

# Discussion in the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International on the American Question

## Statement of the Central Executive Committee.

OWING to the circulation of many false rumors in the party relative to the stand of Comrade Zinoviev regarding the construction of the central executive committee of our party at the next party convention, the C. E. C. finds it necessary to issue the following statement of fact as to what actually transpired in this connection.

After the recent party delegation had been in Moscow for over two months, and after the issues involved had been thoroughly discussed in the American commission and the decision was about to be made, the representatives of the C. E. C. (majority), Comrades Foster and Cannon, had a conference with Comrade Zinoviev in which the latter, upon his own initiative, proposed that the present majority of the C. E. C. should be given a two-thirds majority in the incoming central executive committee. In accordance with this proposition, the following clause was contained in the first draft of the decision on the American question:

"The central committee of the Workers Party will retain its present composition until the party conference is held and the new central committee is to be so elected at the party conference that the Foster group obtains a majority within it, and the Ruthenberg group is represented proportionately at least by one-third. The two leading comrades, Foster and Ruthenberg, are to be re-elected."

Two or three days after this draft appeared, Comrades Foster and Cannon had another conference with Comrade Zinoviev, in which the latter stated that opposition had developed towards his proposal based upon constitutional grounds. He stated that this opposition maintained that under the statutes of the Comintern each party had the right to select its own central executive committee and that only in serious crises, where there is a revolutionary situation or where the party is in great danger, is the Comintern justified in organizing the central executive committee. The claim was made that no such critical situation existed in America and that, therefore, the direct organization of the C. E. C. by the Comintern was inadvisable. Comrade Zinoviev stated that he recognized the force of the objection that there was no critical situation in America, and would, therefore, withdraw his proposal. He agreed to appear before the plenum of the enlarged executive and to state that he had made this proposal upon his own initiative and to give the reason for its withdrawal, which he did.

Following are the speeches in the enlarged executive committee of the C. I. when the report of the American commission was presented.

COMRADE KUUSINEN gave a report on the work in the American commission:

The American commission, with the American comrades, unanimously decided today to recommend that the draft resolution which are submitting here be adopted. The question upon which the conflict arose in the American party was whether the party should fight in the immediate future for a labor party or not. As you know, the majority of the central committee of the American party opposed it, and the minority supported it. In the opinion of the commission, the majority based its policy in this respect too much on superficial temporary phenomena. The minority is absolutely right in its confidence in the vitality of the labor party movement.

But the question has also another side. In speaking of the labor party, it was evident that one side has an entirely different conception of the labor party from the other. One side thought of the coming labor party in a much narrower sense than it ought. A revolutionary, or at least semi-revolutionary labor party will probably always remain a pious wish. A revolutionary labor party is so long an impossibility, as long as the Workers Party of America will become this labor party. But it is possible that a labor party will rise earlier than that.

WHAT purpose can a labor party serve for us? It will become a field of activity for our revolutionary work among the masses, in order to win them over gradually to the revolutionary standpoint. But it will also be a school for the working masses themselves, where they will get the experience of the necessity of class organization, and one other very important experience—the experience of the treacherous role of the reformists, who will in all probability take the lead in this movement. We have already had a clear symptom of this during the last few weeks. The socialist party under the leadership of the well-known Mr. Hillquit, was compelled recently to oppose the LaFollette party on the question of the labor party. The reformists could not formally abandon their leading role in the labor organizations. Otherwise they would be politically dead.

The commission proposed that the former slogan "Farmer Labor Party" must be changed from now on to that of "The Labor Party" only. That

must be done in conformity with the change in the objective situation in America. The agricultural crisis was temporarily overcome by capitalism in America, although it was accomplished by the expropriation of the property of a large mass of small farmers. At present there is no basis for a joint party of the workers and small farmers. That naturally does not mean that the Communists must not continue their work among the small farmers with the greatest energy.

THE working class is approaching great mass struggles. On the whole, however, it must be said that at present the situation is not yet pregnant with revolution. American capitalism seems to be standing at the height of its power. At present it has overcome the situation created by the superfluity of capital by exporting capital to impoverished Europe. The Dawes affair seems a step toward world monopoly to American finance capital. This great power is, however, deceitful. When one is standing on top and can stay there, it is a very advantageous position. But when he comes to a slant and begins to slide, then the higher he stands, the worse it is for him. The great task of the American comrades is to help finance capital to slide down.

In the resolution the commission stated that both the leading groups have made mistakes in their platform; that is, however, well on the road to Bolshevization, but it is still much too weak. The party comrades of both groups must together do everything in their power to strengthen the party.

One other important task: the party has a right wing led by a comrade named Lore, who may not be altogether unknown to you, and of whom there can be no doubt that he is an opportunist. The commission declares in its resolution that there is no room for such an opportunist as Lore in the central committee of the party. The commission did not express an opinion on what the right place is for him, that has been left to the congress of the Workers Party to decide. We are convinced that all the comrades of the central committee of the party, irrespective of the group to which they belong, will deal with this question without ambiguity at the party congress. (Applause).

COMRADE ZINOVIEV said:

Comrades, I should like to make the following statement on the American question:

In the course of the negotiations I myself moved that the composition of the future central committees of the American party be already intimated here in Moscow. I proposed that the present majority retain a majority in the future central committee, but that the present minority be assured representation proportional to its strength, to wit, not under one-third.

During the negotiations I then withdrew my motion as inexpedient. We are of the opinion that after having formulated a unified political platform we may leave it to the party itself to elect its central committee at the next party convention as it sees fit. This is in no way intended to express a preference for one of the two wings of the party.

I must emphasize that the Foster majority did not absolutely insist upon having the composition of the central committee fixed here. That means that my motion was made neither at the initiative of the majority nor of the minority, but on my own initiative.

YOU know, comrades, that the commission has put only one condition, that the opposition, that is the social-democratic group headed by Lore, be not represented in the central committee.

We believe that both wings, Foster's as well as Ruthenberg's, by all means belong in the central committee. Of course it is not easy for both wings to obtain a majority. Nevertheless, each maintains that it will gain the majority. The future will show which of the two has deceived itself. We can only wish both wings the best of good luck. Let them try to win a victory on the basis of the platform of the Communist International, however, only on the basis of the platform here formulated.

The wish was also expressed that both tendencies unite in fighting the social democratic tendency of Lore. If one wing should endeavour to defeat the other thru collaboration with Lore that would be disloyalty to the Communist International. After eliminating the social democratic opposition a free-for-all struggle is permissible, of course in a comradely form within the organization and only up to the party convention. After the convention peace and tranquillity must prevail so that an American question should not again require the attention of the Comintern for a long time to come.

A REPRESENTATIVE of the American majority, Comrade Foster, said:

On behalf of the majority, I would like to state that we fully accept the resolution of the American commission. We believe it provides a solution of all the disputed points in relation to the labor party question which have divided the party for the

last two years and that it lays down the correct line for the future.

From the beginning of the controversy which first arose in 1923 over the question of the formation of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party, the present majority has contended that the labor party must be a mass organization with a firm basis of trade union support, and should not be merely a combination of the Workers Party and its sympathizing organizations, and fought the theory that the Communists should endeavor to split off a left wing from the labor party as soon as possible to transform this split-off section into a mass Communist Party. The resolution of the commission has clearly upheld this point of view and has declared that we are right in emphasizing it.

After the presidential election, the majority of the C. E. C. in its determined opposition to further attempts to organize a fictitious labor party which could not fulfill the role of a mass labor party in the United States, went to an extreme and rejected the agitation for the formation of a labor party in the present situation. This was a mistake which is acknowledged and which will be corrected in accordance with the resolution.

On the basis of this decision the majority will strive to unite our party to end the factional strife that has weakened our party and to eradicate energetically the right deviations present in the Workers (Communist) Party.

A REPRESENTATIVE of the American minority, Comrade Ruthenberg, said:

The minority of the Communist party appealed to the Communist International on the American question, because it considered that there was at stake an issue which involved the whole question of the future of the Communist movement in the United States, the question of developing the class consciousness of the American working class.

We see that in recent years a new tendency had arisen which expressed itself in the movement for the labor party. We believed that it was necessary for our party to take the forefront in this struggle and so to move the backward masses in America a step forward. We believe that to cut loose from this movement would be to take from our party the best avenue of its future development.

In the decision that has been proposed here we have the Communist International's approval of this fundamental viewpoint that the Communist Party in America must remain at the head of and take the lead in developing this movement; and consequently we can give our full approval to the thesis.

In the inner party question also we have a decision to which we can give our full approval. One of the big differences in our party was the question of the struggle against the social-democratic Lore faction in our party. We insisted upon an uncompromising struggle to eradicate this tendency and this has been approved in the thesis.

Thus in the inner party situation we believe that the thesis follows the correct line for the future good of the Communist Party in the United States.

As to the question of the next central executive committee, we accept Comrade Zinoviev's statement, that he wishes both groups good luck, and I can assure you we shall take full advantage to establish a leadership of a good Communist character in the Workers Party of America.

The draft resolution of the American commission was unanimously adopted.

## Charges Cops With Graft.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., May 26—Highly incensed over his arrest and subsequent fine in Chicago last week for parking his automobile over the time limit, Representative Harry Welsbrod of Chicago, introduced a resolution in the house today condemning Captain Patrick Hogan of the Chicago police force, as a "bully," resenting his verbal attack on the legislator, and asking for the appointment of a committee of five members to investigate charges that Chicago traffic police are selling parking spaces in the loop district to favored customers at \$5 an \$10 a month. The resolution was laid on the speaker's table.

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