
Internal Party Problems:

Statement of the Central Executive Committee of Workers Party of America.

Published in *The Daily Worker*, v. 2, no. 29 (April 19, 1924), section 2, pg. 3.

To the Membership of the Party.
Comrades:

We are on the eve of big developments. The successful consummation of the June 17th Convention will mean a gigantic stride forward in the life of the American Labor movement. It will also increase manifold the prestige and influence of Communist ideas and consequently the Workers Party.

And yet it is only gradually and slowly that our membership is awakening to the realization of these immense possibilities. This statement and appeal to the party is issued in the hope that it will accelerate this process and thereby enable the party to mobilize all its resources and energies for the impending task and carry it out.

Internal Conditions for Our Success.

The Central Executive Committee fully realizes the conditions that must prevail in the party in order that our present labor party campaign may be crowned with success. These internal conditions are:

1) The membership of the party must be fully conscious of the nature of our task as well as of the strategy and tactics to be employed in the realization of these tasks.

2) The membership, or at least its overwhelming majority, must have complete confidence in the ability and competency of the CEC.

3) The entire party membership and party organization must give wholehearted and unstinted support to the leadership of the CEC.

Actual Situation in the Party.

The CEC is glad to say that our membership

has reached a pretty thorough understanding of the general nature of our immediate task and objectives regarding our labor party campaign. The thing, however, that is yet to be achieved by our membership is just as thorough a grasp of our strategy and tactics.

This is just as important as a clear understanding of our objective. To define at any given moment the immediate objective of a Communist Party is hard enough, to be sure. But when this objective has been defined correctly, then the entire success of the struggle to attain it depends upon the correctness of the strategy and the tactics applied.

On this point, on the point of strategy and tactics in our labor party campaign, we still find in the party a lack of sufficient clarity and understanding, with the result that the party organization does not respond readily and quickly enough to the leadership of the CEC, and that in a few instances party units have actually deviated from the established party policy.

We also find in the party at present a clear manifestation of an organized factional opposition. Irrespective of the merits or demerits of its case, the harmful effect of such organized opposition upon the fighting ability of the party cannot be successfully disputed.

The Study of Strategy and Tactics.

The Central Executive Committee wishes to impress upon the party membership the vital necessity of studying party policy with particular regard to the strategy and tactics involved. We have already become accustomed and pretty well trained to analyze party policy always from the point of view of the fundamental Communist principles. This is a great achievement indeed. But we have yet to learn to analyze the means and methods for the realization of our immediate objective; that is, the art of strategy and

tactics.

Toward this end we recommend a critical and careful study of the last thesis of the CEC, also the thesis of Comrades Lore and Olgin and the reply thereto by Comrades Cannon and Bittelman, the recent speech of Comrade Ruthenberg to the party membership meetings which the CEC is publishing in pamphlet form, and the recent published letters of the CEC to the District Executive Committees of Minnesota and Michigan, respectively.

Deviations from Party Policy.

In recent weeks the CEC had occasion to deal with the following deviations from party policy:

1) Failure by some of our members to consider and treat our policy in regard to the Third Party movement as an integral part of our general labor party policy. Although the final decision in the matter of the Third Party movement rests now with the Comintern, nevertheless, it must be accepted as established party policy that our attitude toward the Third Party movement cannot be treated as something separate and apart from our general labor party policy. A certain portion of our membership, particularly in the East, has not as yet accepted this point of view.

2) An inclination by some of our members, when engaged in United Front campaigns, not to make known the fact that they are Communists and members of the Workers Party. This inclination manifested itself recently in Minnesota.

3) An exaggerated anxiety to avoid conflicts with so-called progressive labor leaders to the point of hesitating to fight openly and promptly the idea of labor organizations supporting candidates on the old party tickets. This manifestation took place recently in Detroit.

These deviations from correct Communist policy have their origin in two different sets of circumstances. The incorrect treatment of a Third Party movement reflects a conception of Communist tactics and policy which Comrade Lenin described as "Leftism." In our case this conception is motivated mainly by the fact that some sections of our party have not yet fully entered the daily struggles of the workers, have not actually engaged in United Front campaigns on a large scale, and therefore have failed to realize the intricate and

complicated nature of Communist strategy and tactics. It is by no means accidental that these leftist ideas prevail in the East, where our party organization, so far, has not engaged in large scale United Front campaigns.

Nor is it accidental that the deviations manifested in Minnesota and Michigan are rather of an opportunist character. It is these places (the West generally, and particularly in Minnesota) that our United Front campaign have assumed the biggest proportions. It is there that we have made our greatest practical achievements.

No wonder, therefore, that some of our most active comrades in these districts have become oversensitive to the requirements of expediency, practical advantage, and immediate success.

Deviations from Communistic policy of an opportunist nature are mostly the result of practical success, just as deviations of a leftist nature are the result of isolation and passivity. Both must be guarded against constantly and carefully.

The CEC lost no time in correcting the mistaken ideas of our comrades in the districts referred to above. We are glad to report that the instructions and corrections of the CEC have in all cases be accepted in proper Communist spirit.

Organized Opposition to the CEC.

At the membership meetings recently held in Philadelphia and New York, an attempt was made by some of our comrades to raise factional issues and, by indirect means, to crystallize opposition to the leadership of the CEC. Resolutions of the same contents and practically the same wording were introduced at both of these meetings, calling upon the CEC to do the following:

1) To combat and stamp out the opportunistic tendencies manifesting themselves at present in the party.

2) To take action against Comrade Lore for his alleged attack upon the Comintern.

The identity of the resolutions, as well as the manner in which they were introduced, convinced us that we have before us a clear manifestation of an organized opposition against the CEC.

Consider the facts:

1) At both of these meetings Comrade Ruthenberg appeared in the name of the CEC and delivered an extensive report on the policies and activities of the CEC. From his report, as well as from the party press, it should have been obvious to everyone that the CEC is perfectly alive and alert to every situation in the party, and that opportunistic tendencies — wherever and whenever they make their appearance — were promptly dealt with by the CEC in a proper Communist way. In fact, it was only from this report of the representative of the CEC, and the published letters of the CEC to Detroit and Michigan, which were designed to point out and combat opportunist deviations, that the comrades could have learned of their existence. Then why did the comrades find it necessary to introduce resolutions “calling upon” the CEC to take action which had already been taken in each case, promptly and decisively?

2) These meetings were called by the CEC for the express purpose of clarifying some of the issues of our labor party policy before our membership, and of mobilizing them for the June 17th Convention.

3) The CEC considered the case of Comrade Lore some five weeks ago. After thorough deliberation, the CEC decided that the articles of Comrade Lore in question give rise to misconceptions regarding the history of the Comintern. It decided, therefore, to call upon Comrade Lore to submit for the approval of the CEC a draft of a statement correcting the impression that might have been created by his article, and that this statement, upon approval by the CEC, should be published as an editorial in the *Volkszeitung*. Comrade Lore agreed to this decision.

4) In the course of the membership meetings in New York and Philadelphia, Comrade Ruthenberg related all these facts.

It appears from the above facts that the CEC took prompt and proper action in the case of Comrade Lore, and, also, that the CEC needed no reminder in the matter of combating opportunist deviations in those sections of the party where they arise.

And yet some of our comrades in New York and

in Philadelphia found it necessary to introduce resolutions of a sort which could have no other purpose than to sow doubt and suspicion in the party ranks against the CEC and thus, by indirection, to undermine its authority, crystallize opposition to its leadership, and generally demoralize the party organization.

Aside from this, the introduction of these resolutions was bound to divert the attention of the membership from the main purpose of these meetings, thereby seriously interfering with our campaign for the June 17th Convention.

We Need a United Party.

The success of our work, particularly on the eve of the June 17 Convention, demands a united party. The CEC appeals to the party membership for unity and action.

We also appeal to the comrades involved in the opposition to lay aside for the present their factional differences, and to give the CEC and the party the necessary support and cooperation to make the labor party campaign a success.

The CEC is fully in favor of freedom of discussion within the party organization and in the party press of all new problems and difficulties arising out of our activities. But at the same time the CEC feels in duty bound to insist that once a matter has been settled by the proper party authorities, and a call for action issued, the party ranks must close, and every party member must render the CEC the utmost support and cooperation.

Close the ranks, comrades!

Strengthen the party organization!

Forward to the June 17 Convention!

To a Class Farmer-Labor Party!

To a Workers' and Farmers' government in the US and thence to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Central Executive Committee,
C.E. Ruthenberg, Secretary.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2006. • Free reproduction permitted.