
Report on the American Party Situation to the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International, April 11, 1923.

A document in the Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 201, ll. 59-64.

New York City, April 11, 1923

To the Enlarged Executive Committee of
the Communist International

Comrades:—

We submit following a statement of the party
situation in the United States at the present time:

The General Party Situation.

The Open Party.

During the past four months the Central Executive Committee has carried on an extensive campaign among the party members in favor of the open party. This campaign took the form of statements of the political changes in the United States which made possible the existence of the party as an open organization and frequent addresses before party units by members of the Central Executive Committee.

This campaign came to a head in the third National Convention of the party held on April 7th [1923]. At this convention a resolution submitted by the Central Executive Committee providing for

- (a) That the Workers Party of America become immediately the open Communist Party;
- (b) The organization of an apparatus within the Workers Party to safeguard the organization and to carry on confidential work;

was unanimously adopted.

A slight opposition, lead by Comrade Carr [Lud-

wig Katterfeld], manifested itself in the convention, although it did not muster a single vote in its support. This opposition maintained the position that the apparatus of the party must consist of all the former members of the CP of A and that it be an elective organization so far as the party branches were concerned. The position of the Central Executive Committee was that the apparatus be appointive and consist only of such trusted comrades as were needed for the work, these comrades to be drawn from the former CP members.

The Central Executive Committee considered that it would have been a mistake to permit the former CP to exist for one year as an auxiliary organization, as this would have meant that the question of the future of this organization would have been for a year a question of factional struggle, to [the] detriment of all the work of the party.

All the decisions of the Third Convention, including the report of the CEC, the decision in favor of the open party, and the form of the apparatus, were adopted unanimously.

Tendencies Within the Party.

There are at present three tendencies within the party, as follows:

- (a) A small group on the right which is in principle opposed to underground organization and against centralized discipline, consisting mostly of writers;
- (b) A small group on the left which in principle accepts the decision of the Communist International in regard to the open party but which in

practice would leave everything as it was. This group considers the underground organization as the most important for the party.

- (c) The great majority of the party members who support the open party and who are more and more being thrown into active work among the masses.

The former factions in the party do not exist any longer. The so-called "liquidators," "goose faction," and the former opposition [Central Caucus faction] have united into one group, which through its representation on the Central Executive Committee is throwing the party more and more into campaigns among the masses. The campaigns initiated are such as the amalgamation of the trade unions, the labor party campaign, the Protection of the Foreign-Born Workers campaign, cooperation with the Proletarian Party and the Socialist Party on certain issues, cooperation with the Farmer-Labor Party, a general United Front campaign to include all labor political and industrial organization.

The group thus formed commands at least three-fourths of the votes of the Central Executive Committee. It has completely won the party members for the open work. It is carrying through a registration of the party members for the work in the trade unions.

Practical Steps to Realize the United Front.

1. The United Industrial Front.

During the great strikes of 1922 the party issued a United Front manifesto calling upon all labor organizations to unite through the central labor bodies of each [city] for the struggle against the open shop and wage reduction campaign of the employers. Resolutions supporting this plan were adopted by local unions and some central labor bodies. The agitation in favor of the general strike in answer to the Daugherty injunction can in some measure be traced to the party agitation for the United Front.

2. The Labor Defense Council.

The Bridgman convention of the underground party was raided last August and indictments brought

against 76 comrades who attended this convention. Of these 76 comrades, 32 have been arrested. The party took advantage of this prosecution to strengthen its support among the masses. It took as its slogan the right of the Communists publicly to advocate their principles under the constitution and called for the support of all workers and liberal organizations in the struggle to establish this right. As a result of this campaign Labor Defense Councils for defense of the Communists were organized in over 50 cities. There are represented in these councils all the elements of the labor movement. Many trade unions have delegates in these bodies. The Farmer-Labor Party supports the councils. In some places Socialists and Proletarian Party members are working with these councils. In addition many liberals, individual and organizations, are helping in the work of the Labor Defense Council.

The first comrade brought to trial as a result of the Bridgman raid was William Z. Foster. Through his trial the Communist idea was for the first time presented on a nationwide scale to the people of the United States. The trial was given the widest publicity in all of the capitalist newspapers. Rather than the trial of an individual charged with crime, the trial appeared as a struggle between Capitalism and Communism. The prosecution assumed the position of defender of the capitalist system. Before the jury they brought such questions as "Do you believe in private property?" "Do you believe that the government should defend the accumulations of private property?" On the other hand the testimony and speeches of William Z. Foster and C.E. Ruthenberg (the latter went on the witness stand for the defense to defend the Communist principles) was an equally sharp attack on capitalism and uncompromising support of Communism. The personality of both Comrades Foster and Ruthenberg won widespread favorable comment even from the newspapers of the enemy. Through this trial Communism came before the workers not as something advocated by "East-Side Jews" or "Russian Bolsheviks," as has always been charged by the capitalist press, but by two comrades born and bred in the United States and speaking as Americans for Communism.

The outcome of this trial represents a new development in such prosecution. In the past trials of Communists and other radicals have meant almost certain conviction. Gitlow, Larkin, Winitsky, Ruth-

enberg, Ferguson were all easily convicted when they were charged as Communists in the capitalist courts. In the Foster trial the jury divided six and six and there was no verdict.

The trial of William Z. Foster will be followed by that of C.E. Ruthenberg. In the Foster trial the Communist idea was on trial. In the Ruthenberg trial it is planned to put the Communist Party as an organization on trial. This trial is looked upon as a preparation for the 1924 Presidential campaign in which one of the issues will be the prosecution of radicalism. It is hoped in the Ruthenberg trial to create a chain reaching from Ruthenberg to Borah and to compromise everything that is even mildly progressive by linking it up with the Communists.

3. Amalgamation of the Trade Unions.

The trade union work of the party has met with excellent success during the past months. With the slogan of "amalgamation" the Trade Union Educational League has won the support of hundreds of thousands of trade unionists. National Committees for amalgamation have been formed in such industries as the mining industry, the needle trades, the railroad unions, and many others. Eleven State Federations of Labor have gone on record in support of the amalgamation program. A congress of 300 delegates from railroad unions was held in December at which the amalgamation program was adopted. The TUEL will report the details of the progress of the work in the trade unions.

4. The Labor Party Campaign.

In December there was held in Cleveland a Conference for Progressive Political Action. There were represented in this conference two million organized trade unionists and hundreds of thousands of farmers. The party carried on an aggressive campaign for the organization of a labor party at this conference, issuing many leaflets and a pamphlet, *For a Labor Party*. It sent delegates to this conference, who were however not accepted. However, in the struggle to seat its delegates in the conference, the party won the support of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Farmer-Labor Party, the Chicago Federation of Labor, the Min-

neapolis Trade and Labor Assembly, and other delegates from local unions.

In New York City a similar conference was held to which the party also sent delegates. The vote on the question of seating its delegates was 150 against and 58 for. The Socialist Party had 88 delegates, who made up the majority of those voting against the party. A majority of the trade union delegates voted for the admission of the party. The fact that 58 votes were cast for our admission is a big gain over the results in a similar conference last July when we polled less than 20 votes.

In San Francisco a United Front election campaign was carried on by trade unionists, Socialists, Proletarian Party, Workers Party. In Rhode Island the labor party has been organized with the Workers Party as part of this organization.

At the present time the party is making preparations for the organization of the labor party in the Western part of New York state in anticipation of the organization of a state labor party and in order to strengthen its position in the state organization.

The Farmer-Labor Party has issued a call for a convention to be held on July 3rd for the organization of a nationwide labor party. Both the Workers Party and the Socialist Party, as well as all trade unions, have been invited to send delegates to this conference and we will participate actively in the work of agitation and in the convention itself.

The party is not only sending delegates to this conference from the party organization but is working in the trade unions, benefit societies, etc. to have as many Communist delegates as possible sent to the convention.

5. Protection of Foreign-Born Workers.

The National Convention of the Workers Party initiated a campaign against exception laws directed against foreign-born workers. In this campaign we have secured the support of a number of large labor organizations. The campaign will not go forward in full force until next fall, when these exception laws will come before congress. One of the capitalist congressmen, LaGuardia, is quoted as stating "The Workers Party was very farsighted in beginning this campaign as it has thus become the first organization appearing upon

this battlefield." We are printing a pamphlet on this question and have issued a number of leaflets.

6. Socialist Party and Proletarian Party.

We have made various efforts to disorganize the Socialist Party and the Proletarian Party. We have made a United Front proposal to these organizations and have invited the Proletarian Party to join our organization. As a result of our efforts a new left wing is developing in the Socialist Party and a struggle has been created within the Proletarian Party over the question of joining our organization. We are issuing a pamphlet addressed to Eugene V. Debs and all honest workers on the question of "Underground Radicalism."

7. The Campaign Against Fascism.

Through the Italian Section of our party we have organized a United Front against Fascism. In this campaign we have achieved the greatest results in creating a mass movement. Some 150,000 workers are united under the leadership of our party in the fight against Fascism. Our Italian section issued the original manifesto in this campaign. This was supported by the World War Veterans. Then the Italian Chamber of Labor, an organization including all Italian Trade Unions, the executive committee of which is under our control, joined in the campaign. From New York City the campaign was broadened to include Italian workers in all parts of the country. We will develop this campaign from a struggle against Italian Fascism into a struggle against International Fascism by having our German, Polish, Hungarian sections join the campaign and bring with them as many as possible of the workers organizations of these language groups.

We expect later to combine the anti-Fascist campaign with the Protection of Foreign-Born Workers campaign.

Support of Soviet Russia.

1. The Relief Work.

Through the FSR there has been collected the largest sum collected in any country for the relief of Soviet Russia. The agitation of the FSR for relief has

also had widespread political results in creating sympathy for Soviet Russia. The FSR has shown moving pictures of Soviet Russia which have aroused much sympathy and support.

2. Recognition of Soviet Russia.

Through an organization under our direction, but which is led by conservative trade union leaders who do not know that the party directs the work of this organization, we have held a series of great mass meetings. At one of these, held in the largest hall in New York City, Senator Borah was the speaker in favor of recognition.

We are holding mass meetings defending Soviet Russia from attacks on account of the execution of Butchkavich. A meeting held in Washington stirred the whole capital. Another meeting was held in New York. We have instituted a referendum to have the workers express approval of the action of the Soviet Government.

Agricultural Campaign.

We have sent an agricultural [organizer] into the farming sections of the country to build up connections for our party. An agricultural program in tentative form has been prepared and issued as a leaflet.

Negro Campaign.

We are establishing a school for the education of Negro propagandists. A program of work among the Negroes has been prepared and this work will be pushed aggressively.

The Party Organization.

1. Press.

The party publishes its central organ, *The Worker*, weekly. A resolution authorizing the establishing of a daily paper was passed at the last convention and it is hoped that during the year the work of carrying this into effect can be begun. The party also published *The Liberator*, a monthly magazine. It has an English weekly in Chicago [*Voice of Labor*]. Besides these English pa-

pers, the language section publishes nine daily papers and about twenty weekly papers.

2. Literature.

The work of publishing literature is being pushed aggressively. We have issued [or] are about to issue the following books and pamphlets:

For a Labor Party [by John Pepper].

The Government — Strikebreaker [by Jay Lovestone]
— a 320 page book dealing with the role of the government in recent strikes.

The Foreign-Born Workers [by Clarissa Ware], a pamphlet.

The Michigan Communist Defense, a pamphlet.

Besides the above we are cooperating with the English party in distributing the reports and theses of the Fourth Congress [of the Comintern] in pamphlet form.

3. Membership.

The Workers Party dues payments are now approximately 18,000 monthly. We have succeeded in organizing 66 new branches in the last two months. Considerable progress is being made in organizing branches of the American workers.

4. Finances.

We have been obliged to put all our energy into the work of raising money for the defense of the comrades arrested at Bridgman, for which tens of thousands of dollars have been needed. This has made it impossible for us to raise money for other party purposes and has left us in a very difficult financial situation. The needs of defense will require all the money we can raise for a considerable time to come.

Fraternally submitted,

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Executive Secretary.

Josef Pogány,
Political Secretary.

A. Jakira,
Secretary for Confidential Work.

Secretariat.

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Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2005. • Free reproduction permitted.