

FUSION AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

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Since the Russian Revolution, the Socialist movement in this country has been concerned, above all else, with the question of unity.

In each party a section, in some cases a majority, in others a minority, has accepted the full implications of revolutionary Communism, while another section remains wedded to the old reformist ideas, deluded by the belief that the capitalist class can be gradually converted into useful members of a Socialist state.

Between these two there is another group that seems incapable of coming to a decision, but endeavours to maintain itself by giving lip-service to the principles supported by the former, while in action it is in complete harmony with the second.

In other words, the Socialist movement at the present time is split into three: Communists, Reformists who are openly opposed to Communism, and Reformists who for expediency claim to be Communists.

In discussing unity, the Communists must on no account allow any compromise for the sake of gaining the support of the latter group. They must be packed off to the Reformist right wing; their inclusion in the Communist Party would sooner or later spell disaster.

Just as the Third International refuses to take in any but those bodies who subscribe to the fundamental principles laid down in the Moscow Manifesto, so the new Communist Party must rigidly exclude those who do not accept the basic principles of Communism.

It is not enough therefore, that fusion should take place between organisations whose members have shown a majority in favour of unity. The votes in favour of unity may have been determined to a large extent by the feeling of weakness and the desire for self-preservation, each party probably hoping that its particular policy will receive the support of the other organisations, and the old party, greatly strengthened, with a new name, will emerge as a result of the deliberations.

If real unity is to be obtained there must be unity of theory and unity of action. This is absolutely essential. In order to ensure this the Communist delegates at the Unity Conference who favour fusion should form themselves into a provisional committee and, (1) Issue a manifesto laying down the basic principles of Communism, viz.: the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Soviets, etc., and invite all those who are ready to adhere to it to form groups in all parts of the country; (2) To separate the country into districts, and arrange district conferences composed of delegates from the groups in the respective districts. At these conferences the basis will be ratified and a national organisation decided upon; (3) To draw up procedure to facilitate discussion at the district conferences, such as when and where it would be advisable to have a national conference, and the number of delegates each district should send; (4) If general agreement is obtained at the district conferences, to make arrange-

ments for the national conference and prepare an agenda which, of course, will be submitted to each group for consideration before the national conference takes place.

From the start it should be clearly stated that on the question of tactics, there can be no thought of agreeing to anything that violates any of the principles for which the party stands. This will necessitate a clear statement on Parliamentary action. There are many Communists who are opposed entirely to any sort of Parliamentary action, while others hold that it is useful as a method of revolutionary propaganda.

Which ever view is favoured, there should be general agreement on the proposition that no one can be loyal to the principles of Communism, who is prepared to endorse the programme of the Labour Party, or take an oath of allegiance to the King and Constitution.

That in itself would be a sacrifice of principle, and would assuredly lead to further breaches.

It should be understood therefore, that, if the Communist Party agreed to Parliamentary action on the ground of tactical value, each Communist candidate would take an oath of loyalty to his *class* and refuse to submit to the authority of the Labour Party, the Monarchy or the Constitution.

If these suggestions are followed by those who are in favour of fusion, much may be done to bring into existence an organisation that is vitally necessary to cope with the situation that confronts revolutionaries all over the country at the present time. But if it is simply to be the old game of uniting parties and taking anyone and everyone in with 'he crowd, well there may be fusion; there certainly will not be unity.
