
Third International Events in America.

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The unity negotiations between the Communist Party and the "United" Communist Party proceed slowly. It is reported that a basis of representation has finally been agreed upon. The proceedings are of course enveloped in deep, dark mystery. Ordinary folks who are not of the elect are supposed to know nothing of these matters. Even the many recognized communist groups that are not part of the CP or the UCP were not invited to participate. It is far easier to follow the developments of the movement in far off Russia or Armenia than to know what is going on at home. Of course, if one were a police-spy it might be different.

In his criticism of the German and Dutch Left Wing, Lenin remarks that "every truth if it be carried to excess, if it be exaggerated, if it be carried beyond the limits of actual application, can be reduced to an absurdity." He demonstrates how absurd is the position of the "pure communists" in refusing to participate in bourgeois parliaments and reactionary trade unions. Much of this criticism applies with equal force to our own super-Bolsheviks.

An example of the manner in which a perfectly sound principle may by exaggeration be reduced to an absurdity is found in the application of the proposition contained in Section 3 of the conditions for affiliation to the Third International. This section deals with the necessity of secret or illegal organizations, and says in clear language that when the class struggle enters the stage of civil war the Communists cannot depend upon the protection of capitalist laws. "They should create everywhere a *parallel* illegal apparatus which at the decisive *moment* should do its duty by the party...." Now, take this proposition, which is in

itself entirely correct, and carry it to the extreme of insisting that the entire work of a party must at all times be conducted in secret; and that in order to be truly revolutionary a communist party must of necessity be an outlaw organization, then the principle is transformed and made absurd.

Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that at the present time in this country a certain degree of secrecy is necessary. In this case it would be good policy to follow the advice of the International and "create a parallel illegal apparatus" to work in conjunction with the main body in elections and conducting general propaganda and educational activities. But would it not be absurd to argue, as many do, that because some degree of secrecy is necessary that the entire party should be placed on an illegal basis, and that legal, open work should be disguised. If we hide ourselves away how are the masses to be reached? The answer is obvious. To adopt such a plan of organization means simply that we would sever our connection with the general working class movement and turn the workers over to the gently nursing of the reactionary Socialist Party.

No, it is neither good tactics nor proof of revolutionary spirit to hide the light of communism under a bushel. On the contrary, if to carry on our work openly involves some risk, then we will have to work up sufficient courage to face it. Should it become necessary to create a parallel organization for special activities, well and good. But in such matters only the tried and experienced members can be used, and it would be the height of folly to advertise that such an organization existed.

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