
Letter to the Comintern from the Representative of the Proletarian Party of America.

by Dennis E. Batt

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Third (Communist) International
Moscow, Russia

Comrades:—

As the representative of the Proletarian Party of America to the Communist International I submit that the following propositions are important to the future of the Communist movement in America and should receive consideration and a decision from the International.

A decision upon the application for recognition of the Proletarian Party as the American section of the Third (Communist) International should be given. The historical development of the Proletarian Party has already been placed in the hands of the Executive Committee through a previous report which I have submitted. The International will, of course, recognize the value of coming to a decision upon this matter as soon as possible.

The decision as to whether the Proletarian Party is qualified for membership in the International Communist Family naturally rests with the International but in the event our application is not acceptable we would suggest that the status of American groups be left as they are with no party recognized. Under these circumstances we feel sure that we will be able to demonstrate to the International by actually organizing a good number of American workers and securing influence with the masses that we are qualified to function as the American arm of the Communist International.

One of the greatest difficulties we have had to overcome is the belief, founded upon false information circulated, that the Communist International had already recognized a particular party in America.

In the matter of unity the Proletarian Party stands, now as always, for the unity of all Communist elements in America upon a genuine Marxian basis. However, in order that this program may be effective it must be arrived at by general expression and not be the result of machine caucuses of elements that do not and can not really reflect American conditions. For this reason certain fundamental things that relate particularly to America should be decided by competent international Communist authority.

The following must be understood and accepted by any group that expects to function as the Communist organization in America. Firstly, America has not been, is not, and will not be for a considerable time upon the verge of revolution. The faith of the masses in the bourgeois political institutions of America has not broken and does not show any signs of breaking. The psychology of Americans is such that the ruling class would not experience any great difficulty in mobilizing national sentiment against either Japan or England. They are still thoroughly possessed of the provincial psychology which arose with America's frontier development.

One of the prime necessities for the Communist movement in America at this time is an organization that functions openly and propagates

Communism as far as that is possible in the face of the repressive laws that have been enacted by the capitalist class. The need for this kind of an organization lies, not in the desire of any particular body of Communists to conform to the bourgeois regulations of the country, but in the hard facts themselves. This open organization should be controlled by the underground movement and would function as a recruiting ground for the same. It would also act as a screen for the propaganda activities of the underground organization. Unless such an organization is formed there is a real danger that there will appear in America a centrist organization which will attract members of the working class who properly belong within the ranks of the Communist organization.

Further, the psychology of the masses of America make it imperative that use be made of election campaigns for the purpose of propaganda. The nature of American election laws is such that it will be impossible to make use of these campaigns by running independent candidates as has been suggested by some Communists in America. A distinct organization is necessary. Through the use of these campaigns it will be possible to propagate all of the ideas contained in the various theses of the Communist International with the exception of the overthrow of capitalist control by force of arms. In fact, the national laws in America do not prohibit the advocacy of force and violence. This question is covered only by various state laws which forbid the advocacy of crime, sabotage, or violence as a means of overthrowing the present government. However, this is not a serious difficulty. The problem of force is not a problem that is on the agenda of the day in America. While we would be the last to intimate that the overthrow of the capitalist state will be accomplished by any other than forceful means, we do contend that the open advocacy of such measures in America at this time is suicidal for the Communist movement there and is in reality a betrayal of the best interests of Communism. It is not a ques-

tion of desire or unwillingness or inability to propagate force but a question of advisability at this time. Further, it does not appear that amongst American workers, particularly the organized ones, that this will be necessary until the situation becomes much more critical than it is at the present time.

This position is not at variance with the "Theses and Statutes" of the Communist International but on the other hand more closely conforms to sections twelve and thirteen of "The Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International" (pages 18, 19, & 20; Am. Ed. —UCP, *Theses and Statutes of the Third International*) than does the position of any other group in America.

While it is of the utmost importance to build up a well organized underground movement in America the work that it can do directly at this time is but a small portion of the work that must be done. To be effective the underground movement must work through an open movement which it controls.

Further special efforts should be made to develop an American leadership. This is necessary in order to penetrate the Anglo-Saxon section of the workers. Until this is done it is vain to expect any action in America that will be other than fatal. This can best be accomplished by consistent educational activity in the labor unions and in the shops. The American Communist movement is very young and its early activity must necessarily consist mainly of sober educational propaganda rather than senseless appeals to action.

Immigration has given the United States a large foreign population. Approximately eight millions of immigrants have come to the United States in the last twenty years, the majority of whom remain entirely foreign to American life forever. As rule they constitute the kernel of the revolutionary organizations in that country. Unfortunately these organizations reflect more the events in the native countries of their respective members than the American conditions. If in any country, as in Russia, the attitude taken by the

revolutionary organizations can serve as an indicator of the stand taken with regard to a certain question by at least the advanced portion of the working class in the United States it can hardly be a reliable indicator. This peculiarity of American life has misled many in their judgment of the revolutionary outlook in the United States.

In the matter of building Communist groups in the shops great difficulties will be experienced owing to the migratory character of labor. It is not unusual, particularly for revolutionary workers, to change jobs a dozen times or more in a year. Because of this the Communist groups in unions should be productive of better results for the present. In this relation the American Federation of Labor furnishes the best field as the mass movement of the workers. All other unions are of secondary importance. The American Federation of Labor covers all of the basis industries except metal

mining. The work within this organization must be done with the greatest tact and to be successful men of standing in the labor movement should be used.

The Proletarian Party has consistently endeavored to translate into action the above analysis. It would seem strange, indeed, if the International should arbitrarily compel us to liquidate and join the United Communist Party or the Communist Party of America when our attitude has been consistently correct, which is more than can be said for any other group in America.

Trusting that I will receive a favorable decision on the above, with Communist greeting, I remain

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