
“At Last.” †

Unsigned article in *The Communist* [UCP], v. 1, no. 1 (June 12, 1920), pp. 1, 16.
Most likely writer was the publication’s Editor, C.E. Ruthenberg.

The United Communist Party, which thousands of revolutionary workers have been demanding since September of last year, is a reality.

By action of the representatives of the former Communist Labor Party membership and representatives of the majority of the members of the Communist Party, the two organizations have been consolidated and have become the United Communist Party.

The convention through which the two groups were united was itself an achievement. Despite police persecution and constant surveillance of the active members of the two organizations, sixty delegates met for a week and discussed and legislated without discovery.

But more important than the fact that the delegates were able successfully to defy the agents of Mr. Palmer and of the various state prosecutors, are the results of the convention.

When, after meeting as separate groups for a day the delegates from the two organizations were united, there quickly appeared upon the breasts of most of the delegates of the words “AT LAST” in great black letters. A circular bearing that caption had been distributed among the delegates and the words had been torn from it to give expression to their sentiment.

Since then the convention has completed its work and these words bear a deeper meaning than that of a mere expression of relief that after months of negotiations unity has been achieved.

The break in the Left Wing movement which began at the Left Wing Conference of last June and which took a more permanent form at the September conventions at which the Communist Party and Com-

munist Labor Party were organized, had serious consequences for the Communist movement in this country. This division segregated in one organization the language groups which through their sacrifice and devotion had laid the foundation of the Communist movement. In the other was the American element of the Left Wing, which was needed to give expression to Communism in this country.

The Communist Party, from the very beginning of its existence, found its work hampered because it had in its ranks only a few men capable of expressing Communist principles in the English language. There was a powerful party organization made up of the language groups, ready to serve as the driving force, but this force could not be given full expression because the medium for such expression did not exist in the party.

The unity achieved during the recent convention is unity between the most aggressive and active members of the language groups — those elements which place the opportunity to work for Communist principles above loyalty to language group organizations, and the American elements which have the capability of making the party an organization that will function in the class struggle in this country — MAKING IT A PARTY OF ACTION.

It is the juncture of these two elements achieved at the unity convention that give significance to the “At last.”

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The words have still another significance. The

†- This article appeared on the cover of the first issue of the official organ of the new United Communist Party, an 8 x 11 newsprint magazine called *The Communist*. The Joint Unity Convention described in this article — held May 26-31, 1920 at the Wolfskeel Resort, amidst wooded dunes on the sandy shore of Lake Michigan — named C.E. Ruthenberg the editor of this publication. While the tone of this article may strike the reader as having been written by a former member of the CLP, a polemic in the July 1, 1920, issue of the official organ of the CPA indicates this piece was “evidently written by Damon [Ruthenberg].”

two organizations which are combined in the United Communist Party came into existence at a time when it was thought that they might function openly. Since that time the ruling class of this country has given ample evidence through raids, arrests, deportations, and imprisonments that no organization which is so fundamentally a challenge to the whole capitalist order as a communist party must be, can escape the full weight of the power of persecution which the capitalists have in their command.

The United Communist Party makes no pretense of legality. It has not attempted to express the fundamental Communist principles in a way to make them pass the censorship of its bitter enemy. The program of the united party is what it should be, a bold challenge to the whole capitalist system and a declaration of revolutionary promise, without reservation or compromise.

The program of the party declares that the final struggle between the workers and the capitalists, between exploited and exploiter, will take the form of civil war, and that it is the function of the United Communist Party systematically to familiarize the working class with the necessity of armed insurrection as the only means through which the capitalist system can be overthrown.

This declaration in the program of the united party marks an advance over the previous program declarations of the two Communist organizations, as great as the declaration of principles in these programs were advances over the principles of the Socialist Party, from which they sprung.

The United Communist Party enters the working class struggle in this country as the first clear-cut expression of the revolutionary movement that has achieved a splendid victory in Russia, that temporarily held Hungary and Bavaria, and that is nearing its goal of the Workers' Dictatorship for the transformation of capitalism in Germany, in Italy and the other European countries. It not only clearly expresses the principles which have guided the action in the working class victories achieved thus far, but it has within its ranks the men and women who can carry those principles into action and make the party a living, vital

force in the struggles of the workers in this country.

The last 18 months have been the formative period for this movement. It was to be expected that during this period there should be alignments and realignments of the various elements of a revolutionary character. The various factional controversies discouraged many active and valuable comrades. They refused to join either party until unity was achieved, and thus the Communist movement was deprived of the support of many who would have been a source of added strength.

While there still remains outside of the united party a faction made up of part of the language groups, the logic of the situation will compel them to join the united party or bring about the disintegration of their organizations. They have before them the alternative of at once throwing their lot with the united party and becoming part of a strong, virile Communist movement, or of repeating the history of the Socialist Labor Party. They must choose between these alternatives because there is no basis for their separate existence except the national spirit which is generated by their organization in separate language groups. They cannot challenge the principles stated in the program of the United Communist Party, because no clearer Communist program could be written. If they place the autonomy of their language group organizations above Communist principles they cannot hope to become a factor of any importance in the Communist movement in this country. The realization of this fact will soon be forced home to this group and there is hardly a doubt but that the best elements in it will soon be functioning as part of the United Communist Party.

It is because the achievements of the unity convention have thus cleared the atmosphere and opened the way for the building of a powerful party, the vanguard of the working class and a party of action, that the "At Last" of the delegates is echoed on this last page.

At last a united party! At last a clear-cut revolutionary program!

Now to the struggle, to action! On to victory!

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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