
Letter to the Executive Committee of the Communist International in Moscow from the Central Executive Committee of the CPA in New York, October 19, 1920.

Document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 32, ll. 59-62.

October 19, 1920.

To the Executive Committee
of the Communist International,

Dear Comrades:—

In the *Izvestiia*, official organ of the Soviet Republic, issue of September 14th [1920] — which accidentally came into our possession on October 13th and therefore could not have been acted upon before the date of this letter — we came across the following decision enacted by your committee relative to the American movement:

Both Communist parties — the United Communist Party and the Communist Party — are obligated to unite into one party on the basis of the decisions of the 2nd World Congress of the Communist International. This unity must be finally accomplished not later than in two months; that is, by the 10th of October 1920. Those who do not subject themselves to this decision shall be expelled from the Third, Communist International.

The Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party, at its special meeting on October 19th [1920], took up this question and adopted the enclosed resolution. Your decision was immediately complied with not only because we recognize your full and complete authority but also because we agree with your fundamental plan of creating one Communist Party in each country.

However, we wish to impress upon your committee that the Communist Party has done all in its

power, consistent with Communist principles and tactics, to unite all Communist elements within one party, ever since the breach created by the split in the Left Wing Conference [NYC: June 21-24, 1919], which eventually resulted in the formation of two Communist parties.

We have already enumerated in detail the outstanding facts pertaining to this question in the last statement to your committee on the occasion of our receipt of your appeal for unity between the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party, as printed in the No. 11 issue of *The Communist International*.

THIS APPEAL ARRIVED SOME MONTHS AFTER THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR UNITY HAD BEEN SUDDENLY BROKEN OFF BY THE CLP, WHICH UNITED WITH THE SPLITTING-OFF MINORITY OF THE CP LED BY DAMON [Ruthenberg], CAXTON [Ferguson], FISHER [Belsky], AND OTHERS.

It is also important to bear in mind that the split was engineered just at the moment when unity through a joint convention was about to be consummated.

Your first appeal for unity could no longer be applied in the new situation because an entirely new set of factors had developed, which can be briefly enumerated as follows:

(1) The CLP had broken off negotiations with the CEC of the Communist Party.

(2) The CLP and the “minority faction” which split away from the CP made a deal not to have anything to do with the CEC of the CP — AS PRINTED IN THE MAY 15th ISSUE OF THE CLP *COMMUNIST*

NIST.

(3) The United Communist Party abolished and destroyed every vestige of subordinate language federations in their party.

(4) The United Communist Party took a wrong position on industrial unionism in its program and in its dealings with the IWW, entirely out of keeping with the position of the Third International.

(5) The Centrist leaders of the “minority” (Damon [Ruthenberg], Caxton [Ferguson], Fisher [Belsky] & Co.), who had split away from the CP mainly on the questions of mass action and language federations, after committing a grave breach of party discipline as well as absconding with the funds and records of the party, BECAME THE DOMINATING LEADERS OF THE UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY.

(6) The Centrist leaders of the CLP openly condoned these actions and endorsed the stand of the Centrist “minority” leaders.

(7) From the very beginning the United Communist Party refused to acknowledge the existence of the Communist Party, as a regularly constituted party, despite the self-evident facts.

This new situation could not be dealt with in the manner prescribed in your appeal because the breach had been so widened that it left no other course open for the Communist Party to pursue except to send a delegate to Russia to lay the facts before your committee and await your decision after all the fact had been laid before you.

This course the Communist Party pursued. It sent a delegate to Russia to lay the facts before your committee and awaited his return with your decision before resuming any action towards uniting all Communist forces in this country into one party.

The decision of your committee made on Au-

gust 7th [1920], prior to the arrival of our delegate, however, makes further delay impossible, irrespective of the outcome of our delegate’s mission. We recognize your decision as final and have made preparations that will bring both parties into a unity convention based upon proportional representation of membership in both parties. The decisions of the 2nd World Congress, the Conditions for Affiliation to the Communist International, and any action of your committee pertaining to the Communist movement in this country, shall be the basis of unity.

This does not mean that we have given up the fight with the Centrist leaders of the UCP. By no means. This fight will now be carried on within the new, united party, just as uncompromisingly as before. These men have proven themselves utterly unfit for leadership in the Communist movement and have also proven that they do not understand the needs of a Communist Party at this stage of its existence in the peculiar conditions obtaining here.

We are confident that the position of the Communist Party will be vindicated after your committee has come into possession of all the facts. We believe that your committee has been fed with misrepresentations and lies due to the PECULIAR CONDITIONS which precluded the possibility of our side of the case coming before you.†

With Communist greetings, we remain,

Yours for the world proletarian revolution,

**The Executive Committee of the
Communist Party of America.**

C. Dobin [Charles Dirba], Exec. Sec.

†- Carefully X-ed out of the message here so as not to be readable: “As for the two delegates of the Communist Party (Comrades Fraina and Stoklitsky) they left this country prior to the new conditions which prevailed in this country, both in the Communist movement and outside of it, which necessarily—”

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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