
Circular Letter “To All Ohio Locals and Branches” from Alfred Wagenknecht.

[September 1919]

An undated mimeographed document. Original in the Tim Davenport collection.

TO ALL OHIO LOCALS AND BRANCHES

Comrades:—

Locals and Branches in Ohio have made inquiries as to the status of the Ohio organization now that the Chicago conventions have passed into history. For the delegates who represented Ohio at Chicago (with one exception†) we desire to report as follows:

1. The fight for Left Wing principles in the Socialist Party culminated in a National Left Wing Conference held in New York City June 21 to 24. Your State Executive Committee instructed Comrades Wilkins and Wagenknecht to attend this conference.

2. The following motion was passed at this National Left Wing Conference: “That the National Council of the Left Wing call a conference in Chicago September 1st of all revolutionary elements willing to unite with a revolutionized Socialist Party or with a Communist Party organized by Left Wing delegates seceding from the convention of the Socialist Party to be held August 30th.

3. At this National Left Wing Conference a minority group bolted because they wanted to organize a new party immediately and not in harmony with the provisions of the above motion.

4. A week after the National Left Wing Conference was held, a state convention of the Socialist Party

of Ohio took place. This convention adopted the Left Wing program as passed by the National Left Wing Conference and also instructed state delegates to the national convention. The instruction to the delegates, afterwards endorsed by a referendum vote of the Ohio membership, were to the effect that the Ohio delegates

were to attend the convention called by the Left Wing Conference, should delegates from suspended and expelled Socialist Party elements not be seated in the SP Convention.

5. Your delegates, in attempting to attend the Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party, were ejected from the convention hall by police personally commanded by Adolph Germer.

6. Your delegates then, together with other barred and seceding delegates, 72 in number, met in another hall in the same building where the newly elected revolutionary National Executive Committee called the legal Socialist Party con-

vention to order.

7. Obeying the instructions from the National Left Wing Conference, which requested the Left Wing delegates to organize a communist party, your delegates then organized such a party, naming it the COMMUNIST LABOR PARTY. As the National Council of the Left Wing failed to call a conference of revolu-



†- Reference is to C.E. Ruthenberg of Cleveland, who was a founding member and the first Executive Secretary of the rival Communist Party of America.

tionary elements to meet in Chicago on Sept. 1st, for the purpose of unifying all revolutionary factions, the Communist Labor Party immediately issued a call for unity to the Russian Federation bolting minority group.

8. This minority group refused to unite with us, for it wanted the “honor” of organizing the first communist party. The majority group did not care about the “honors” involved, but demanded unity. The minority group, refusing to unite, then went ahead and organized a party of its own.

9. Your delegates obeyed instructions to the letter. Your delegates were not instructed to attend the convention called by the bolting minority group, the Russian Federation group, but to attend the convention which was to have been called by the National Council under instructions from the National Left Wing Conference.

10. Your delegates, having obeyed instructions to the letter, instructions given your delegates by membership referendum, the Ohio organization is therefore now officially affiliated with the Communist Labor Party, the logical outgrowth of our fight for Left Wing principles within the Socialist Party.

11. In this emergency we should now abide by the new national constitution adopted by the Communist Labor Party convention until such time as it is amended by referendum. We have been “expelled” from the reactionary Socialist Party. This is an honor. We have affiliated with the Communist Labor Party. This is also an honor. Let us all in this emergency maintain our strong Ohio organization and loyally cooperate with the efforts of new party officials to build a powerful national organization.

12. New dues stamps and supplies are now ready. All members in the United States will henceforth pay uniform dues of 50¢ per month. The state office will sell dues stamps at 35¢ each, and initiation stamps at 50¢ each. Members will pay 50¢ per month dues and new members will pay an initiation fee of \$1.00. New Dues Cards are \$1.50 per hundred. We await an early order from you and hope for your immediate cooperation.

Yours in Comradship,

A. Wagenknecht,
State Secretary.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

*Portrait of Alfred Wagenknecht in 1918 by Tim Davenport, from a New York Call photo.
Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2005. • Free reproduction permitted.*