
For a Party of the Masses

(The Struggle Against Sectarianism):

*A Statement on the Controversy in the Communist Party of America
by the Central Executive Committee, in Answer to the Appeal of the “Minority”
Members, Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba],
to the Executive Committee of the Communist International.*

[circa Dec. 1, 1921]

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Their Crime Against the Party.

Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba], the “minority” members of the CEC, have issued an appeal to the Communist International, against the decision of the CEC to proceed at once to organize the Party’s legal activities according to the advice of the 3rd Congress of the Communist International. This appeal was read at a full meeting of the CEC, and it was unanimously decided to forward it at once to the Communist International, together with a reply thereto by the CEC, and to print both the Appeal and the reply in the forthcoming issue of the Party’s official organ.† It was provided, and agreed to by the 3 “minority” members, that certain portions of the appeal, which go into too much detail regarding the plans, and which are in no way necessary to their argument, should be carefully edited before publication, in order that the Party should not be endangered thereby.

Despite this decision of the CEC, and their agreement to it, these members have issued their appeal in

the form of a circular without the slightest alteration of those paragraphs which, as was pointed out to them in the meeting, unnecessarily expose the details of the Party’s relations and connection with the legal organization. The CEC will take steps at once to safeguard the Party members from the possible danger to them from this unwarranted and indefensible action of Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba]; and by suspending them from the Party, pending investigation of charges of the most serious nature, has protected the Party against any further work of this sort on their party.

Their Shifting Position.

The appeal of the “minority” members reveals the fact that they have again changed their point of view on the theoretical and practical questions at issue in the Party.

Their position on the all-important question of communist legal organization and activity has changed so often since the Unity Convention [Woodstock, NY:

†- Members of the CEC minority Charles Dirba, John Ballam, and George Ashkenuzi were suspended at the CEC meeting of Nov. 28, 1921 by a vote of 7 to 3 (despite a constitution provision specifying that 8 votes were required to suspend or expel from that body). This provides an earliest possible date for production of this document. The appeal of the CEC Minority to the Comintern to which this document is a reply, was first read at the Oct. 17, 1921, meeting of the Central Caucus, revised at the enlarged session of Oct. 24-25, and was stated by Ballam to have been dispatched to Moscow by courier on Nov. 5, 1921. Due to intense financial difficulties, no issue of the English language official organ of the CPA, *The Communist*, was issued between November 1921 (v. 1, no. 5) and February-March 1922 (v. 1, no. 6/7), and the text of this reply to the Central Caucus’ appeal was never reproduced in that publication. It was, however, produced as a typeset special “bulletin.”

The Suspension of Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba].

The “minority members of the CEC — Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba], have appealed to the party members to refuse to obey the decisions of the CEC in a circular which is calculated to paralyze the Party’s legal work by exposing our plans to the enemy. They have accordingly been suspended from the CP of A under charge of:

1. Endangering the party by circulating a document signed by these three members exposing the plans and tending to provoke persecution.

2. Repeatedly breaking the discipline of the Party and urging others to do so.

3. Circulating anonymous circulars through unofficial channels, and attempting to break down the morale of the Party.

4. Attempting to disrupt the party by an unorganized campaign of false rumor, slander, and misrepresentation.

5. Propagating a split in the Communist Party.

6. Dobin [Dirba] — calling a meeting in District 1 [New York] at which expelled members were present and participated.

7. Henry [Ashkenuzi] and Moore [Ballam] called meetings of members in District 2 [Boston] and invited and allowed suspended and expelled members to be present.

8. Failing (Henry [Ashkenuzi] and Moore [Ballam] to do Party work assigned them by the CEC while drawing wages from the Party treasury.

May 15-28, 1921] that it is hardly necessary to debate with them. Their own argument of today exposes the unsoundness and insincerity of the position they stood upon yesterday, and judging by the mental gymnastics they have thus far performed, it is not too much to assume that their own admission tomorrow will refute the false conclusions which they draw from false premises today. The rate at which we are travelling, under the pressure of the Party membership, toward the position adopted from the first by the CEC, warrants the prediction that by the time their appeal gets to Moscow they will be ready to issue another circular, explaining that they did not mean what they said in the present one.

Since the Unity Convention they have put forward and defended 4 separate and distinct theories of communist work.

First — when the “left sickness” appeared to have its paralyzing hold upon the entire party, they opposed the CENTRALIZATION of legal work, holding that the system of loosely connected local organizations was sufficient.

Second — when the Party members began to give unmistakable signs of an aspiration for more open work amongst the masses, they agreed to the CEC’s plan to centralize all existing legal organizations.

Third — when the members began to clamor for a definite legal political organization, they published their anonymous circular, proposing a “cadre” as a substitute for a bona fide organization.

Fourth — since the instructions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International have made so clear and explicit, and the overwhelming majority of the party members support them, they now brazenly come out in favor of a legal organization “in principle.”

This is the amazing record of these nimble acrobats on the trapeze of “sacred principle.”

Their continual shifting of position on the question of communist legal work deserves to be set forth in detail and analyzed, in order that the Party members, as well as the Executive Committee of the Communist International, may see them in their true light, as men who are able to change their principles to suit partisan purposes, as easily and readily as the political jugglers of the bourgeois world. It is nothing less than an insult to the intelligence of the Party membership

to assume that they will longer tolerate these demagogues, who, by freakish combination of unfortunate circumstances, found themselves for a time at the head of a movement which they are not worth to serve in the humblest capacity. That the Communist International will repudiate them we have no doubt whatever. Its severe criticism of the American Communist Party is in itself nothing less than a condemnation of the unworthy leaders like Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba], who have made a plaything of the promising young communist movement, and brought it to the blind alley of sectarianism and isolation. In our struggle to overthrow this leadership once and forever, and to put our party in its true place at the head of a mass movement of class-conscious, fighting workers, we confidently rely upon the friendly support of the Communist International, whose platform we stand upon, and whose policies we support with all our power.

When the question of the legal activities was first brought up for discussion in the CEC, these high priests of pure and perfect Bolshevism threw up their hands in horror. They detected unmistakable signs of "Menshevism" and "Centrism" in all the plans proposed to connect the party more intimately with the daily struggles of the workers. *They fought each and every plan put forward for the extension of legal work and they made no counterproposals.*

According to their logic, the feeble, sporadic efforts made in this direction by the two communist parties before the Unity adequately filled the requirements. They resisted every plan to coordinate and centralize the already existing communist organizations, to say nothing of creating a new one on a broad, national scale. Party nuclei feverishly "controlling" a local lodge or fraternal order here, a singing society there, a debating club yonder — such was their conception of "utilizing all legal possibilities." This is the way they proposed to carry out the mandate of the 3rd Congress to "unite the masses politically, by means of public activity in the struggle against American capitalism."

The 3 "minority" members, in their appeal to the Communist International, speak of the first definite step taken by the CEC for the centralization of legal work in such a matter-of-fact manner as to leave the impression that it was supported by them. Concern-

ing the reports on this question, which were referred by the Unity Convention to the CEC without recommendation, they say: "When these reports were considered in the CEC it was decided to organize all legal organizations then under Party control, into a central legal organization." They forgot to say that they bitterly opposed this motion of the CEC and attempted to organize a campaign of sabotage in the Party to prevent its being put into effect. *They opposed this plan on the ground that it would lead to the creation of a legal party.* When they now profess to favor a legal party "in principle," it must be remembered that only yesterday they opposed the first step taken toward the creation of a legal party, *on the ground of principle.*

Acceptance "In Principle" — Opposition in Practice.

Having now arrived at the point where they say they support the idea of a legal communist party "in principle," and since they always make a big talk about what they call "principle" — having slight interest in the "small matters," such as practical work amongst the masses and the APPLICATION of communist principles to the everyday struggles of the workers — one might draw the conclusion that they are now prepared to quit their opposition to the Thesis of the 3rd Congress, the instructions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, to proceed at once to put it into effect, and the decision of the CEC to do so. But this is not the case. Their pretended acceptance of the principle of legal communist political organization is accompanied by an intensified campaign to obstruct its actual realization in life. Their opposition now takes the form of open defiance of the Party discipline, an open appeal to the Party members to refuse to obey the decisions of the CEC. They accept the principle, they say, but they are willing to smash the party to pieces to prevent the APPLICATION of the principle. Their profession is opposite to their performance. In this respect they are much like those false leaders of the European parties whom the Communist International has so justly denounced because "they stand for the Third International in words, but not in deeds."

These American disciples of Sylvia Pankhurst and Herman Gorter set forth two reasons for their opposi-

The CI and the Plans on Legal Activities.

The approval of the Executive Committee for the development of legal activities has been specific and emphatic. Several messages to the effect have been received, as follows:

From our delegate on the EC of the CI:
(Cable, October 17, 1921.)

“Am sending authoritative letter from the President of the Third International [Zinoviev] approving immediate formation of legal organization.

From our delegate: (Letter, October 24, 1921.)

“The members of the EC are wholehearted in saying that such an endeavor as our CEC has decided upon must be resorted to by any party operating under similar conditions, which expects to do serious work amongst the masses. They say they depend upon the integrity and resourcefulness of the CEC and the support of the party members to protect the new organization from the demagogues and political adventurers who may seek to contest our control.

“In short, the leaders here are unanimous in approval of the step we have taken and trust that it is being taken with the proper precaution; there is no disposition to question the wisdom of your having done so, nor even is there any fear expressed.

The prestige of our party has gone up enormously because of the step taken by the CEC — our prestige amongst the leaders here.”

From cable, November 14, 1921:

“Letter of approval declares for the IMMEDIATE formation of legal organization. NO DELAY IS PERMISSIBLE....”

tion in practice to the Thesis which they agree to “in principle.” They say, “We agree that this advice (of the EC of the CI) to the American delegation should be carried out in practice as soon as the disturbed conditions within the CP of A will allow.” In other words, their position amounts to this: “We favor the idea of a legal party, but it cannot be organized NOW, because of the ‘disturbed conditions’ which we have brought about within the Party. Therefore we insist upon delay in order that we may continue our disruptive work, and thus make still more difficult the organization of the legal party in the future. If the Executive Committee of the Communist International and the Party members will be good enough to support us in this contention, our acceptance of the ‘principle’ will do no harm, because it will never be realized in life.”

Political Conditions in America.

The second reason they advance to justify their campaign of opposition and sabotage is that “political conditions” in America are not favorable to the organization of an open movement. They have a lengthy argument on this point which serves very well as the rope with which they hang themselves. The labor movement, they say, is in a state of ferment, and they recite facts enough to prove it. Unemployment spreads over the country like a plague. The West Virginia miners put up an armed struggle against their oppressors. Two million railroad workers threaten a strike; the government sides against them; their leaders betray them. The union-smashing campaign of the organized employers shows no sign of abatement. Strikes, lock-outs, wage cuts are the order of the day. The workers’ organizations face a life and death struggle on every side. The masses are beaten, discouraged, and demoralized because they have no leadership, no unifying center. And from these terrible facts, which cry aloud to the communists to go to the masses at all hazards and in spite of all obstacles, to set up without delay an open political body which will serve as a rallying point for the shattered and demoralized forces of labor, a unifying and directing center for their desperate struggle — from all these facts, these cut-and-dried dogmatists, these good-for-nothing sectarians draw the conclusion that our party must not set up a broad, open organization now, BECAUSE THE TIME IS NOT RIPE!

The entire argument of Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba] is based on negation — on the doubts, the fears, the distrust of themselves and of others, which are the never-failing symptoms of the sectarian disease. They do not trust the masses; they do not trust the Communist Party. In their appeal there is not one ray of hope or promise to be found. The ordinary worker would be discouraged completely by so pessimistic a point of view. Men of such feeble spirit cannot lead a fighting party of the proletariat. They are material only for a pitiful sect founded on the creed of doubts and fears.

The aggressiveness of the American ruling class during the last 2 years has made the more conscious workers look about for means to cope with this new enemy — the government — which shows them its iron fist in every strike. The intensification of the struggle brings out more and more clearly its political aspect. The inadequacy of the unions alone becomes manifest. Throughout the whole country resounds the demand for a workers' political party. It is the topic of the hour in the labor movement. The Communist Party is duty-bound to foster this sentiment and to take the lead in its crystallization. To evade this task under any pretext, or to delay it unnecessarily, as Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba] propose, would be nothing less than a crime against the workers of America.

The Communist International has grown great and powerful by assimilating the best elements of the revolutionary factions — socialists, syndicalists, anarchists, and militants in the labor movement — and overcoming their prejudices in the process. This has been possible because the program of the Communist International comprises all the wisdom drawn from practical revolutionary experience, and has incorporated within it all the vital features of all the movements of the workers which went before it. Our party must also learn how to draw the radical labor factions closer to itself and to assimilate their best fighters. It is the task of our party to gather the scattered revolutionary forces in the United States and unite them into one strong body. The tens of thousands of workers who have left the Socialist Party, the old militants of the IWW, the rank and file workers in the trade unions — here is the living material for a powerful mass movement of which the organized communists will be the

heart and core. The radical labor forces are today shattered and demoralized. The program of the Communist International, which is our program, can unite them as it has done in all other countries.

The Correlation of Legal and Illegal Organization.

The “minority” members have never presented a plan to the CEC outlining their idea for the correlation of legal and illegal organization. In their printed propaganda, however, they accuse the CEC of aiming to “liquidate” the CP of A. In the matter of the correlation of legal and illegal organizations we are guided by the practical experience of the communist parties which have confronted the same problem and solved it. It is on the basis of this practical experience, crystallized by the revolutionists of Europe, and not on quack theories, that we are going to proceed to organize the open movement and adjust the underground organization to the new situation.

In order to unify the revolutionary elements, and line up the anti-capitalist forces for the struggle, the open movement must be of such a nature that all class-conscious workers may come into it. The organized communists, functioning within this broad organization, must bring the various elements by degrees to their point of view, to their method of struggle, and gradually assimilate them. Only through the use of such broad tactics toward the class-conscious elements can we hope to build, at first, a *workers'* mass party, and finally make it a *communist* mass party.

A legal communist mass party cannot be brought into life by the single act of holding a convention and “launching” it, as the shallow theorists of the “Workers Council” naively assume. These Left Socialists can organize a *legal* party in this manner, and this may be what they really want, being more concerned about legality than about communism, but the creation of a *legal communist* mass party is not so simple a matter. These platonic lovers of the Third International ask us to disband the compact, disciplined underground body, which we have built up at the cost of 2 years' struggle and sacrifice, on the day we organize what they call “an open communist party.” They would have us trust the entire movement to bourgeois legality, like a reckless gambler who risks everything on one throw

of the dice. Such a proposal is worthy only of these latter-day saints of communism who had no part in the building of our movement.

NO, the creation of a legal communist mass party in the United States is a *process*. During this process the party must be able to attract and absorb most of the revolutionary elements and factions and weld them into one big, militant mass movement. It will be wholly impossible to achieve this aim unless the communist within remain closely organized in a well-disciplined communist party. Without a well-organized and well-disciplined communist party within the broad organization to steady it, to guide it, and to *control* it, the creation of such a body would not only be dangerous, but disastrous to revolutionary unity. It would soon become the playground of ambitious, unscrupulous demagogues and adventurers; it would be shattered into fragments. The CEC does not propose to organize an open *sect* with an exclusive membership, which would confine itself to propaganda, and fail to organize the workers who sympathize with its aims and are willing to join it for a general struggle against capitalism. The CEC proposes to organize a movement broad enough to embrace all conscious proletarian militants. It will then become the task of the organized communists, i.e. the CP of A, to weld them together, to develop the best of them and absorb them. To undertake this colossal enterprise, to keep it firmly in hand and carry it through to a successful issue in spite of all difficulties, *the bona fide communists must retain intact their independent organization, and they will do so.*

Moreover, the underground party must exist because at this stage of extreme weakness of the labor movement, and the disorganization of the militant radical forces, an open party could not dare to express fully the communist program without inviting an onslaught of persecution, which it would not have strength enough to stand up against. No communist can or should rely upon bourgeois legality, even in peaceful times. The relative importance of legal and illegal work will continually alternate with the fluctuation of the class strife and changes in political conditions. In certain parts of this country it will be impossible to apply the same forms as in others. In some parts of America most any sort of political work is impossible at the present time. The underground or-

ganization is no doctrine and no panacea. It is a revolutionary expedient to be used according to needs.

The communists will be able to control the open movement not only because they are organized, which the others are not, but because they will and must set the example of good leadership, courage, and sacrifice to the cause of the workers. In order to do this, the party has to put forward the best of its members to assume the responsible functions of the open movement. The entire membership must be engaged in this work.

Their Queer Theory of the "Cadre."

The latest doctrine of the opposition in the party is that a part of the membership should remain underground, while the other half goes into the open as a "Cadre." This ridiculous conception of the correlation of legal and illegal work is going to be a historic contribution to the gaiety of the communist world. The opposition cannot conceive the problems, except in a mechanical form. The question arises, if one half of the members shall stand for the dangers of open work, why not the other half? If the most capable comrades are placed into responsible positions in the open movement in order to control and direct it, must they be watched by those who hide underground entirely, and do no work? According to their schemes, one-half of the party membership would be out in the open "Cadre," doing the work and facing the hazards, and the other half would remain in their underground hiding places, instructing the doers how to do it.

The logic of this theory may yet lead to the conclusion that the two halves of the party membership should exchange roles every 3 months. The underground "vacationists" would come out into the open "Cadre," and those in the open would take a vacation underground. It is pertinent to ask the exponents of this queer theory how they justify their opposition to the creation of a genuine open movement. If they agree to one-half of the members coming into the open, why not the entire membership?

The correlation of legal and illegal organizations is not achieved by mechanical control of one committee or group by another, but by a well-planned interfusion of both organization and committees, and by the skillful handling of the sympathetic workers in

the open movement. Those who say that this cannot be done betray a lack of confidence in the communists. More than that, they deny the living practical experiences of comrades in other countries who practice such work daily with very little talk about it.

In their desperate attempts to hold up the legal work at all costs, the leaders of the opposition are playing upon the fears of the members, speaking about federal laws and conjuring things in much the same way that the yellow Socialists argued against affiliation with the Communist International because of the danger involved. They predict that terrible things will befall those who face the workers in the open.

Communists do not have underground organizations in order to hide themselves from the masses. The practice of underground organization is resorted to in order to be able to retreat when necessary, and to prevent the enemy from smashing the organization itself, as well as to be able to always hold before the workers our final aim. If there are any members who favor the underground organization mainly because of the safety it affords them as individuals, and who are afraid to go out to the workers to openly do the work that must be done openly, there is not reason for them to stay in our party. Above all, communists CAN NOT BE COWARDS!

“Failure of the CEC to Carry on Communist Work.”

Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba] charge that the CEC “has failed to carry on any communist work in this country and is daily demonstrating its total inability to do so.” Let us take up their “charges,” and see who it is that carries on the communist work, and who is afflicted with “total inability.”

It is true that communist activity amongst the masses is only a fraction of what it ought to be. For *this*, there are 3 reasons:

- 1) The weakness of the Party.
- 2) The great difficulty of working through an organization that is entirely underground.
- 3) The necessity of using our ablest workers for the struggle in the party against the sabotage and disruption organized and led by this same “minority.”

These difficulties are being overcome:

1) The new policies and the new leadership in the party are drawing into our ranks the best of the radical workers who hold aloof from the sterile sects. We are establishing far-reaching connections amongst this element in the labor movement. They will come with us and help us to build a strong, fighting party.

2) A movement that exists wholly underground develops strong tendencies toward sectarianism and isolation from the masses and tends to become the breeding-place for manipulators and hairsplitters, leaders who are excellent in small things. Such, for a time, was the fate of our movement. This was clearly seen by the Communist International and because of it, they advised us to try all ways and means to get out into the open. The plans made by the CEC for the development of legal communist work are made for the very purpose of carrying out the advice of the 3rd Congress to “get closer to the masses.” Those who oppose this effort and seek in every way, by fair and foul means, to obstruct and prevent it will deceive no one by cloaking their dastardly actions under the slogan of “*participation in mass struggles.*”

3) The third difficulty in the way of properly connecting the party with the daily struggles of the workers — the disruption in the party — is rapidly being overcome as the party organizations and committees, from top to bottom, are taking action against those responsible for it. In suspending these 3 members the CEC is setting an example to the entire membership of how it must deal with those who willfully disrupt and demoralize the party.

Work has been done in spite of the difficulties. Our nuclei committees have issued *52 leaflets* in local strikes throughout the country. We have established organized connections with over *500 local unions*, according to reports from Industrial Organizers in the Districts. The sentiment for an extensive rank and file movement is already pervading the trade union world; in all such movements our party plays an influential part.

The “minority” members accuse the CEC of having done no work in the *Army and Navy*. Surely little argument on this point is necessary, because it must be known to every rank and file member of the party that the American Army and Navy is not composed of conscripted workers who would be susceptible to communist propaganda. An ambition to seriously affect a

mercenary Army and Navy of the present American type necessarily presupposes the existence of a powerful communist party with extensive ramifications throughout the entire labor movement and well-organized communist nuclei in the Army and Navy itself.

None but demagogues can condemn the party on the ground that it did not organize a wide agitation in this field. If the failure to do so is “treason to communism,” as they charge, then they were partners to it, for they never made a single motion in the CEC, not even so much as a suggestion on the subject.

On the *unemployed problem* the CEC urged members to action several months ago, and a plan was published in the official party bulletin. Since then, unemployed conferences have been organized in 8 cities. The workers, however, are still using up their reserve funds and as a result there was a lack of interest. Only now is the unemployed situation reaching an acute stage, and a complete program and machinery is ready to begin work.

Our program in the *independent unions* is being put into effect successfully; great progress has been made in this field. The *Sacco-Vanzetti* issue has taken up nationwide agitation organized in conjunction with the working class elements willing to cooperate with it.

The CEC is not an irresponsible committee which picks up one activity or the other without seeing the possibility of leading it to a successful conclusion. It realizes that the Party has to acquire a certain amount of power and influence in order to successfully utilize the opportunities that arise.

The CEC has been engaging in activities in many fields and in many sections of the country, which it cannot report except on the floor of the party’s convention. The accusation of lack of activity comes with bad grace indeed from such members as Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba], who, during their entire term of office in the former CP did not do 1/20th of the work which has been done by the present committee in a few months since the Unity Convention, in spite of the difficulty of an organization in the process of amalgamation, factional antagonism, lack of funds, and organized sabotage and disruption organized and directed by these same Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba].

Legal Party Press.

The “minority” members do not help their case by mentioning the legal press. Being opposed to organized legal work, they have naturally shown very little interest in the legal press of the party. Their supporters — encouraged and advised by them — deliberately tried to kill one of our foreign language dailies by squandering the funds before they turned over the management of it to the newly-elected Bureau, and by shutting off all financial support from those branches over which they have influence. They contribute nothing to the success of our legal papers, either financially or editorially. Despite the fact that Moore [Ballam] took the party’s money as a member of the editorial committee, he gave us no more than one article.

The CEC, on the other hand, has always looked upon the establishment and development of the legal press as one of the main tasks of the party. This necessarily goes hand in hand with the organization of legal communist activities in general. A strong legal press cannot be established and maintained without a strong legal organization, and vice versa.

The CEC has considered plans for the establishment of a daily paper in connection with the organization of legal activities. Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba] contributed nothing to the discussion on these plans, offered no suggestions, showed not the slightest interest. Their indictment of the CEC on the ground that “it has done nothing to establish a daily paper” will deceive no one who knows their attitude on legal organization, legal press, and legal activities in general. To establish and maintain a daily newspaper is a giant task that must be carefully planned and organized. We do not propose to invite disaster by rushing into a tremendous enterprise until we see a reasonable chance to succeed with it. The CEC is of the opinion that the creation of a broad legal organization which makes fullest utilization of all sympathizing workers is an *indispensable condition* for the support of a daily newspaper at the present time. The plans for legal organization decided upon by the CEC, and being carried out, are the best guarantee to the membership that the CEC is in earnest about the question of a daily newspaper. Those who oppose the legal organization convict themselves of insincerity when

they talk about a strong legal press.

It is not true, as charged by the “minority,” that the “CEC abolished two well-established legal propaganda papers and replaced them by one nondescript weekly magazine.”† The two papers were COMBINED because the whole membership demanded it and because it was the practical and sensible thing to do when the two parties were united. These very members, Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba], voted for the motion to combine the two papers.

The *Resolution and Theses* of the 3rd Congress [of the Communist International] went to the printer as soon as the amended copies were received. There has been no delay in their publication that could be prevented by the CEC, and Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba] know it. The holding up of funds, as a result of the work of disruption of this trio, is responsible for the delay.

Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba] take upon themselves the responsibility of telling the Executive Committee of the Communist International and the members of the Communist Party of America that “workers who have been Bolsheviks for years are expelled — while bourgeois liberals are invited and accepted as members of the party.” This is a deliberate lie, made out of whole cloth, without the slightest justification or excuse except their own desire to arouse the prejudice of the members by any means, no matter how infamous. There has not been a single member admitted to the Communist Party, with the knowledge and consent of the CEC, who has not been fully recommended and vouched for by trustworthy communists. The records of the CEC do not contain a single protest by Henry [Ashkenuzi], Moore [Ballam], and Dobin [Dirba] against any member admitted to the Party.

“The Crushing Policy.”

The “crushing policy” of which the minority members complain consists simply of the refusal of

the CEC to allow the party work to be held up because they and their supporters do not do it. The “confusion” which they say exists in the party over the question of legal and illegal work is not the result of the failure to “explain to and instruct the membership.” It has been caused by their own organized campaign of slander, disruption, and provocation. The “confusion,” however, is not nearly so widespread as they wish to make it appear. The great majority of the members already fully understand and support the policies of the 3rd Congress which we are carrying out; and that majority grows steadily as we reach the rank and file with the true facts.

It is true enough that the two communist parties have been only recently united and that a degree of factional feeling had to be taken into account. But their method of meeting this condition and our method is as far apart as the poles. Their method has been to cultivate and cater to the old prejudices in every way possible, to keep up an organization within the party on the basis of the former division, and to oppose all constructive activity on the ground that “our forces are not yet united.” Our method has been directly opposite. It has been our endeavor to unify the organization on the basis of the new policies laid down for America by the 3rd Congress.

The program for legal activities put before the party by the CEC took away the foundation from the old sterile controversy over phrases and abstractions, and quickened the entire organization with animated discussion of the WORK to be done and the MOVEMENT to be developed. This discussion has finally been crystallized into a well-settled conviction on the part of the great majority of the members in favor of the policies of the 3rd Congress, and a firm determination to put them into life in America. Our Party is inspired by a new spirit, by an inspiration to go forward with our task of building up a communist mass party. The rank and file members of the Party grow more and more impatient with the hairsplitters and phrasemongers who take up our time with their never ending talk and their disruption, and the CEC is be-

†- Reference is to the merger of the old CPA’s legal weekly, *Workers Challenge*, and the former UCP’s legal weekly, *The Toiler*, to form an ostensibly new publication, *The Worker*. Issue numbers of the former UCP publication was maintained under the new title. As was the case with the former UCP publication, *The Worker* made use of a small format, consisting of approximately 8.5 by 11 inch pages — thus its description as a “magazine.” The name “Workers Challenge” was recycled in 1922 by the legal political organization attached to the Central Caucus-CPA, the United Toilers of America, as the name of its official organ.

ing pressed hard to deal firmly with them. This is the “intolerable and deplorable” condition within the party of which they complain. We say it is the most heartening sign of healthy new life in the movement; the certain proof that NOW is the time to put into effect the plans of the CEC for legal activities, made in accordance with the decisions of the 3rd Congress and the instructions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

Close the Ranks!

A party of the masses! That is the issue. The party members understand it clearly and they have spoken for it in unmistakable terms. The leaders of the opposition are discredited before the entire party. The majority against them mounted steadily as their real purposes were made manifest. Their campaign of slander, disruption, and sabotage has failed to break the party. The split which they propagate cannot succeed.

The rank and file of the Party who struggle so long to unify the movement cannot go with those who again seek to divide it. The great body of the membership draws together in a closer unity.

A party of the masses! That is our slogan. We serve the toiling masses of America by our determined struggle against sectarianism. We fight for a communist party that will stand at the head of their struggle, and make itself worthy of the proud name it bears in every country: “The vanguard of the workers.”

Communists! There has been a long discussion in the Party, and everyone has had his word. Now comes the time for action, when communist soldiers

must obey. The Central Executive Committee has made its decision, and every party member must carry it out to the letter. Behind that decision stands the 3rd Congress and the instructions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Let no one challenge that decision. Great tasks are before us. We will be able to accomplish them only if we move as one strong body, bound by true communist discipline. Let no one break that discipline.

CLOSE THE RANKS!

Every Communist to his task!

Forward to a communist party of the masses, a worthy section of the Communist International — the inspirer, organizer, and leader of the world’s proletariat!

Long live the Communist Party of America!

Long live the Communist International!

Central Executive Committee,
Communist Party of America.

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