
Manifesto of the Communist Party of America on the Workers Party: To the Workers of America [circa January 1922]

Leaflet in the James P. Cannon papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

COMRADES AND FELLOW-WORKERS:—

The history of the labor movement in America is the history of the betrayal of the interests of the working class by self-appointed "leaders." The revolutionary vanguard of the workers has been cursed with reformism and opportunism. Many political organizations and parties have sprung up, all claiming to represent the working class, and appealing for support on the basis of programs which represented "short cuts" to the emancipation of the workers from the horrors of wage slavery. During the period preceding the world war all these Utopian schemes and blue prints of the "Cooperative Commonwealth" and the "Workers' Republic" and short cuts to the revolution could win some measure of support from certain elements of the workers and the petit-bourgeoisie because none of these theories had been subjected to any test of action. With the successful proletarian revolution in Russia in 1917 and the establishment of the first proletarian government of Soviet Russia all the fine spun theories of the; social-patriots, reformers and Utopians were exploded. The proletarian revolution in Russia is the beacon which must guide the working class of all countries in the employment of the correct tactics for the speedy and successful overthrow of the Capitalist State, and the living example of the form and character of the government to be established by the working class. This Workers government can be no other than the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviet Power.

In 1919 the Communist International was organized and there took place throughout the world a realignment of the revolutionary forces formerly represented by the socialist and social-democratic parties in every country. In the light of the experience of the Russian workers and peasants the new strategy for revolutionary effort was

demonstrated and the principle of Marxian Socialism firmly established. In response to the clarion call of the Communist International, the "left wing" of the Socialist Parties formed themselves into Communist Parties in each country as sections of the Communist International, thus forming one international Communist Party of disciplined and determined revolutionists, with a practical program of action, both immediate and ultimate in scope.

In the United States, the Communist Party of America was organized in Chicago, September 1919, composed of elements which accepted the principles of the Communist International and which had left the reformist Socialist Party. Soon after the Communist Party was established the Capitalist State conducted its infamous raids upon the party in an attempt to destroy it. The program and the organization was declared illegal. The Communist Party reorganized its branches and all its organizational machinery into an underground organization, through which the party continued to carry on its agitation and propaganda for the overthrow of the capitalist government and the abolition of capitalism. During the two and one-half years of the existence of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party continued to dwindle, until from a party of 125,000 members it has become a small sect composed of a few intellectuals with a following of about 6,000, while the American Section of the Communist International — The Communist Party — grew in influence and power.

Certain elements of the old decaying Socialist Party, who after repeated attempts to destroy the Communist Party from within, and realizing the futility of trying to resurrect the dying Socialist Party, decided to organize a new party of their own. This party is now euphemistically called the "Workers" Party and was organized in New York City last December (1921). This party is a palpable fraud and the Communist Party of America is issuing this declaration to the workers of America in order to warn them against the impostors and charlatans who have organized this spurious "Workers" Party through which they claim to speak in the name of the Communist International.

The so-called "Workers" Party is designed to create confusion among the working class of this country. A casual reading of its program, which was written and adopted by a dozen self-appointed "leaders" will disclose the fact that while this mushroom party claims to support the Communist International, and denounces the Socialist Internationals, all of the principles for which the Communist International and its American Section — the Communist Party — stands, are carefully left out.

That which differentiates the Communists from the Socialists is the difference in methods and in aims. The Communists clearly and

fearlessly state that all capitalist governments are nothing but the dictatorship of the capitalist class over the working class; that bourgeois democracy means the proletariat. The Communists assert that the exploited masses can only achieve their emancipation from all the horrors of capitalism through mass action which will develop into open armed conflict of the workers against the forces of the capitalist state, resulting in its violent overthrow and destruction, establishing in its place the dictatorship of the proletariat who become the ruling class and exercise their power through the Soviet form of government. Soviet is a Russian word which has become universal through common usage. Its English equivalent is "councils." The Soviets, of workers, soldiers and peasants were first created in Russia during the 1905 Revolution and were the results of natural and spontaneous efforts of the revolutionary proletariat to create their own organs of state power.

These Soviets disappeared after the failure of the 1905 revolution and reappeared in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. These Soviets are today the governmental machinery of the Russian proletariat working under the direction and control of the most conscious and revolutionary elements of the workers and peasants — the Russian Communist Party. These soviets represent the machinery through which is expressed the proletarian democracy — a democracy of and for the working masses and against the capitalists. The Communists declare that the capitalist state cannot be "captured" as advocated by Socialists, but must be destroyed, including its parliamentary forms, and be replaced by the Soviets.

The program of the Workers Party contains nothing but a mere Platonic aspiration to have a "Workers' Republic" in America. Although this spurious party is only a few months old, its official organs admit that their program is negative in character and does not point the way to the emancipation of the proletariat and the abolition of capitalism. To make up for this the Workers Party sets up the claim that they have a set of "fighting leaders" who personally will guarantee the integrity and revolutionary character of the Workers Party. The curse of the American proletariat has always been their dependence upon individuals who have from time to time set themselves up as the saviors and self-appointed leaders of the workers. The Workers Party stands self-confessed as a fraud and an imposition. The Workers Party gives lip service to the Soviet Government of Russia and to the Communist International, while at the same time repudiating everything for which the Russian Revolution and the Communist International stands.

The Communist Party of America, Section of the Communist International categorically declares that the Workers Party cannot and does not speak for, or in any way represent the revolutionary proletar-

iat of America, that it does not support or advocate the principles and tactics of the Communist International; that the Workers Party is not composed of revolutionary proletarian elements, but that instead it is a centrist sect composed of the personal following of a few semi-bourgeois intellectuals who have no standing in the labor movement of America.

The Communist Party of America, therefore, repudiates the Workers Party and calls upon the class conscious workers of America to have nothing to do with this organization. This so-called Workers Party claims to support the Red Trade Union International and is attempting to work within the trade unions and other organizations of the workers in this country. The Red Trade Union International is built upon the principle of the Proletarian Dictatorship based upon Soviet Power which the Workers Party repudiates as a tactic for the proletariat of America, and consequently the Communist Party of America warns the workers organized in the trade unions against the activities of the Workers Party which cannot and does not speak in the name of the RTUI.

The Communist Party of America, Section of the Communist International, is composed of working men and women, who are conscious and determined revolutionists. The Communist Party is an underground party, declared illegal by the capitalist government of the US, it refuses to emasculate its program in order to conform to the requirements of bourgeois legality. In spite of the underground, illegal character of the Communist Party it has organized the necessary legal apparatus with which to carry its message to the workers and to participate in the day to day struggle against our exploiters. The members of the Communist Party are working side by side with their fellow workers in shop, mill, mine, factory, field and railroad. They are active in the everyday struggles of their fellows, fighting shoulder to shoulder with them in the trade and industrial unions against the reactionary and traitorous leaders, in strikes, in demonstrations, in every working class activity.

The Communist Party has no intention of attempting to raise up "new saviors" or imposing a few intellectuals upon the workers or their organizations as "fighting leaders." The Communist Party has no interests separate or apart from those of the broad masses of the exploited workers. We are bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. Any influence or leadership achieved by the Communists will be won by the proven devotion, self-sacrifice and loyalty to the cause of the workers.

The Communist Party calls upon all workers who accept its revolutionary principles and its tactics to join its ranks. The Communist Party recognizes that there is no easy road to Communism. The

struggle of the exploited masses is a life and death struggle with the capitalist class and their capitalist government. In this struggle the workers must present a united front against their enemy. It is the aim of the Communist Party to unite the exploited masses of America in their fight for emancipation from capitalism. Any party or organization which seeks to break this working class unity by spreading confusion in their ranks is counter-revolutionary and an enemy of the proletariat.

The Proletarian Revolution in Russia has clarified and demonstrated the tactics and the principles upon which the world revolution will be achieved. The Communist Party of America is committed by its program and its activities to these principles as enunciated by the general staff of the revolutionary world proletariat — the Communist International. The Communist Party will oppose all parties and organizations which oppose these principles and will expose those dangerous confusionists and centrists who pretend to support the Communist International in order to increase their personal prestige with the workers, only to emerge from their hiding places at an opportune time to stab the Communist Party and the labor movement in the back.

The so-called Workers Party is a menace to the proletariat of America. It is a party of dangerous compromisers, opportunists and centrists, masking themselves as Communists. The Communist Party of America calls upon all workers and Workers organizations to refuse to support or to join this prototype of the decadent Socialist Party — this aggregation of Compromisers, opportunists and centrists — this party of the American Mensheviki called the Workers Party of America.

Down with the betrayers of the proletarian revolution.

Rally to the revolutionary banners of the Communist Party of America.

Long live the Communist International.

**Issued by the CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
of the COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA,**

DAVIS, Executive Secretary.

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