

Harrington Reviews "The Communist Bulletin."

Published by the Canadian Section of the Communist Party of the U. S.

ALIGHT has risen in the East—the East which, after a feeble struggle surrendered to the general apathy prevalent almost universally during the latter years of the war.

The workers either contracted patriotism or professed it; their leaders secured fat salaries to preserve so desirable a State. The capitalists and their jackals, professional and business people, were by no means inactive; wherever a slave sought to voice the aims of his class he was, everywhere in the English speaking part of this continent at least, promptly silenced.

Now we may be wrong, but we have not heard of anything startling occurring east of Port Arthur and, making all allowance for bias in the part of our correspondents, we conclude that the workers have not given their masters much to worry about for a year or so at any rate.

But progress though temporarily stayed, will burst with power proportionate to the time she is halted, and overturn all barriers. This truth is made manifest by the appearance of "The Communist Bulletin," Vol. 1, No. 1, undated and without place of abode. To the latter conditions we have no objections on general principles, but oh! it's mightily inconvenient.

However, the Bulletin is here, and as it devotes some attention to us, and particularly to me, it seems proper that we should, as old timers, meet it at the camp gate saying, "Welcome little stranger, you are tardy, but—"

There are many familiar airs about this little stranger however, which cause us to reflect that we have met before, and we would advise him if he is solicitous of his incognito as his grimaces imply, to be more careful; writers have habits, and so have printers.

It would appear from our new recruit in the revolutionary struggle, that the workers of Canada have an additional burden added to their already too burdensome task, to wit, the removal of Harrington from their capacious backs. I here crave the indulgence of the "Clarion" readers while some personal matters are dealt with. There have been zealous comrades before who have undertaken to wipe the floor with me, and some have done it to the queen's taste and their own. I have no right to object to this as a matter of course, but I feel compelled to protest against the methods. Surely, being human, I have made enough blunders to require chastisement, without it being necessary to indulge in inaccuracies and then assume an injured innocence expression when such are pointed out. The same reflection is also offered on behalf of the S. P. of C. With a definite knowledge of all my shortcomings, and a keen desire to hide them, I am now confounded and utterly crushed by being chronicled as "the purest of all pure 'Marxists,'" as "this great 'Marxian scholar.'" My sins have found me out. It's coming to me for leaving Boston.

Let us now proceed to examine the charges:

"... not once has the party in a leaflet or article pointed out the necessity of a working class assault upon the capitalist state as the method for the overthrow of capitalism." Granted. We would have lied had we done so.

But we have pointed out that such a course was a method for such purpose. (See our "Manifesto," page 42, and Preface to Fourth Edition).

Then we are accused of not having "dreamt of trying to mobilize the workers against the Imperialist War. Guilty as charged! Dreams are not our strong point. However, there follows a quotation from Trotsky to which I may return at a later date. Meanwhile, availing myself of the same authority:

"Had the Socialists limited themselves to expressing condemnation of the present war, had they declined all responsibility for it, and refused the role of confidence in their governments as well as the vote for the war credits, they would have done their duty at the time." ("Bolsheviki and World Peace," page 176.)

Anyone who cares to enrich his mind with something more substantial than dreams should read this entire chapter, pages 172-182.

Now we did much more than the limited task here assigned to Socialists; we held anti-war meetings and maintained ourselves against every assault, and we were the only ones who did so throughout the war.

We were able to do this because of our pre-war propaganda, and because we did not dilute that propaganda during the war. Our little stranger speaks from experience when he says: "It is easy to remain pure by doing nothing."

In his quotation from "the thesis on Parliamentarism," the slipshod mental laziness of our little stranger allows him to indicate paragraph 6 of "The Communist Party and Parliamentarism" as the source, whereas it is reproduced exactly from paragraph 7 of "The Communist Parties and the Question of Parliamentarism," a document contained in the "Theses" presented to the Second World Congress of the Communist International. This "Theses" here referred to which our friend quotes from is precisely the same document from which were reprinted the derided "obsolete Eighteen conditions." The quotation from paragraph 6 above referred to is:

"Consequently, Communism repudiates parliamentarism as the form of the future; it renounces it as a form of the class dictatorship of the proletariat; it repudiates the possibility of winning over parliament; its aim is to destroy parliamentarism. Therefore, it is only possible to speak of utilizing the bourgeois State organizations with the object of destroying them. The question can only and exclusively be discussed on this plane." (Paragraph 6, page 4, "P. T. U. and the C. I.," Theses adopted by the Second Congress, August, 1920, Emphasis ours).

So much for the quotation: now our friend's comment:

"Did the Socialist Party of Canada ever formulate the question of participation in elections in that way? No; not even theoretically. And their election manifestos only dealt with the evolution of capitalism, the horrible condition of the worker under capitalism, and the solution is always vote for the Socialist Party of Canada."

Of course the inconvenience which we noted regarding the forced furtiveness of our friend is here apparent, in the great circumambient darkness which encompasses him; he must fail to see the things which are, and have, also, recourse to dreams. We can assure him that our election manifestos never have even suggested that a vote for us would solve the workers' problems. Far from it! We have even been accused out here of telling the workers that we did not want their votes, what we wanted was their attention. And if we were sure that such action would not reveal their whereabouts we would send them some which would demonstrate the truth of this accusation. In this respect we would like to see a meeting between the Western adherents of the "Theses" under discussion and our bashful friend, on this point; the discussion would be funny. For the rest, we again refer our friend to our "Manifesto," pages 42-47.

After this deliberate lie,—but no, let us delete the adjective—"hole in the corner conspirators" of whom Marx was so scornful cannot be expected to read correctly, albeit they did watch the "Clarion" for mention of the Third International, after this lie I am trounced unmercifully for suggesting that we would have to "indulge in all manner of tactics which heretofore we have looked up as, to say the least, futile." Thus:

"It is refreshing to hear this purest of all pure 'Marxists' using exactly the same argument against the Communist International as is being used by the defenders of the Second International. This theoretician considers the tactics of the Third International futile after the lessons received in the Finnish, Russian, Hungarian, and German revolutions; only one living in a land of dreams could come to such a conclusion."

All right. Turn to section 1, par. 4, of the Thesis

on "Trade Unionism and the Communist International," adopted at the Second Congress:

"The luke-warmness of the working masses, their theoretical indecision, their tendency to yield to the arguments of opportunist leaders, can be overcome only during the process of the ever-growing struggle, by degrees, as the wider masses of the proletariat learn to understand, by experience, by their victories and defeats, that, in fact, it is already impossible to obtain human conditions of life on the basis of capitalist methods of management; and by degrees as the advanced Communist workmen learn through their economic struggle to be not only preachers of the ideas of Communism, but also the most determined leaders of the economic struggle of the Labor unions. Only in this way will it be possible to remove from the unions their opportunist leaders, only in this way will the Communists be able to take the lead in the trade union movement and make of it an organ of the revolutionary struggle for Communism."

Compare that, and indeed the entire thesis with clause 2 of the conditions of affiliation, and then rave some more.

Then we read:

"The MacDonalds, Snowdens and Harrington's are opposed to the Third International because it does lay down the tactics to be followed and refuses to allow any affiliated party to 'indulge in all manner of tactics'"

Well, the other precious pair can speak for themselves, being in receipt of eats by virtue of their position in the labor movement. Doubtless clause 2 worries them, but it holds no terrors of me, seeing I am engaged the best part of every day rendering medical aid to a bunch of unhealthy flat wheels and box cars. However, the Third International does just permit all manner of tactics, and cannot avoid doing so, when they accept those who have been so engaged these many weary moons. The term Communist has no magic virtues, and the Third International has no alchemy whereby it can transmit the reformist into a revolutionist. For, apart from attempting to do what is not possible, according to the Theses quoted above, their aberrations range all the way from resolutions passed in Communist conventions, pledging Communists to work for the abolition of alcohol, and to join the Labor Party,—to Madeline's "The Real Lady Again," column in "The Communist," published by the British Communist Party. Small wonder the "Workers' Dreadnought" reviewer suggests that "there is room therefore, in the movement, for a paper appealing to those who like light fare, are not extravagant in their intellectual diet, and desire to keep their Communism respectable and away from militancy." (Jan. 29, 1921.) Our friend should know of some of these, as we shall see later.

Let us return to the Finnish, Russian, Hungarian and German revolutions. It is partly because of these that I consider clause 2 futile. Answer, friend, was it the Centrists, the Rights or the MacDonald's or Snowdens, or any of that tribe, who marched into Finland singing revolutionary songs, under Von der Goltz (see his diary)? Who suppressed the revolution in any of the three countries? Who suppressed the Paris Commune? Even one "living in the land of dreams" could find ample evidence that the mob which marches and fights for its master, does so and will always do so, in spite of leaders, Right, Left or Centre, so long as they see through their masters' eyes.

And while we are on this subject let us take up the question of denunciation. There are some ardent rebels who can satisfy their revolutionary ardor, and soothe their Communist conscience, by denunciation of all and sundry except the master class. Being the "purest of all pure 'Marxists'" I can commiserate with these poor souls who, lacking the spirit of revolt, but consumed with its fire, leave the firing line, beat it back to the home town, select some "pacifist" walking down a dark lane, and from a secure distance bawl out various names. It is one of the most humane methods of fighting yet

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