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# Letter to the Communist Party of America, October 9, 1921.

from Grigorii Zinoviev

A document in the Comintern archive. Handwritten Russian original is f. 515, op. 1, d. 38, l. 78.  
English translation is l. 79; alternate copy with handwritten notes of Robert Minor is l. 80.

**NOT for publication — by order of the Author.**

Dear Friends,

In my pamphlet [*Taktika Komintern*], a copy of which I now send you, you will find a brief exposition of my opinion about American affairs and about the duties of our Party in America.

We have been informed that a part of our Russian comrades in America are of the opinion that it is not necessary to hurry with the creation of a legal party in America. This appears to us to be a *very great mistake*. Quite to the contrary, we are very tardy with this matter in America, and every week of further tardiness brings the greatest harm. We fully understand that it is impossible to now legally create an open Communist Party in America. The difficulties are gigantic. But it is necessary to use every inch. It is necessary to establish a legal paper (and local papers) which, though in the most guarded and extremely moderate form (as was done by the Bolshevik papers under the Tsarist censorship) preach the elementary truths of Communism, or merely of the class struggle. It is necessary to create a legal “Society of Friends of Labor,” or something of that sort — ultra-moderate in appearance, but a society acting openly, which would provide the possibility of raising your head from the underground (think once again of the example of the Russian Bolsheviks under Tsarism). It would be the greatest mis-

take to lock ourselves amongst ourselves. All our enemies in America need is for the Communists to get stubborn over “purity of principle” and “irreconcilability” and to detach themselves from the masses, to transform themselves into a sect and sit “as a matter of principle” in the underground without sticking their noses out of it. But for us, the Comintern, the opposite is needed. In particular, the Russian comrades will be taking upon themselves a great responsibility if they act as an obstacle to the fulfillment of the unquestionable directives [*direktivy*] of the Comintern.

It would be very desirable if comrades holding differing opinions on the subject would write us in full with their reasons.

We send you all our warmest greetings.— Remember the starving people in Soviet Russia. What has been done so far is only a drop in the bucket. It is necessary to increase this work many, many times.

With Communist greetings,

G. Zinoviev

9 Oct. 1921  
Moscow

*Checked to the Russian original and edited by Tim Davenport.  
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