

## **DOCUMENT 21:**

**'The Twenty-one Points – Conditions of Admission to the Communist International' as adopted at the second Comintern congress in 1920 and appended to the constitution of the Communist Party of South Africa by its founding conference in 1921.**

1. The general propaganda and agitation should bear a really Communist character, and should correspond to the programme and decisions of the Third International. The entire party press should be edited by reliable Communists who have proven their loyalty to the cause of the proletarian revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat should not be spoken of as simply a current hackneyed formula, it should be advocated in such a way that its necessity should be apparent to every rank and file working man and woman, to each soldier and peasant, and should emanate from everyday facts systematically recorded by our press day by day.

All periodical and other publications, as well as all party publications and editions, must be subject to the control of the presidium of the party, independent of whether the party is legal or illegal. It should in no way be permitted that the editors abuse their autonomy and carry on a policy not fully corresponding to the policy of the party.

Wherever the followers of the Third International have access, and whatever means of propaganda are at their disposal, whether the columns of newspapers, popular meetings, labour unions or co-operatives, it is indispensable for them not only to denounce the bourgeoisie, but also its assistants and agents, reformists of every colour and shade.

2. Every organisation desiring to join the Communist International shall be bound systematically and regularly to remove from all the responsible posts in the labour movement (party organisation, editors, labour unions, parliamentary faction, co-operatives, municipalities, etc.) all reformists and followers of the 'centre,' and to have them replaced by Communists even at the cost of replacing at the beginning 'experienced' men by rank and file working men.

3. The class struggle in almost every country of Europe and America is entering upon the phase of civil war. Under such conditions the Communists can have no confidence in the bourgeois laws. They should create everywhere a parallel illegal apparatus which at the decisive moment should do its duty by the party, and in every way possible assist the revolution. In every country where in consequence of martial law or of other exceptional laws the Communists are unable to carry on their work lawfully, a combination of lawful and illegal work is absolutely necessary.

4. A persistent and systematic propaganda and agitation is necessary in the army, where Communist groups should be formed in every military organisation. Wherever owing to repressive legislation this becomes impossible it is necessary to carry on such agitation illegally. But refusal to carry on or participate in such work should be considered equal to treason to the revolutionary cause and incompatible with affiliation to the Third International.

5. A systematic and regular propaganda is necessary in the rural districts. The workers can gain no victory unless they possess the sympathy and support of at least part of the rural workers and of the poor peasants, and unless other sections of the population are neutralised. Communist work in the rural districts is acquiring a predominant importance during the present period. It should be carried on through Communist workmen of both city and country who have connections with the rural districts. To refuse to do such work or to transfer such work to untrustworthy half reformists, is equal to rejection of the proletarian revolution.

6. Every party desirous of affiliating to the Third International should renounce not only avowed social patriotism but also the falsehood and the hypocrisy of social pacifism; it should systematically demonstrate to the workers that without a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism no international arbitration, no talk of disarmament, no democratic reorganisation of the League of Nations will be capable of saving mankind from new Imperialist wars.

7. Parties desirous of joining the Communist International must recognise the necessity of a complete and absolute rupture with reformism and the policy of the 'centrists,' and must advocate this rupture amongst the widest circles of the party membership, without which condition a consistent Communist policy is impossible. The Communist International demands unconditionally and peremptorily

that such rupture be brought about with the least possible delay. The Communist International cannot reconcile itself to the fact that such avowed reformists as, for instance, Turatti, Modigliani, Kautsky, Hillquit, Longuet, Macdonald, and others, should be entitled to consider themselves members of the Third International. This would make the Third International resemble the Second International.

8. In the Colonial question and that of the oppressed nationalities there is necessary an especially distinct and clear line of conduct of the parties of countries where the bourgeoisie possesses such colonies or oppresses other nationalities. Every party desirous of belonging to the Third International should be bound to denounce without any reserve all the methods of 'its own' imperialists in the colonies, supporting, not only in words but practically, all movements of liberation in the colonies. It should demand the expulsion of its own imperialists from such colonies and cultivate among the workers of its own country a truly fraternal attitude towards the working population of the colonies and oppressed nationalities, and carry on a systematic agitation in its own army against every kind of oppression of the colonial population.

9. Every party desirous of belonging to the Communist International should be bound to carry on systematic and persistent Communist work in the labour unions, co-operatives and other labour organisations of the masses. It is necessary to form Communist groups within these organisations which by persistent and lasting work should win over the labour unions to Communism. These groups should constantly denounce the treachery of the social patriots and of the fluctuations of the 'centre'. These Communist groups should be completely subordinated to the party in general.

10. Any party belonging to the Communist International is bound to carry on a stubborn struggle against the Amsterdam 'International' of the yellow labour unions. It should propagate insistently amongst the organised workers the necessity of rupture with the yellow Amsterdam International. It should support by all means in its power the International union of Red Labour Unions adhering to the Communist International.

11. Parties desirous of joining the Third International shall be bound to inspect the personnel of their parliamentary factions, to remove all unreliable elements therefrom, to control such factions not only verbally but in reality, to subordinate them to the Central Committee of the party, and to demand from each proletarian Communist that he devote his entire activity to the interests of real revolutionary propaganda.

12. All the parties belonging to the Communist International should be formed on the basis of the principle of democratic centralisation. At the present time of acute civil war the Communist Party will only be able fully to do its duty when it is organised in a sufficiently thorough way, when it possesses an iron discipline and when its party centre enjoys the confidence of the members of the party, who are to endow this centre with complete power, authority, and ample rights.

13. The Communist Parties of those countries where Communist activity is

legal should make a clearance of their members from time to time, as well as those of the party organisations, in order systematically to disembarass the party from the petty-bourgeois elements which penetrate into it.

14. Each party desirous of affiliating to the Communist International should be obliged to render every possibly assistance to the Soviet Republics in their struggle against all counter-revolutionary forces. The Communist Parties should carry on a precise and a definite propaganda to induce the workers to refuse to transport any kind of military equipment intended for fighting against Soviet Republics, and should also by legal or illegal means carry on propaganda among troops sent against workers' republics, etc.

15. All those parties which up to the present moment have stood upon the old social-democratic programmes should within the shortest time possible draw up a new Communist programme in conformity with the special conditions of their country, and in accordance with the resolutions of the Communist International. As a rule the programme of each party belonging to the Communist International should be confirmed by the next Congress of the Communist International or its Executive Committee. In the event of the failure of the programme of any party being confirmed by the Executive Committee of the Communist International, the said party shall be entitled to appeal to the Congress of the Communist International.

16. All the resolutions of the Congresses of the Communist International as well as the resolutions of the Executive Committee, are binding for all parties joining the Communist International. The Communist International, operating under the conditions of most acute civil warfare, should be centralised in a better manner than was the Second International. At the same time the Communist International and the Executive Committee are, naturally, bound in every form of their activity to consider the variety of conditions under which the different parties have to work and struggle, and generally binding resolutions should be passed upon which such resolutions are possible.

17. In connection with the above, all parties desiring to join the Communist International should change their names. Each party desirous of joining the Communist International should bear the following name: Communist Party of such and such a country (Branch of the Third Communist International). The question of the naming of a party is not only a formal one, but one of great importance. The Communist International has declared a decisive war against the entire bourgeois world and all the yellow Social Democratic parties. It is indispensable that every rank and file worker should be able clearly to distinguish between the Communist Parties and the old official 'Social Democratic' or 'Socialist' parties, which have betrayed the cause of the working class.

18. All the leading organs of the press of the parties of every party are bound to publish all the most important documents of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

19. All those parties which have joined the Communist International as well as those which have expressed a desire to do so are obliged in as short a space of time

as possible, and in no case later than four months after the Second Congress of the Communist International, to convene an Extraordinary Congress in order to discuss these conditions. In addition to this the Central Committees of these parties should take care to acquaint all the local organisations with the regulations of the Second Congress of the Communist International.

20. All those parties which at the present time are willing to join the Third International, but have so far not changed their tactics in any radical manner, should, prior to their joining the Third International, take care that not less than two-thirds of their Committee members and all their Central Institutions should be composed of comrades who have made an open and definite declaration prior to the convening of the Second Congress as to their desire that the party should affiliate to the Third International. The Executive Committee of the Communist International has the right to make an exception also for the representatives of the 'centre' as mentioned in Paragraph 7.

21. Those members of the party who reject on principle the conditions and the theses of the Third International are to be excluded from the party.

This applies also to the delegates at Extraordinary Conventions of the Party.