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# The Convention Has Spoken.

An Unsigned Lead Article, circa September 1, 1922.

Published in *The Communist* [New York: unified CPA], v. 1, no. 10 (Aug.-Sept. 1922), pp. 1-2.

The Second Convention [Bridgman, MI: Aug. 17-22, 1922] of our party, the Communist Party of America, as founded at the Unity Convention of last year [Woodstock, NY: May 15-28, 1921], is now history. A year of change in the situation to be met by the Communist movement, a year of historic opportunities seized, of great strides made forward, of mistakes made at heavy cost, of lessons learned — has passed. The bitter internal struggles that have marked this period and led up to the Convention — these also must become the history of bygone days. As a milestone marking the progress of our Party, this Convention must close the period of inner struggle and must open a new epoch. This is the historic significance of the Second Convention. To assure it this significance is the task of every comrade.

If revolutions are the locomotives of history, then the Party of the Revolution must be its engineer. The strength, the power, the efficiency of the engineer cannot be improved by speculative plans and blueprints alone; but must be improved mainly on the basis of experience in actual work.

To apply the Communist Party of America to its task must be the immediate object of the *united* efforts of the whole membership of the Party. The Second Convention has supplied the basis for these united efforts.

Whether the Communist Party remains an underground party, or whether a radical change of conditions brings the possibility of its being an open party — in either case it must not rest content to be a mere interpreter of the class struggle, but must establish itself as the most intelligent and most active participant in the class struggle. The underground form or the open form of a revolutionary party is determined by existing conditions which may vary from time to time and from country to country. But the fundamental task of the Party is determined by revolutionary prin-

ciples which the shifting conditions do not change.

Our Convention established by decision and otherwise that, under the conditions that exist at the present time and which will exist for some time to come, *the Communist Party of America must continue to be an underground party*. Further to build up this underground party, to strengthen it, to protect it, to make of it a more and more effective driving power of the proletarian revolution in America, is the duty of every Communist in the country. To be a Communist means to be an engineer, or a fireman, or at least a cog in the machinery of the locomotive of the workers' revolution. *No one has a right to call himself a Communist, no one can protest his adherence to the Communist International, who refuses to be an active and loyal member of the Communist Party of America, the Section of the Communist International.*

## Into the Open Struggle!

The Convention did not rest in settling alone the point that the Party remains an underground party. It declared in unquestionable terms that its fundamental task is not a conspirative one, capable of being carried out successfully under cover and in darkness, but that the fundamental task lies in *open work* in the daily struggles of the working class. Although its task is the promotion and guidance of the revolution, and though the revolution is the very antithesis of capitalist “law and order,” yet the struggle of the working class is essentially in all its stages an open struggle. In the present stage of the struggle, groups of workers are battling against individual capitalists or combinations of them, in an effort to gain enduring working conditions. To be the most active, intelligent, and loyal fighters in these groups of workers, and to accelerate the development of their struggle for existence into a struggle of the masses of the proletariat for the political su-

premacny of the working class — this is the task of the Communists, the task of the Communist Party of America.

*Strong underground organization, but the center of gravity in open work:* that, in a dozen words, is the formula laid down by the Second Convention of the Communist Party of America. It is the formula which every Communist in America must adhere to — or stand convicted of breaking faith with Communism and with the Communist International.

To accomplish its task the Party must apply itself as a *unit*. Factions, though they may originate in conscientious efforts to serve the cause and the Party, *develop inevitably* into conspiracies against the Party and its best interests.

### **The Opportunity.**

The antagonisms between the working class and the capitalists are sharpening day by day. The struggle between these classes grows more intense. Larger and larger masses are drawn into the struggle. The political indifference of the American working masses gradually disappears. Courts issuing injunctions, state militia and federal troops driving the workers back into the treadmills of profit-extracting capitalists, police clubs bouncing on the heads of striking and picketing workers — all these manifestations of partisanship of the government in the class struggle are gradually destroying the myth of the “non-partisan” state, and are driving the masses of the American proletariat toward open rebellion against the government. Even Gompers, the reactionary incarnate, is forced today to speak a language that he himself would have denounced as treasonable a few short years ago. We are not deceived by this language; we merely mention it as a sign of the times. How far must the masses of the workers have advanced, if the stragglers in the rear of the army must speak thus in their effort to hold the confidence of the masses!

Hundreds of thousands of workers have for months been engaged in a gigantic struggle. That has happened before, it is true. But never before has the spirit of the masses been so utterly dominated by the

determination to fight to the bitter end; never before had the government had to discard entirely the mask of non-partisanship. Never before has the idea of a general strike of the working masses taken possession so persistently of the mind of the workers in America.

This tremendous development of the class struggle in America has taken place with only slight Communist influence, yes, even in spite of the slow, halting, inadequate pushing of the Communist program for exactly that development. Now, in the face of this development, which of you, comrades, would continue the fruitless internal squabbles within the Party! Which one, or what group of you, would dare to assume responsibility for a continuation of the factional spirit and strife, responsibility for a continuation of the caucuses that tear the Party to pieces and paralyze all efforts at revolutionary work?

### **Unity!**

The secret of success of any Communist Party is its compactness, its centralized machinery, its uniformity of action. Any factional organization inside of the Party makes impossible such uniformity of action and condemns the Party to the existence of a paralytic. In the face of the gigantic task before the Party, in the face of the present battle of the American workers against the capitalists (fast developing into a battle against capitalism itself!), no loyal Communist can allow the energies of one single member to be diverted from the task of the Party and diverted to the purposes of a faction or caucus.

Comrades! The Convention has spoken. A strong underground Party! Extension of open work in the unions and LPP [Legal Political Party]! Absolute unity of the Party and its action! Discontinuance of factional strife and caucuses! Our duty is clear. Our task is tremendous. The time is favorable.

Do your duty! Close your ranks! Make our Party a real force in the great struggle of the American proletariat.

Let us unite to make good in action the phrases: “Long live the Communist Party of America!” “Long live the Communist International!”

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

*Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2006. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.*