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# Circular Letter to the Membership of the United Communist Party from the CEC of the UCP in New York Regarding the Need for Security [circa Dec. 10, 1920]

Quoted verbatim in the weekly report of Jacob Spolansky for the week ending Dec. 11, 1920.  
Copy in DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA M-1085, reel 922, file 202600-14.

## Latest Bulletin from Communist Headquarters.

Comrades:

Certain occurrences lately point to the fact that at certain points the membership is becoming extremely lax insofar as USING CAUTION in the work is concerned. The January [1920] raids are past history. Nothing very disastrous has occurred lately. And so some of our members are beginning to think that EVERYTHING IS SAFE.

WE WANT TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE IS STILL ON THE JOB. It will continue ON THE JOB as long as we exist as a *Revolutionary Organization*. Spies, stool pigeons, provocateurs, and every form of scum is bound, in some way or other, to get into the organization or learn of its activities. A MOVEMENT LIKE OURS MUST BE ACTIVE OR IT HAS NO REASON FOR EXISTENCE. This activity is bound to come to the attention of the government, which will use every means to disrupt our RANKS.

It there is any doubt on this score, we may call your attention to the recent raids carried out in Chicago. The discovery of a so-called "plot" in Chicago to wreck a train was the beginning of a governmental campaign to treat us NOT AS REVOLUTIONARIES, BUT AS CRIMINALS! Holding us responsible for the Wall Street disaster was the second step in State

Calumny and strategy.

We must therefore insist that you EXERCISE GREAT CAUTION IN ALL PARTY MATTERS. The constitution has established certain regulations for the admission of members. It has come to our knowledge that these rules are being violated, if not ignored. The constitution states clearly that every applicant must be vouched for by 2 members of at least 3 months' standing each. Applicants must be put into recruiting groups, wherever possible, and kept on probation for 2 months. During this time they must perform all party work, having a voice in all matters but no vote. Only by unanimous consent can an applicant be accepted into group membership. Transfers must be made in the regular order, no transferred member being accepted into a new group until the regular procedure is completed.

And remember, even these regulations will not protect you completely. Government agents will seek to get admission, will throw off suspicion by their "revolutionary" activities, will urge violence of the kind the party does not advocate, fully understanding that they are immune from arrest and harm. We do not want to create useless alarm, but we must be on our guard constantly. Furthermore, we must insist that you exercise caution in holding your meetings.

YOU MUST MEET IN YOUR GROUPS ONLY. You must make sure that the places you meet in are safe. You must meet at a reasonable hour and go home at a reasonable hour, so that no suspicion will be aroused. You must not get into heated discussions

and hurl revolutionary phrases at one another, since neighbors are likely to overhear what is said. You must be guarded in what you say. You must be cautious in talking and discussing party affairs in public places, since patriots are still plentiful and glad to expose you.

YOU ARE NOT manifesting revolutionary spirit by carelessness. We adopted the underground method in order to carry on our work effectively. The propaganda must be put across without danger. Whatever risks you take, whatever carelessness you are guilty of, not only endangers you but also ENDANGERS THE PARTY.

Consequently, you must understand that discipline demands that you do nothing that exposes you or the party to needless persecution. Make sure that you are never observed or followed in your party work. Should you notice that you are being observed, do not go home, nor to a party meeting place. Keep party literature in safe places and not openly exposed in your home. Do not have a stock of literature lying about. When you receive literature, dispose of it RIGHT AWAY by immediate distribution and sale. Do not have correct addresses of other members either upon your person or in your house. If you must write down addresses, write them so only you can read them.

OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING RULES IF YOU ARE ARRESTED:

Do not testify against yourself. You will be questioned by the officers who make the arrest. ANSWER NOTHING. Give no party information. Give no names. In many instances arrested members have incriminated themselves answering questions asked by detectives. NO ANSWERS. NO NAMES. ABSOLUTELY NONE, no matter what their threats may be.

Answer no questions put to you by the prosecuting attorney.

ABSOLUTELY NONE.

Answer to the judge, in the courtroom, only formal questions, such as your name, occupation, age, family; but as to the charge made against you answer only "not guilty."

At all stages ask for a LAWYER, naming the defense attorney engaged by the party.

If you are brought before an Immigration Commissioner and are shown a warrant for your deportation, answer only formal questions as to your age, nationality, arrival in the United States, etc., but REFUSE to answer any questions as to your political beliefs. REFUSE to answer any questions as to your membership in any political party.

Do not give detectives even your addresses. Do not argue with them, nor with the prosecutor, nor with anyone after arrested. Answer no questions at any time as to what political organization you belong. As a Revolutionary you have pledged yourself to bear the consequences of your Revolutionary work. The organization, on its part, pledges itself to give you all the protection in its power. Active times are ahead of us. But the times are not free from danger. Attend your meetings regularly. Do your work in the groups and outside. BUT ALWAYS BE CAUTIOUS.

Fraternally,

*United Communist Party.*

***Edited by Tim Davenport.***

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