With Renewed Forces -- Onward to Victory!

Our First National Conference

by Ben Gitlow

The First National Conference of the Communist Party of the U. S. A. (Majority Group) was attended by over sixty elected delegates from the most important industrial centers of the country. The delegations were overwhelmingly proletarian. The delegates were all members of many years standing in the Communist Party, many of them having been the founders and organizers of the Party.

The Conference represented a determined Communist force. It tackled the problems facing the working class, analyzed conditions and laid down a course of action. It fearlessly dealt with the present crisis in the Communist International, the false and wrecking line its present leadership is carrying out and its effects upon the American Communist movement. It adopted decisions which will make it possible for the Communists of this country, together with the Communists of all other countries, to overcome the crisis, to replace the present false line by a correct Leninist line and to unify and consolidate all Communist forces in a united Communist International.

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The Conference was not one steered and dominated by a small faction or clique. The delegates freely applied themselves to the work of the Conference; the discussions were frank and open; the decisions made represented the will of the delegates. The decisions were not all unanimous like those of the recent Party Convention but were hammered out as the result of discussions in which the issues were sharply drawn and clarified. The Conference and its deliberations and decisions are bound to leave its imprint upon the development of the Communist movement of the United States.

A Correct Political Analysis Guarantees A Correct Line

The development of the CP-Majority Group was well shown in the thesis on the present political situation and our tasks as adopted by the Conference. In contrast to the shallow, incorrect and evasive thesis recently adopted by the Party Convention, the thesis adopted by our Conference was a clear and Communist interpretation of the economic and political developments taking place on a world scale and in the U. S. A. On the basis of this analysis the tasks of the Party were analyzed and a line laid down for the activities of our group. The main features of the thesis are the following:

1. An estimation of the present position of world capitalism in which the present economic situation is carefully analyzed, the general political situation (growth of reaction, imperialist antagonisms leading to war, offensive against the USSR) described and the false economic and political analysis of the present leadership of the Comintern exposed.

2. An analysis of the present economic crisis in the United States on the basis of which the following conclusions are reached:

"We see, that: 1) tho the United States is today in an economic crisis, the general trend of American imperialism is not yet downward; 2) this general trend of American imperialism does not exempt it from the general historical decline of world capitalism in the present period; 3) the very growth in American imperialist strength has already reached a point where it is itself sharpening the inherent contradictions of capitalism in the United State, and 4) generating and intensifying the contradictions and antagonisms which will lead not only to the collapse of American capitalism but also of international capitalism as a whole; 5) today this rapid development of United States imperialism only intensifies the contradiction of international capitalism, only 'serves as a force for sharpening and stimulating the elements of disintegration in international capitalism, thus making for a world crisis'."

3. A most thoro analysis of the structural changes and basic contradictions of American capitalism, from which the following conclusion is reached:

"Obviously, genuine order is impossible in capitalist economy. The attempts of the most highly developed capitalist country, the United States, to remove disorder in the process of production and exchange basically tend to develop deeper and more widespread disorder. The very structural changes in American capitalist economy are hastening its collapse and doom."

4. An analysis of the present political situation showing the growth of capitalist reaction and factors making for a regrouping of class forces.

5. An analysis of the situation in the labor movement, discussing the effects of rationalization and the burden of war preparations upon the workers, the actual conditions of life and work of th American working masses, the differentiation and regroupings in the working class (the leftward movement among the workers, the developments in the trade union movement, etc.) and the various forces in the labor movement.

6. An examination of the false line of the Party, as a manifestation of the general false line of the ECCI today.

7. A carefully worked out analysis of the tasks of the Communist Party today.

8. An examination of the development of the CP-Majority Group, a thoro analysis of its achievements and shortcomings, and a concise declaration of its main tasks. The concluding words of the thesis very accurately reflect the spirit of the whole National Conference:

"The events of the last year, in the U. S. A. and internationally have more than justified the struggle we have been carrying on. The crisis in our Party has been shown to be an organic part of the crisis in the Communist International and our struggle to be a part of the struggle of the International Opposition. Our first duty and our special task is to win the struggle for the international Leninist line on the American sector!

Forward to the unity of the Communist International!

Towards a mass Communist Party in the U. S. A."

For Leninism and Against Trotskyism!

The Conference had before it a report on the question of Trotskyism, its political and organizational character and its relation to the crisis in the Comintern. The resolution which the Conference adopted clearly pointed out that the present crisis in the Comintern can generally be characterized politically as the revision of the Leninist position of the Comintern in the direction of the traditional viewpoint of Trotskyism. The resolution made clear that the position of Trotskyism on the question of the class character of the Soviet Power (the question of Thermidor), in spite of the recent partial retreat, still constitutes a departure from the fundamentals of Communism. The Conference was of the opinion that, if the Trotskyites give up their position on this question, the necessity for their readmission into the Comintern and the Party will follow, in spite of their big errors on a number of other very important questions which do not, however, touch the fundamentals of Communism. The resolution called attention to the great similarity in system and methods of leadership of Trotsky and Stalin.

While advocating blocs on the concrete issues of the class struggles with the Trotskyites, the Conference rejected the idea of unity between the two groups because of the fundamental differences between them. The Conference was very emphatic in rejecting the idea of Comrade Weisbord that the Trotskyist opposition could be a rallying center in solving the crisis in the Communist International; it pointed out that the overcoming of the crisis in the Comintern would bring with it the political liquidation of Trotskyism.

> With the next issue we will begin publication of the political documents of the National Conference: the resolution on trade union policy, the program-of-action, the resolution on Trotskyism, the resolution on Negro work, etc. The Draft Thesis has already been published in *Revolutionary Age* (June 15 issue).

Forward Against Capitalism! The Program-of-Action.

Realizing that Communists must be the most active fighters against capitalism and must show the way to the workers in their everyday struggles, the Conference adopted a program-of-action of working class unity against the bosses. It is at the same time a stirring call and a guide to action for the workers and farmers to rally against the capitalists. It is a program-of-action of a maturing Communist force that realizes that the road of working class victory lies thru the organization of the everyday struggle of the workers and farmers on their immediate demands.

For A Better Organization! Support the Revolutionary Age!

The National Conference noted the development of our group from the loose formation of a handful of comrades after the return of the VI Convention delegation to the Comintern, from an underground existence as far as the Party and the workers were concerned, into a recognized factor in the Communist movement and the class struggle today. The Conference definitely established the consolidation of our group and its emergence as a fighting Communist force not only for a correct line in the Party but also in the front ranks of the bitter class struggle in this country. At the same time the Conference examined the great deficiencies of our organization that still remain and outlined ways and means to overcome them.

Of great importance was the consideration given by the Conference to the *Revolutionary Age*. It considered how to meet the government attack upon our paper. Noting the progress made towards converting the *Revolutionary Age* into a mass paper, the Conference gave special attention to the building up of support for the *Revolutionary Age* so as to make this possible. The Conference emphasized the need for a better financial base, for more subscribers, for workers corespondence and for the early realization of a Weekly *Revolutionary Age*.

Against the Oppression of the Negro Masses!

The Conference had before is a report on Negro work which was followed by a general discussion in which a number of Negro delegates participated. The importance of greatly intensifying our Negro work was stressed. If as a result of the Conference the actual organization of Negro work will be spread to all districts a great step forward will have been taken.

The questions of the struggle against lynching, the relation of the Negroes to the trade union movement and the question of the slogan of self-determination received most consideration.

The Conference decided that steps be taken immediately to develop a campaign against lynching on as wide and as broad a basis as possible, in view of the startling increase of lynching recently. The question of self-determination was left to the National Council for further study in order to definitely establish our position on this question.

Build the Left Wing in the Unions! For Trade Union Unity! For Genuine Militant Industrial Unionism!

The main question before the Conference was the trade union question. The false sectarian line of the Comintern and our Party leadership has almost completely wrecked whatever Communist influence and organization had been established in the trade unions. The Party membership has been giving more and more evidence of growing resistance to the ruinous trade union policies of the Party leadership. The Conference stressed that it was not sufficient to main tain merely a critical attitude towards the wrong sectarian line but that it is necessary for us to engage in independent trade union activity on the basis of a correct trade union line.

The results of the false Party line were indicated by the resolution adopted by the Conference as follows:

"1. *The left wing in the trade unions has been virtually destroyed.*

"2. *The new indutrial unions under Communist influence have all lost heavily in membership, have suffered serious defeats in struggles and have ceased to be a factor in the organization of the unorganized.*

"3. *The Communists have not led any strike movements of any importance since the Gastonia strike which had its inception before the new period ushered in by the Address of the Communist International.*

"4. *There is no real campaign being conducted in any industry for organization of the unorganized.*

"5. *The fight against the leadership and ideological influence of the Socialist Party has been abandoned with the result that thousands of workers who were previously organizationally and ideologically with the left wing are today under the hegemony of the Socialist right-wing bureocracy in the unions.*"

The Conference declared in unmistakable terms that our group must go into the trade unions, must organize the left wing, must raise the issue of trade union unity, must develop a mighty rank-and-file movement against the reactionary burocrats, against the bosses, for militant industrial unionism. To do so is to hasten the defeat of the disastrous policy of the present Party and TUUL leaderships which is proceeding in seven league boots to isolate the Communists from the masses and destroying the possibility of a left wing base in the trade unions.

Stop Splitting—Unite the Communist International!

The Conference gave a fitting answer to the whole system of bluff and bombast when Comrade Lovestone commented upon the recent *Pravda* editorial on the tasks of the American Party. While recognizing the right and even the duty of the leadership of the CPSU to make suggestions and proposals to the American Party, the Conference disagreed with the distortion of the facts, with the bluff and misrepresentation resorted to in order to justify the ultra-left course of the Comintern and our Party.

The Conference answered the attacks upon us and other Communist Opposition movements by calling for greater and more united action of the international Communist Opposition against the false line and sectarian tactics as the road to the unification and consolidation of the Comintern.

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The political character and the spirit of our First National Conference, conducted thruout in the spirit of Leninism and Communist unity, made it an historical event in the American Communist movement and provide a guarantee for our eventual victory in overcoming the crisis in our Party and in the Communist International.