
International Affiliation at the Detroit Convention

by James Oneal

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(National Office Press Service.)— Now that the national convention agenda is before us, we know the principal items that will come before it. Fortunately, the convention for the first time will have before it information which the last two conventions did not have on the matter of the Third International. We have the terms of affiliation for admission and the answer to the application for admission submitted by the Socialist Party. These two documents for the first time simplify matters for the convention and the membership.

One of the last straws grasped at by the tiny faction which favors unconditional affiliation is the assumption that the reply of the Executive Committee of the Communist International is not official, or, at least, that we have no assurance that it is. It is curious that those who take this position accept almost anything else that comes from Moscow as authentic without question. But the fact remains that this reply to our application was printed in *The Communist* and it appeared in the *Russian Press Review*, a weekly publication of the Bolsheviki which carries important and reliable information direct from the Russian Communists themselves.

What are the facts? One is that the Third International will recognize only one party in each country. The Socialist Party cannot enter it and remain the Socialist Party. If it wants to enter it must scrap its organization and unite with the underground Communists. NO amount of argument can obscure this fact. In fact, because the two Communist organizations [CPA &

UCP] have failed to unite in response to orders that only one Communist organization will be tolerated, both these organizations are threatened with refusal to admit delegates from either at the coming congress of the Third International. All is outlined in recent numbers of *The Communist*, organ of the “United” Communist Party. In view of these facts, an honest attempt to join the Third International should take the form of a resolution to abandon the Socialist Party and recommend to the party members that they join one of the Communist groups.

US Couldn't Dictate Changes.

Or, if there be those who think that even after scrapping our organization, after joining the Communists and then working inside that we can modify the terms of the Third International, they should be disabused of this also. In answer to our application the executive made this significant statement:

Concerning questions of principle and fundamental aims, it is impossible to consider what the American Socialist Party “may have to say to Moscow afterwards.” On the contrary, the Communist International has something to say to parties desiring to affiliate, before they are accepted.

How the slightest criticism within the Third would be accepted may be surmised from this answer. It goes on even to charge that our “most base betrayal of Socialism” in this country is the language we used in our resolution when we said that we sympathize with the Russian workers “in maintaining their Soviet Government” — not because it is a Soviet Government, but because it is a government of their own choosing.” The resolution was the work of those who favor affiliation and it is thrown back in their faces by Zinoviev & Co. The latter even refer to the authors of the resolution as a minority whose “ideas were confused, permeated by cowardly compromise and petty bourgeois prejudices.”

The language used against these comrades who stood in court facing 20-year sentences is contemptible and unjust. They

proudly reaffirmed their Socialist views, despite the fate that awaited them. If an insufferable egotist is to sit in Moscow and hurl slanders at comrades whose devotion to the movement has been tested as few have been tested, then the international that can stand for this is one that we cannot join. It so happens that the language was used against comrades with whom I have disagreed, which is all the better for the purpose of my argument.

Some of the 21 Points.

We cannot join the Third and then have something “to say to Moscow afterwards.” Of this we have assurance from Moscow. The first thing required of us is to accept the 21 Points. Among these are included the following: (a) We must accept “democratic centralization”; (b) we must have periodical “cleansings” of the party membership, i.e., trials, expulsions, etc., with their endless factions and quarrels; (c) our programs must first get the approval of Zinoviev & Co. or the Congress before we can go ahead with them; (d) the name must be the Communist Party; (e) we must also form a secret illegal organization for illegal activities; (f) we must carry a schismatic fight into the unions, the cooperatives, and all other labor organizations to place Communists in control; (g) dictatorship must be propagated as a special dogma; (h) though armed insurrection is not specifically mentioned, it is certain that a party that rejects it would not be admitted; (i) take orders from the “general staff” in Moscow; (j) expulsion of all those who vote against unreserved affiliation.

I have pointed out elsewhere that most of this program has its origin in the Bakunin anarchists, who wrecked the First International. It is also evident that the armed organizations of anarchists established in Chicago in the early '80s, which culminated in the Haymarket tragedy, had the same origin. If there be those who want this thing — well, this is the thing they want. It is also the thing that they will get. But the sooner we clearly mark our fundamental antagonism to the cheap Bakuninism that again stalks in the movement, the sooner we will be able to

take up our real task, reaching the working class of the nation with the emancipating philosophy of Socialism.

Let Moscow Learn From Us.

We do not have to go to Moscow. Better that Moscow should come to us and learn something of the real situation in the United States. Moscow might learn the need of exporting a little common sense in its propaganda. Its supporters here in the Communist parties have been living in a phantom world of their own creation. Much of their activity has been of the opera bouffe type. They have displayed no more knowledge of reality than a native of Siam.

I have no desire to link up with the Frainas and Stoklitskys. They did us a service by leaving us, and we would do ourselves injury by returning to them. If they think that by playing hide and seek with secret service agents, and that hurling leaflets from buildings urging “armed insurrection” is the thing, we should allow them a monopoly of this stupidity. It is time that we draw the line in these matters; and the information the next convention has will enable us to draw it clear and distinct.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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