



GOVERNMENT



ON PROPAGANDA  
AND AGITATION

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## ON PROPAGANDA AND AGITATION

1. Our chief general duty to the open revolutionary struggle is to carry on revolutionary propaganda and agitation. This work and its organization is still, in the main, being conducted in the old formal manner, by means of casual speeches at the mass meetings and without special care for the concrete revolutionary substance of the speeches and writings.

Communist propaganda and agitation must be made to take root in the very midst of the workers, out of their common interests and aspirations, and especially out of their common struggle.

The most important point to remember is -- that Communist propaganda must be of a revolutionary character. Therefore, the Communist watchword (slogans) and the whole Communist attitude towards concrete questions must receive our special attention and consideration.

In order to achieve that correct attitude, not only the professional propagandists and agitators, but also all other Party members must be carefully instructed.

2. The principal forms of Communist propaganda are:

(i) Individual verbal propaganda.

(ii) Participation in the industrial and political labor movement.

(iii) Propaganda through the Party Press and distribution of literature.

Every member of a legal and illegal Party is to participate regularly in one or the other of these forms of propaganda.

Individual propaganda must take the form of systematic house to house canvassing by special groups of workers. Not a single house within the area of

Party influence must be omitted from this canvassing. In larger towns a special organized outdoor campaign with posters and distribution of leaflets usually produce satisfactory results. In addition, the fraction should carry on a regular personal agitation in the workshops accompanied by a distribution of literature.

In countries whose population contains national minorities, it is the duty of the Party to devote the necessary attention to propaganda and agitation among the proletarian strata of these minorities. The propaganda and agitation must, of course, be conducted in the languages of the respective national minorities, for which purpose the Party must create the necessary special organs.

3. In those capitalist countries where a large majority of the proletariat has not yet reached revolutionary consciousness, the Communist agitation must be constantly on the lookout for new forms of propaganda in order to meet these backward workers half-way and thus facilitate their entry into the revolutionary ranks. The Communist propaganda with its watchwords (slogans) must bring out the budding, unconscious, incomplete, vacillating and semi-bourgeois revolutionary tendencies which are struggling for supremacy with the bourgeois traditions and conceptions in the minds of the workers.

At the same time, Communist propaganda must not rest content with the limited and confused demands or aspirations of the proletarian masses. These demands and expectations contain revolutionary germs and are a means of bringing the proletariat under the influence of Communist propaganda.

4. Communist agitation among the proletarian masses must be conducted in such a way that our Communist organization appears as the courageous, intelligent; energetic and everfaithful leader of their own labor movement.

In order to achieve this, the Communists must take part in all the elementary struggles and movements of the workers, and must defend the workers' cause in all conflicts between them and the capitalists over hours and conditions of labor, wages, etc. The Communists must also pay great attention to the concrete questions of working class life. They must help the workers to come to a right understanding of these questions. They must draw their attention to the most flagrant abuses and must help them to formulate their demands in a practical and concise form. In this way they will awaken in the workers the spirit of solidarity, the consciousness of community of interests among all the workers of the country as a united working class, which in its turn is a section of the world army of proletarians.

It is only through an every day performance of such elementary duties and participation in all the struggles of the proletariat that the Communist Party can develop into a real Communist Party. It is only by adopting such methods that it will be distinguished from the propagandists of the hackneyed, so-called pure socialist propaganda, consisting of recruiting new members and talking about reforms and the use of parliamentary possibilities or rather impossibilities. The self-sacrificing and conscious participation of all the Party members in the daily struggles and controversies of the exploited with the exploiters is essentially necessary not only for the conquest, but in a still higher degree for the carrying out of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is only through leading the working masses in the petty warfare against the onslaughts of capitalism that the Communist Party will be able to become the vanguard of the working class, acquiring the capacity for systematic leadership of the proletariat in its struggle for supremacy over the bourgeoisie.

5. Communists must be mobilized in full force, especially in times of strikes, lockouts, and other mass dismissals of workers in order to take part in the workers' movement.

It would be a great mistake for Communist to treat with contempt the present struggles of workers for slight improvements in their working conditions, even to maintain a passive attitude to them on the plea of the Communist program, and the need of armed revolutionary struggle for final aims. No matter how small and modest the demands of the workers may be, for which they are ready and willing to fight today with the capitalist, the Communists must never make the smallness of the demands an excuse, at the same time, for non-participation in the struggle. Our agitational activity should not lay itself bare to the accusation of stirring up and inciting the workers to nonsensical strikes and other inconsiderate actions. The Communists must try to acquire the reputation among the struggling masses of being courageous and effective participator in their struggles.

6. The Communist cells (or fractions) within the trade union movement have proved themselves in practice rather helpless before some of the most ordinary questions of everyday life. It is easy, but not fruitful, to keep on preaching the general principles of Communism and then fall into the negative attitude of commonplace syndicalism when faced with concrete questions. Such practices only play into the hands of the Yellow Amsterdam International.

Communists should, on the contrary, be guided in their actions by a careful study of every aspect of the question.

For instance, instead of contenting themselves with resisting theoretically and on principle all working agreements (over wages and working conditions), they should rather take the lead in the struggle over the specific nature of the tariffs (wage agreements) recommended by the Amsterdam leaders. It is, of course, necessary to condemn and resist any kind of impediment to the revolutionary preparedness of the proletariat and it is a well-known fact that it is the aim of the capitalists and their Amsterdam myrmidons to tie the hand of the workers by all manners of working agreements. Therefore, it behoves the Communist to open the eyes of the workers to the nature of the aims. This the Communists can best attain by advocating agreements which would not hamper the workers.

The same should be done in connection with the unemployment, sickness and other benefits of the; trade union organizations. The creation of fighting funds and the granting of strike pay are measures which in themselves are to be commended.

Therefore the opposition on principle against such activities would be ill-advised. But Communist should point out to the workers that the manner of collection of these funds and their use, as advocated by the Amsterdam leaders, is against all the interests of the working class. In connection with the sickness benefit etc., Communists should insist on the abolition of the contributory system, and of all binding conditions in connection with all volunteer funds. If some of the trade union members are still anxious to secure sickness benefit by paying contributions, it would not do for us to simply prohibit such payments for fear of not being understood by them. It will be necessary to win over such workers from their small bourgeois conceptions by an intensive personal propaganda.

7. In the struggle against Social-Democratic and petty-bourgeois trade union leaders, as well as against the leaders of various labor parties, one cannot hope to achieve much by persuasion. The struggle against them should be conducted in the most energetic fashion and, the best way to do this is, by depriving them of their following, showing up to the workers the true character of these treacherous socialist leaders who are only playing into the hands of capitalism. The Communists should endeavor to unmask these so-called leaders, and subsequently, attack them in the most energetic fashion.

It is by no means sufficient to call Amsterdam leaders (i. e., leaders of the reformist trade unions) yellow. Their yellowness must be proved by continual, and practical illustrations. Their activities in the trade unions, in the International Labor Bureau of the League of Nations, in the bourgeois ministries and administration, their treacherous speeches at conferences and

parliaments, the exhortations contained in many of their written messages and in the Press, and above all, their vacillations and hesitating attitude in all struggles even for the most modest rise in wages, offer constant opportunities for exposing the treacherous behavior of the Amsterdam leaders in simpleworded speeches and resolutions.

The fraction must conduct their practical vanguard movement in a systematic fashion. The Communists must not at all allow the excuses of the minor trade union officials who, notwithstanding good intentions, often take refuge, through sheer weakness, behind statutes, union decisions and instructions from their superiors to hamper their march forward. On the contrary, they must insist on getting satisfaction from the minor officials in the matter of removal of all real or imaginary obstacles, but in the way of the workers by the bureaucratic machine.

8. The fractions must carefully prepare the participation of the Communists in conferences and meetings of the trade union organizations. For instance, they must elaborate proposals, select lecturers and counsels and put up candidates for elections, capable, experienced and energetic comrades. The Communist organizations must, through their fractions, also make careful preparations in connection with all workers' meetings, election meetings, demonstration, political festivals and such like arranged by the hostile organizations. Wherever Communists convene their own worker's meetings, they must arrange to have considerable groups of Communists distributed among the audience and they must make all the preparations for the assurance of satisfactory propaganda result.

9. Communists must also learn how to draw unorganized and backward workers permanently into the ranks of Party. With the help of our fractions, we must induce the workers to join the trade unions and to read our Party organs. Other organizations, as for instance educational boards, study circles, sporting clubs, dramatic societies, co-operative societies, consumer's associations, war victims' organizations, etc., may be used as intermediaries between us and the workers. Where the Communist Party is working illegally, such workers association may be formed outside the Party through the initiative of Party members and with the consent, and under the control, of the leading Party organs (unions of sympathizers).

Communist youth and women's organizations may also be helpful in rousing the interests of many politically indifferent proletarians, and in drawing them eventually inside the Communist Party through the intermediary of their educational courses, reading circles, excursions, festivals, sunday

rambles, etc., distributing of leaflets, increasing the circulation of the Party organ, etc. Through participation in the general movement, the workers will free themselves from their small bourgeois inclinations.

10. In order to win the semi-proletarian sections of the workers, as sympathizers of the revolutionary proletariat, the Communists must make use of their special antagonism to the landowners, the capitalists and the capitalist state in order to win those intermediary groups from their mistrust of the proletariat. This may require prolonged negotiations with them, or intelligent sympathy with their needs, free help and advice in any difficulties, also opportunities to improve their education, etc., all of which will give them confidence in the Communist movement. The Communists must also endeavor to counteract the pernicious influence of hostile organizations which occupy authoritative positions in the respective districts, or may have influence over the petty-bourgeois working peasants, over those who work in the home industries and other semi-proletarian classes. These are known by the exploited, from their own bitter experience, to be the representatives and embodiment of the entire criminal capitalist system, and must be unmasked. All every day occurrences, which bring the state bureaucracy into conflict with the ideals of petty-bourgeois democracy and jurisdiction, must be made use of in a judicious and energetic manner in the course of Communist agitation. Each local country organization must carefully apportion, among its members, the duties of house to house canvassing in order to spread Communist propaganda in all the villages, farmsteads and isolated dwellings in their district.

11. The methods of propaganda in the armies and navies of capitalist states must be adaptable to the peculiar conditions in each country. Antimilitarist agitation of a pacifist nature is extremely detrimental and only assist the bourgeoisie in its efforts to disarm the proletariat. The proletariat rejects on principle, and combats with the utmost energy, every kind of military institution of the bourgeois state, and of the bourgeois class in general. Nevertheless, it utilizes these institutions (army, rifle-clubs, citizens' guard organization, etc.) for the purpose of giving the workers military training for the revolutionary battles to come. Intensive agitation must therefore be directed, not against the military training of the youth and workers. Every possibility of providing the workers with weapons, should most eagerly be taken advantage of.

The class antagonisms revealing themselves as they do in the materially favored positions of the officers, as against the bad treatment and social

insecurity of life of the common soldiers, must be made very clear to the soldiers. Besides, the agitation must bring home the fact to the rank and file that its future is inextricably bound up with the fate of the exploited classes. In a more advanced period of incipient revolutionary fermentation, agitation for the democratic election of all commanders by the privates and sailors and for the formation of soldiers' councils may prove very advantageous in undermining the foundations of capitalist rule.

The closest attention and the greatest care are always required when agitating the picked troops used by the bourgeoisie in the class war, and especially against its volunteer bands.

Moreover the social composition and corrupt conduct of these troops and bands make it possible; every favorable moment for agitation should be made use of for creating disruption. Wherever it possesses a distinct bourgeois class character, as for example in the officer corps, it must be unmasked before the entire population and made so despicable and repulsive, that they will be disrupted from within by virtue of their very isolation.



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