
To the Communist Party of America: A Communique from the Executive Committee of the Communist International, March 30, 1922.

Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 128, l. 26-27.

Moscow, March 30, 1922.

TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA.

Dear Comrades:

The Executive of the COMINTERN for the last two years has been following with deepest concern the strife in the Party in America, which presents constant obstacles to the creation of a strong revolutionary party. The Executive Committee of the CI repeatedly offered its advice to the American comrades, and at the Third World Congress the delegations of all countries warmly greeted the delegation of the finally united Communist Party of America.

It was all the more painful therefore for us to hear that a few months after the World Congress a part of the members of the Party broke away again and inaugurated a vigorous factional campaign. The news was all the more strange because the ostensible reason for the split was the formation of a legal party, i.e. the realization by the Party of the very tactics recommended by the Third Communist International.

The Executive has taken an active interest in the situation thus created. It appointed a Commission, which at protracted conferences with the official CP of A delegate, Comrade Carr [Ludwig Katterfeld], and the delegate of the seceding fac-

tion, Comrade Moore [John Ballam], thoroughly discussed the situation in all its bearings. Arising out of the report by its Commission, the Executive adopted a *unanimous* decision which reaches you simultaneously with this letter.† It also instructed the Commission to confer with the American comrades as to the carrying out of this decision.

As to the subject proper, the Executive decided, as you will see from the contents of the resolution, to reassert in the most emphatic manner its standpoint and to approve the creation of a legal party.

Our opinion is that the majority of the Party has acted fully in accordance with the spirit of the Theses of the World Congress when it quickly proceeded to prepare and carry out the formation of a legal party. It is possible that the formation of the legal party has been accompanied by some mistakes. We know that elements leaning towards centrism underestimate the work of the illegal Party; the CP of A must combat these tendencies. Yet the best way to put mistakes right is for everyone who can do the work better to join in and help with all his might.

You have acted differently, you have broken the unity of the Party, you have opened fire on the Party from the outside, while it was endeavoring, to the best of its knowledge and ability, to carry out a decision of the International, and this in

†- While this document has not been located on the fond 515 microfilm, a copy appears as "Document 2" in Klehr, Haynes, and Anderson's *The Soviet World of American Communism* (Yale University Press, 1998), reprinting material from fond 495, op. 1, d. 26 (*list* unspecified). Scholars are cautioned that the explanatory comments accompanying this and other documents in the above mentioned volume are highly tendentious.

connection with a decision which was to open the way for the Party to conquer the masses of the American workers.

Every Communist who considers communism not in the light of a religion for chosen ones, but strives earnestly to bring about the Communist Revolution through the American proletariat, everyone who thinks of the ways and means of accomplishing this revolution, must arrive at the conclusion that an open, legal party, accessible to the wide masses, is an absolute necessity for the purpose of enabling the Communists to reach the masses and to influence their struggle to train them for the revolution and win them for Communism.

It was the duty of all comrades, without distinction of shades of opinion, to close the ranks of the illegal party and with might and main (*sic.*) to assist in the formation of a legal party, so as to infuse into it the fullest measure of Communism. Only in this manner will it be possible to open a wide field for communist recruiting in America, which must safeguard the illegal Party of the CP of A from fruitless sectarianism and political impotency, and must also find a source of strength in the trade unions.

The Executive therefore addresses to you, dear comrades, this earnest appeal to remedy the grievous mistakes committed by you in splitting the Party and in thwarting its efforts to create a legal Party. *You must rejoin the Party, you must assist in the common activities with all the strength at your command and you must give up all factionalism.* You can do it and we are convinced that you will do it.

You can do it. Your delegate now in our midst, Comrade Moore [Ballam], became convinced in the course of his lengthy conferences with us that the COMINTERN only seeks to help by its decisions the consummation of our common

goal: to lead, as far as possible, in the formation of a mighty party in America as rapidly as possible, whose growth should fully correspond to its role in history. Its conviction, gained through fraternal intercourse with the most experienced comrades of all countries, must also become yours.

YOU WILL RETURN TO THE PARTY AND ITS WORK. COMRADE MOORE [BALLAM] COULD FIND A COMMON PLATFORM WITH COMRADE CARR [KATTERFELD]. WHY SHOULD YOU NOT BE ABLE TO DO THE SAME WITH REGARD TO THE PARTY? THE OVERCOMING OF SELF, INVOLVED IN THIS ACT, WILL BE REPAID TO YOU A HUNDREDFOLD BY THE SERVICES WHICH YOU WILL THUS [*illeg.*] TO COMMUNISM.

The Communist International sends its plenipotentiary representative [Genrik Valetskii] to America, whose task will be to help you in overcoming the still existing difficulties. We already had to contend with even greater obstacles than yours in some countries, and have learned to overpower them.

We place at your disposal the whole of our revolutionary experience — we will together find the way out and pursue it in the future.

LONG LIVE THE UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY IN AMERICA!

LONG LIVE THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL!

LONG LIVE THE WORLD REVOLUTION!

With fraternal greetings,

The Executive Committee
of the Communist International.

*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.
Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2005. • Free reproduction permitted.*