

A LETTER FROM PRISON TO THE 7th PARTY CONVENTION

June 12, 1930.

Seventh National Convention
Communist Party, U.S.A.

Dear Comrades:

WE wish to express our full agreement with and endorsement of the thesis and resolutions presented by the Central Committee to the Convention.

The cyclical crisis which has engulfed American capitalism has not only brought the United States fully within the maelstrom of the world economic crisis, but has tremendously deepened the world crisis.

The analysis of the Comintern and of the last two plenums of the Party are fully borne out by events. The crisis is becoming deeper with accompanying attacks upon the workers and poor farmers, with international tariff wars and wage cuttings, with more aggressive imperialist attacks upon the colonies by the respective imperialist powers, with the danger of an imperialist war brought nearer by the "peace" and "naval reduction" parleys and plans, with more acute danger of a military attack upon the Soviet Union.

The masses have answered the attacks of the capitalists by a manifestation of deeper radicalization and greater readiness to struggle. The world revolutionary tide constantly rises. In Poland, Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Japan, South America, Cuba, the masses have engaged in big strikes against wage cuts and radicalization, these movements becoming political in character. The masses have shown that they will not accept a worsening of conditions, without a bitter fight.

The demonstrations in the United States on March 6 and May 1, the strikes in the South, the struggles of workers in all parts of the country, many of them spontaneous, the readiness of the workers to follow the Party and T.U.U.L., indicate the growing radicalization and willingness of the workers to fight against the vicious rationalization schemes of American capitalism. Strikes in textile, mining, auto, rubber, shoe, clothing, food, building, show that discontent is rife in all industries and sections. The awakening of the Negro and the willingness of the white worker to fight and defend him is a sign of the breaking down of the barriers to a more militant struggle.

These phenomena have manifested themselves in face of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, the socialist party and Musteites, whose fascist role, each in its way, is to help the capitalists in suppressing strikes and struggles, to assist in their rationalization schemes and keep the workers loyal to capitalism.

The establishment of a Soviet Government in China embracing 70,000,000 people and the revolt in India are two outstanding factors of the present situation. The growth of the Communist Party of India and the exposure of the imperialist activities of the British Labor Party and the Second International as a whole, are matters of the greatest significance to the international proletarian revolutionary movement.

Exceeding even these factors are the achievements of the Soviet Union in building Socialism. This is a victory of the Russian workers and peasants and of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., a victory that stands unchallenged and which throws into rout the Bucharinists and Trotskyites. This development affects not only the Soviet Union, but every capitalist country. The Five-Year Plan is not only an inspiration to the workers and peasants throughout the world, but a cause for fear and dismay on the part of the capitalists. The unparalleled expansion of industry and collectivization of agriculture with increasing well being for the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, contrasted with the crisis and its terrors for the workers and poor farmers in the capitalist countries, is filling the capitalists with the greatest apprehension.

The capitalists try to find their way out of the general crisis of capitalism by rationalization and war, both of which lead to disaster for capitalism. The capitalists and their social-fascist tools are feverishly preparing for war, especially against the Soviet Union.

The Comintern, having strengthened itself by the defeat of all right groups, becomes the rallying center for all the revolutionary millions the world over, notably in the colonial countries. As capitalism goes into crisis, the influence of the social-fascists over the masses diminishes and that of the Comintern increases.

Our Party has decided achievements to its credit—first of all, the unification of the Party and the inner consolidation of its forces, the smashing defeat of the Lovestone right opportunist group and the initiation of a systematic struggle against the opportunist tendencies of the Party. This achievement, with the aid of the Comintern, made possible the progress of the Party. With the unification of the Party came objective analysis and self-criticism, but this is as yet inadequate and must be strengthened.

The March 6 and May 1 demonstrations, the great increase in the Party membership, the building of the T.U.U.L. in new industries, the raising of the influence of the T.U.U.L. as the revolutionary union center, the popularization of the R.I.L.U. among the American workers, are of first-rate importance as showing the general strengthening of the Party in prestige, organization and influence.

The establishment of the Party and T.U.U.L. in the South, under the hardest conditions and with meagre forces, cannot be overestimated, especially since the Party had to meet the united force of the capitalists, government, Ku Klux Klan and other fascist organizations, the A. F. of L., S.P. and Musteites. The rallying of Negro and white workers under the banner of our Party in the South is of great significance.

The Party has weaknesses that must be speedily overcome if it is to fulfill its tasks in the coming struggles. The demonstrations led by the Party have shown its tremendous political influence and the confidence of ever larger masses of workers in the Party, but also manifested its political and organizational weakness. Strong opportunist tendencies are present especially in the trade union work and in the districts, this being amply dealt with in the Thesis. Insufficient mass work is especially notable in all districts and must be speedily remedied.

Weakness is also to be noted in the lack of cadres of live, capable, responsible functionaries who have fully "made the turn," lack of check-up and control, of ability to coordinate the various campaigns that the Party must conduct simultaneously to meet the needs of the various phases of the struggle, failure to activate and control the activities of every mem-

ber, proper distribution of work so that each member has a responsible task and no comrade is overburdened (which too often is the case at the present time), failure to train the comrades for their work, failure to hold, activate and advance new recruits to fill the posts in the Party and mass organizations—these are some of the basic weaknesses of the Party.

A fundamental weakness of our Party is the continued feebleness of the Y.C.L. This is all the more dangerous because of the tremendous and growing role of the youth in American industry and the class struggle. The Party must give decisive attention to the building of the Y.C.L.

The perspective in the United States is one of deepening crisis, as the world over, vicious wage-slashing campaigns against the workers, further radicalization and mass struggle.

Especially during the coming winter will the crisis deepen and the struggle intensify. Unemployment will increase; the employers have definitely initiated a wage cutting campaign. This will throw great tasks of leadership upon our Party. The workers will fight. The entire Party must be prepared and keyed up to meet this situation, to organize the workers to struggle and to lead them in the fight.

The campaign against our Party in all sections of the country, the imprisonment of comrades for long terms, the campaign particularly against us in the South (Powers, Carr and the four other comrades), Whalen's forged documents and the Fish investigation, show the preparations the capitalist class and government are making as they develop their general attack against the workers.

To meet this situation, the basic task is to build our Party. The recruiting campaign, especially among workers in basic and war industries, must be pushed more energetically than ever. More intense work must be done among the Negro and young workers, the composition must be improved, shop nuclei must be established in all industries and be activated into functioning units leading struggles. New cadres must be developed. The struggle against right opportunism, the main danger, and also against "left" sectarianism must be intensified.

The keynote of the convention, as emphasized in the thesis, must be mass work. The convention must devote its main attention to organizing this work. While in complete agreement with the analysis and tasks as laid down in the Party thesis, we desire to emphasize the following urgent tasks in the mass work:

1. Building the T.U.U.L. A good start has been made in building the T.U.U.L., both in the existing revolutionary unions and in penetrating new industries. But this is only a beginning. The 50,000 membership campaign must be the starting point for day-by-day enrollment of new members in the unions, of forming shop committees in shops, factories, mines, or railroads and ships. The R.I.L.U. 5th Congress must be emphasized. The revolutionary union papers must become mass organs. The local Councils must be built up. All our forces must much more militantly be thrown into this work.

2. Defend the Soviet Union. We must popularize among the masses of workers and farmers of this country the achievements in building Socialism in the Soviet Union, which is an inspiration to all workers. In many sections of our Party there is a distinct underestimation of the tremendous effects of these achievements as an instrument for revolutionizing the masses of this country. The vast object lesson of the actual building of Socialism in the Soviet Union with such striking success, has tremendous power in persuading the workers of the correctness of our Communist Party program as a whole.

3. China, India, Philippines and Latin America. We must arouse and rally the workers of the United States to give actual support to the masses of these countries who are struggling against imperialism. The Comintern has repeatedly reminded us of the necessity of the Parties in the imperialist countries actively aiding the revolutionary movements in the colonies. This is a duty that must not be neglected.

4. Unemployment. The struggle against unemployment, with its center, the fight for unemployment insurance, is an elementary task. The convention on July 4-5 in Chicago must be a mass demonstration of unemployed and employed workers such as this country has never witnessed. March 6 showed us the tremendous possibilities of unemployment as an issue for developing revolutionary struggles of the masses.

5. Election Campaign. The election campaign will be, for our Party, a most important rallying period for the seething discontent among the masses of workers. We must be really alive to its possibilities. We must utilize it to strengthen the Party, the T.U.U.L. and all revolutionary organizations.

The central issue of the election campaign must be unemployment, especially the fight for unemployment insurance. The Party Districts, Sections and Nuclei must no longer base election activities primarily upon street corner meetings and rallies, but carry on their work in the shops through united front election committees, shop bulletins, shop gates meetings, etc. This campaign must rally the greatest possible masses of workers behind the slogans of the Party.

6. Daily Worker. The campaign for the Daily Worker must no longer be a matter of emergency, but be linked up with the daily work and every campaign of the Party and revolutionary unions. The Daily Worker must become the mass organ of the American workers.

7. War Danger. Saturating all our tasks and definitely interviewed with them is the campaign against the war danger, not only inter-imperialist but particularly against the Soviet Union. The danger of war becomes ever graver and the masses must be mobilized for an intense fight against this danger.

In conclusion, we appeal through the convention to the membership of the Party to throw themselves into the work of the Party. *Mass work is our slogan, the conquest of the majority of the workers our goal.* We are convinced that the decisions of the convention will put our Party to work so that it may become an even worthier section of the Comintern, and better equipped to lead the workers and poor farmers of this country in revolutionary struggle for a Workers and Farmers Government of the United States.

Fraternally,
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ROBERT MINOR,
ISRAEL AMTER.