

# The Communist



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## Lenin vs. the "Majority" Group.

IN an editorial in the first issue of the "Communist" published by the "majority" group, headed "The Party in Crisis", a criticism is made of the "minority" because of its policy of establishing contact with the masses of the workers and relating the principles of Communism to their everyday struggles.

While this editorial is contradictory in parts — the author evidently fearing to clearly advocate keeping the Communist Party a sect apart from the life struggles of the workers — the true character of the opinion of the "majority" group comes out in the following paragraphs:

This cry of "contact with the masses hold in itself the seeds of future compromise, vacillation and betrayal. It is the cry of the confusionists and sentimentalists who seem to think that a Communist Party must have contact with the masses at all stages of its development. They do not see that if they attempt to run after the masses, at a time when the masses are not ready for them, they will, in their zeal, reduce Communism to a theory and practice that will meet the approval of the politically immature masses. They will compromise principles and tactics to get 'contact with the masses'.

In the London Call of April 22, there is printed a letter from Lenin to Sylvia Pankhurst, in reply to a request for advice as to the course which the English Communists should follow, in which Lenin, after again emphasizing what had been previously stated as the fundamental principles upon which all Communist groups should unite — Class struggle, Mass action, Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Soviet Organization — which the "majority" group repudiates, continues to give this advice to the English Communists:

A close contact with the masses of the workers and the ability constantly to agitate among them,

to take part in every strike and to respond to every move of the masses — such is the most important thing for a Communist Party.

"Close contact with the masses"... "To take part in every strike and to respond to EVERY MOVE OF THE MASSES — SUCH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR A COMMUNIST PARTY" says Lenin; and "this cry of 'contact with the masses' hold in itself the seeds of future compromise, vacillation and betrayal is the cry of confusionists and sentimentalists..." says the "majority" group.

According to this statement Lenin is a confusionist and sentimentalist in his advice to the English Communists, for it will be noted that Lenin does not only say that it is important for a Communist Party to maintain contact with the masses. He goes further and says that it must maintain CLOSE CONTACT and that it is MOST IMPORTANT that a Communist Party respond to every move of the masses.

The "majority" group believes that the only response that a Communist Party should make to movements of the masses is to advocate and propagate the use of force. For them a Communist Party has only this one purpose — to teach the working class that force will be necessary in order to establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and that everything else is to be condemned as compromise and opportunism.

This is not Communism at all. It is the perversion of the living principles of Communism into an iron dogmatism. If there is one thing that differentiates Communism from other social philosophies it is the appreciation that the facts in every given situation must be considered in applying its principles. The "majority" viewpoint would make of the Communist Party merely a conspiratorial body advocating the use of force to overthrow the existing government.

It is not at all remarkable that the men who compose the majority of the C. E. C. of the party take this viewpoint. They are incapable of playing a part in any other kind of Communist Party than such a conspiratorial body and naturally they endeavor to make the party such an organization.

With this view of Communism and the functions of a Communist Party the "minority" will never agree. The "minority" view of the functions of a Communist Party is that expressed by Lenin. It must establish close contact with the masses. It must take part in every strike. It must respond to every move of the masses. It must be the living incarnation of the class struggle, leading and guiding the workers, winning their confidence by participating in all their struggles, developing mass action in its various phases as the revolutionary consciousness of the masses develops, to

the final revolutionary struggle for power.

The "majority" group fears that the sacred principles of Communism will become sullied through such participation in the movements of the masses. This is the fear of the religionists who do not even dare discuss their religion for fear that it may lose its glamour in contact with the facts of life. They would hug their breasts and wait for the social their sacred "principles" to their breasts and wait for the social revolution.

We will have none of that, comrades of the "majority". Your Communism may be of such fragile character that you dare not risk it in the actual struggle of the workers. We have no fear about our principles. We are ready to apply these principles and carry on the fight in accordance with these principles. If they cannot stand the test of application in the present struggles of the workers they had better be discarded. We believe that the principles upon which our movement is founded can stand this test. We do not believe that contact with the masses means compromise. That is the viewpoint of those who would make Communism a holy creed. We believe that our party can follow Lenin's advice, that it is not necessary to sacrifice action in order to maintain purity of principles. It is because you are weak that you fear to risk your principles in action. WE INTEND TO MAKE THE COMMUNIST PARTY BOTH A PARTY OF ACTION AND A PARTY OF UNCOMPROMISING ADHERENCE TO PRINCIPLES.

## As to Party Funds

MUCH ado is being made by the "Majority" group of the fact that the Executive Secretary of the party, according to their view, "walked off with the party funds."

The Executive Secretary of the party was elected by a party convention. His responsibility is to a convention of the party, and when the split between the two factions in the party was impending the Executive Secretary served notice that in the event of such a split he would continue to administer his office and conduct his work, making his report, financial and other otherwise, to the party convention.

There is, too, another fact to be considered in connection with the funds of the party. At the time the split took place there was under the control of the Executive Secretary \$6,328.32. Of this amount approximately \$4800.00 was due Chicago comrades, who had loaned this sum to the party for the purpose of publishing literature and for defense work. These loans had been guaranteed by the personal pledge of the Executive Secretary that the sums would be repaid promptly.

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