

The Question of Relations Between the C. P. and an L. P. P.

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After the few months of experience of maintaining double machinery most of us must have noticed the advantages and disadvantages of the C. P. organization. We cannot help coming to the conclusion that not only has the No. 2 absorbed almost all the ordinary tasks carried out through the C. P. in the workers' everyday struggle but these tasks are being performed more efficiently by the No. 2 than by other apparatuses.

Most of us come to C. P. meetings and find that nearly everything we meant to do or talk about might just as well be done in our No. 2 meetings. It is difficult to convince yourself or to convince others that so much time and energy should be wasted for the maintenance of machinery to enable us to hide ourselves in small groups when most of the things we are doing could much better be done in larger gatherings and in the open. It is difficult to get new members into the C. P. because it is not easy to explain the necessity and advantages of the present system.

The objectionable features of our present organizational machinery are especially emphasized in the fact that the mere routine upkeep of it forces us to spend more time in interminable meetings among ourselves than we spend in working among the masses. The party machine is at present a Gordian Knot which strangles the energies of the membership.

We are forced constantly to develop new machinery as we enter real activities among the masses, machinery which we deemed not necessary before, but which can put the party in real touch with the masses. We are entering the labor movement—the most important field of activity in the party. But how in the world can we make our work in this field effective and create the necessary machinery for that purpose when our time is spent looking after the upkeep of the two general machines not to mention the other organizations which though temporary in character still enlist the energies of our most capable and active members? The party machinery is so chaotic that we undertake tasks without any serious possibility of carrying them out. Under such conditions discipline is only a pious wish; it becomes a physical impossibility. System becomes an illusion and efficiency a Utopia.

It will not suffice to set up dogmas. The problem

is one of practical organization. We are few in numbers with a tremendous field to cover. We cannot afford to fritter away our energies in the upkeep of the present machinery. There must be a revision of our ideas to conform to new needs and the structure of the party must be radically changed. This together with a judicious application of the United Front policy are the two major and dominant questions before the coming convention. Upon the proper solution of these problems depends the future of the movement as far as results are concerned.

I believe I have stated the main evils of the present organizational system and see visions of execution as a liquidator, centrist or the personification of some other bugaboo that may mean anything or nothing. It is very easy to disagree, but difficult to offer a solution of the pressing problems that now confront us. It is easy to always agree with the majority. In your own circle you will have the reputation of being always right, but those who are always right may be good politicians but they are not good revolutionists.

Are we for an open Communist Party?

All the objections to the present system are the practical and technical outgrowth of a wrong policy not so much on the part of the C. E. C. as on the general attitude of the members themselves. The confusion arises over the relative functions of a C. P. and an L. P. P. Some want to make the first a holy Synod for the chosen ones privileged to function as the C. P. of A. with the legal organ a mere necessary evil where the Ishmaelites can be allowed to enter. Others want to develop a bonafide Communist Party of America to function in the open, and the manner in which this result can be obtained is to have a legal party evolve into an open Section of the C. I. as soon as technically possible.

If the idea of an exclusive underground party prevails then of course the Communist Party must function pretty much the same as now and L. P. P. must be further relegated to the background much more so than at the present time. In which case L. P. P. will be reduced to im-

potence, its wings clipped and less time spent on it. Such a policy would be suicide for the Communist movement in the United States. It would be the very anti-thesis of a policy for the development of a Communist mass party —and entirely out of harmony with the Theses and spirit of the Third Congress. It must be rejected.

The other policy which tends to the development of a Communist party which can only be done in the open must be taken as a basis. In which case L. P. P. must become the Communist Party. We must strive to train the membership to become a Communist membership and make them participate in all Communist activities among the masses. We need a Communist mass party in the open, to manoeuvre in the open in full view of the masses, facing the dangers and taking advantage of the possibilities of the struggle.

The exclusive underground party has been a happy hunting ground for many queer types and the morale of many ardent rebels has become sapped by a policy, the principal characteristic of which was the suggestion of **running away** from danger. This atmosphere must be cleared, unless we are to degenerate into a mystic sect of political Freemasons every now and then crawling into a hole and pulling the hole in after us, all the time fooling ourselves with the idea that we are doing dire deeds of revolutionary significance while in reality we are like little boys amusing themselves with tin soldiers. Let us get away from this hocus-pocus and on to the task of developing an open Communist Party.

It would be tactically foolish however to come into the open now with our real name, for we have not as yet entrenched ourselves sufficiently in the labor movement nor rallied the bulk of the rebels in this country within our ranks. It is better strategy for this time being from many points of view to operate as at present. We cannot gamble and take chances. The only safe policy is to rely on strength and we are not yet strong enough in the labor movement compared with the strength of our enemies who desire our destruction,

Hence we must maintain the No. 1. machinery in a form not suited to an open C. P. But the main purpose of this No. 1. machinery is to develop out into open through L. P. P., an open Communist party; in other words we must not restrict the development of L. P. P. in any way whatsoever. All communist activities that possibly can be carried out shall be done through the medium of L. P. P. and all members of L. P. P. shall participate in these activities.

The Function of No. 1.

The question then arises what shall No. 1. do? Control? Yes, the thoroughly conscious minorities within shall be organized even though we would have an open Communist Party for the purpose of preventing the open party from sliding back under pressure of capitalism into compromise and expediency which easily becomes the fate of mass movements during the more peaceful and more ordinary periods of the class struggle. But that is not the only purpose of the organized group within. It must also carry out the many tasks that will develop during the struggle which cannot and should not be done in open. It must be this group that does the illegal work and prepares the whole movement for such work. The training for such work and the necessary organization cannot be created offhand when the occasion for it suddenly arises but foresight must be exercised in preparing for such eventualities and the successful coping with such situations will only be possible when the members have the necessary training and experience.

The clear, and active cells of revolutionists within it that must control the open movement and prepare it for its illegal task as well as protect it from the onslaughts of the enemy. It would be ridiculous to say that our No. 1. is such an organization; in its relations with No. 2. Ours is not an underground organization, but a Communist Party that functions semi-legally. At least 50% of our members are inactive and as to their clearness on communism; well utopian revolutionary sentimentalism is the most polite term I can think of to characterise their political understanding.

The No. 1. cannot remain the kind of organization it is now. It must become different in methods, in function and must try to include within its ranks exclusively only the active portion of the membership. It must rather control by activity and ability rather than by numbers; by a virtual monopoly of the virile force of a large open movement. This can be accomplished by limiting the No. 1. organization to active members, the purpose of such an organization being to function adroitly within as a solid body of cells for secret and illegal activities and as a caucus for the purpose of controlling the open movement and keeping it along the correct lines.

This can be done without the enormous waste of time now involved in the upkeep of our No. 1. machinery. A trained group of active revolutionists does not need innumerable routine meetings under the illusion that such is the only way to keep the No. 1. together. The organization is there and

meetings are called when necessary that is, when important work is to be done or new policies to be discussed and decided on. No active revolutionist can afford to waste his time for nothing and the chaos of meetings and useless machinery we have now is breaking the discipline and the morale of the whole movement. This waste must be eliminated

and the superfluous organizational junk consigned to the scrap heap. It is not liquidation of No. 1. that we need; it is reorganization that is required to conform to new conditions. Only then will liquidation be liquidated and the No. 1. instead of being a monotonous drudgery will become the indispensable virile and leading force that we all want it to be.