this convention. While the question of election of delegates should not be

raised until the call is actually out, we should create interest in the convention by raising the question, emphasizing the need of a class Farmer-Labor Party and thus building up sentiment favorable to its organization.

The Campaign for the May 30th Convention also offers the most favorable situation for the organization of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party. The Federated Farmer-Labor Party is a class Farmer-Labor Party, although it has not yet won the support of the great masses of the American workers and farmers. Through strengthening the Federated Farmer-Labor Party by organizing new branches, by securing new affiliations and endorsements for it, the group which stands for the class Farmer-Labor Party will be strengthened in the May 30th Convention.

The Farmer-Labor Voice.

Beginning with the month of January, the Federated Farmer-Labor Party will issue a newspaper twice a month under the name *The Farmer-Labor Voice*. Our Party has transferred to the Federated Farmer-Labor Party *The Voice of Labor* and with the change of name as indicated above this paper will become the property of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party and its official organ. *The Farmer-Labor Voice* will be the medium to carry on propaganda and organization work for the Federated Farmer-Labor Party and in support of the May 30th Convention.

The Party units and party members are urged to give the organ of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party their support by subscribing for it and circulating it among the workers and farmers everywhere.

Membership Drive.

While the above are the immediate political tasks of our Party, there is one campaign which must not be overlooked in taking up this work,

and that is the drive to increase our Party membership. With the publication of the Daily [Worker] we will have a new instrument through which to carry on this campaign.

If our party is to fulfill its great task we must add to our Party membership. At the convention, the Central Executive Committee reported that the figures gathered showed 25,000 members on our Party rolls, although the dues payments have not reached that amount. Each branch must see to it that every member pays dues regularly, and every branch must organize itself to add to its membership. In the letter received from the Communist International, the CEC of our Party was congratulated on having initiated the drive for new membership and the Communist International emphasized the need of building up our Party organization for the great work ahead of us.

The Membership Drive must be one of the first tasks of every Party unit. New ways and means of bringing members into the Party must be found. The Communist International said that every member of the Party should at least bring one new member into the Party. If we could achieve that goal we would immediately double our Party membership. We must gain at least 10,000 new members and the drive for new members must go along from month to month alongside of the political campaigns of our Party.

Comrades! The 3rd National Convention of the Party has prepared the way for new achievements for our Party organization. The work outlined above constitutes the first task of the new year to strengthen our influence and build up our Party organization. The whole Party must immediately mobilize its strength for these campaigns and carry them forward successfully.

Fraternally yours,

C.E. Ruthenberg,
Executive Secretary.

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NOTICE TO ALL PARTY UNITS.

All Party units are again reminded of the fact that the Industrial Registration blanks are to be returned to the National Office without any further delay. Only one-third of the branches have so far carried out the instruction of the Central Executive Committee which were since approved by the National Convention of the Party. The City Central Committees which have not yet reported to the National Office the names and addresses of their City Industrial Organizers must do so immediately.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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