
Letter to the National Executive Committee of the Communist Labor Party in New York from the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America in New York, March 19, 1920.

A document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI f. 515, op. 1, d. 22, ll. 6-7.

New York, March 19, 1920.

National Executive Committee,
Communist Labor Party,
New York, NY.

Comrades:

Your reply to our proposal to hold a joint convention for the purpose of achieving unity of the Communist elements of this country has been received and has had the careful consideration of our committee.

We will not concern ourselves with the various charges and insinuations in your statement. These are evidently not intended to be taken seriously, but are included merely for the purpose of propaganda, since they do not affect the issues at stake. Our committee has, however, again considered your proposal for immediate unity between your committee and ours and has rejected this proposal by the decisive vote of 9 to 4. The reason for this rejection is that our committee does not believe that unity attained through such committee action would attain the permanent Communist unity which we earnestly desire.

As evidence of its desire to achieve such permanent Communist unity our committee has adopted the following statement, which it submits for your consideration and acceptance:

1. We accept the basis of Communist unity proposed by the Third International, inasmuch as it relates to the rank and file, but we maintain that the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party must be in agreement also on questions of tactics and

organization, and since such would not be the case if we merged the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party and the National Executive Committee of the Communist Labor Party, we reject such a merger.

2. We reaffirm our desire to have the unity of both parties achieved through a joint convention.

3. We are ready to set the date for the joint convention at the earliest possible date and not later than June 15th [1920].

4. The constitutional relations of the Federations to the party must enter as a part of the call for the joint convention, subject of course to changes by the convention.

5. In the meantime, we favor cooperation between the two parties whenever desirable and practicable through the Central, District, and Local committees of both parties, subject to the control and approval of the respective Central Executive Committees.

We have elected a Joint Convention Committee of 3 members with instructions to meet with a similar committee of your organization and to arrange a convention on the following basis:

1. The joint call for the convention must include our Manifesto, Program, and constitutional relations of the Federations to the Party.

2. Apportionment of delegates on the basis of dues stamps sold by each organization for the months of October, November, and December [1919], the total number of delegates from both organizations not to exceed 35. Books of both organizations to be open

to the opposite committee members.

3. The election of delegates to be by membership action and to be conducted secretly and to be as nearly as possible alike for the two organizations.

4. The quorum to call the convention to order to consist of two-thirds of the delegates elected by each organization.

For ourselves we have adopted the following plan for the election of delegates:

1. We will apportion delegates to our districts on the basis of dues stamps purchased during October, November, and December [1919].

2. A convention of each district shall be called in which sub-districts shall be represented by one delegate for each 200 members on the basis of dues stamps purchased for October, November, and December [1919]. This convention to elect our delegates and alternates.

3. Nominations for delegates to the district conventions shall be secured from the members by the

group organizers. Nominees must be members in the districts in which they are nominated. The names of all nominees shall be presented to the members for vote by the group organizers. The district convention may elect any party member irrespective of the districts.

If your committee really desires unity between the Communists of the United States and is not merely using the plea to unity as a convenient method of propaganda against the Communist Party of America, we trust you will take immediate favorable action on this proposal and elect your convention committee.

Fraternally submitted,

Central Executive Committee,
Communist Party of America.

“David Damon” [C.E. Ruthenberg],
Executive Secretary.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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