

## Western Clarion

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VANCOUVER, B. C. JANUARY 16, 1922.

### KEEP TO THE LEFT!

**T**HE Party referendum (still incomplete) on the matter of affiliation with the Third International on the basis of the 21 points has provided the means of excuse for separation from the Party and its policy to some of those who voted for affiliation on that basis.

Local (Winnipeg) No. 3, voted 25 for and 11 against affiliation, and at the meeting following upon the recording of this vote they passed a motion "resolving" Local No. 3, of the S. P. of C. into a branch of the Workers' Party of Canada. The resolution reads:

"Whereas, the majority of Local No. 3, S. P. of C. have by their vote declared for affiliation to the 3rd International, and whereas the minority of Local Vancouver have already arranged to form in conjunction with the left wings of S. P. of C., a separate form of organisation to carry out the obligations imposed by their adherence to the 3rd International, and whereas, it is impossible to continue to function in the S. P. of C.—therefore: "Be it resolved that Local No. 3, cease its affiliation to the D. E. C. of S. P. of C., assume all financial obligations of the Local, and proceed to form a provisional branch of the Workers' Party of Canada."

Fulfilling their end of the bargain, a document entitled "The Parting of the Ways" and ending with the words, "Workers of all Countries unite" has been issued in Vancouver, signed by four members of Local No. 1, (J. Kavanagh, R. W. Hartley, J. G. Smith, A. S. Wells), "on behalf of twenty members of the S. P. of C." The names of the twenty members do not appear, of course, and the document is supposed to be accepted as a pronouncement made by the 24 members of Local (Vancouver) No. 1, who voted for affiliation. (Local No. 1, voted 24 for affiliation and 37 against). Responsibility for it, however, rests only with its four signatories who kindly signed "on behalf" of twenty others. Some of the twenty had not seen it before they saw the printed sheet.

Now we have not set out here to score any points nor, for that matter, to write a polemic concerning divided viewpoints. We have in mind many comrades at outside points who, for lack of a plain statement of fact, may find it difficult to understand these happenings.

It is no easy task to take up any writing that is controversial and quote fairly from it to the advantage and instruction of the reader. The practice of quoting arbitrarily from books and pamphlets that have been written to present frankly partisan viewpoints, notably on policy and tactics among Socialists has been indulged in shamelessly during these recent years by many ink-spillers who choose to saddle the exalted with their own ill considered prejudices. This practice is generally adopted to bolster up a weak case, and reference to the source of the quotations made usually discloses the fact that they are made to apply where they are not intended to apply. The case, of course, is altogether different where text-books or books on science are consulted and references are made in proper order.

However, the application of all this is that in quoting to suit everyone from this pronouncement, "The Parting of the Ways," we recognise the diffi-

culties, but so far as the S. P. of C. is affected we may fairly say the basis of disagreement as laid down is that while the S. P. of C. is one of the clearest of the Marxist groups on this continent and has carried on educational work for many years, it has not attempted to guide the working class in its struggles against its capitalist masters; it refuses to accept the task laid down by the Third International; it prefers the academy; it is an academic institution, not a political party of the working class; its attitude of non-participation in every day affairs leads to sterility.

That is a fair summary of the charges laid at the door of the S. P. of C. The secessionists say that while in the past they have worked with those who voted against the Third they can do so no longer. They say, "The issue before the revolutionary working class is the Third International and proletarian control, or the 2½ International and compromise with the exploiters. To us the road is clear. We will go forward with the revolutionary workers of the Third International." That's practically all they have to say concerning their intentions.

Then follow the signatures of those four who are so tired and weary of the "academy" after all these years and who will no longer work with us. One of them never did at any time work with us; he joined the party (a few months ago) in order to vote us into the Third. Two others are in much the same boat. The matter of getting genuine signatures must have been hard on Comrade Kavanagh.

As to the points of disagreement with us, we do not propose to cover these here at this time. Those points, generally speaking, have been the subject of controversy in these columns during several months last year. We are past the phrase-making stage now on the part of our secessionists who have argued for affiliation, and we are now looking for the application. Local Winnipeg (majority section) have laid it down that they, in agreement with the minority of Local Vancouver, have allied themselves with the Workers' Party of Canada. That's the application of it, and there is little use in arguing any more about Theses, Statutes, Conditions or points. The actions of these "affiliators" who have separated themselves from us measure the weight and worth of their case. Their first action, in allying themselves with the Workers' Party, constitutes their first violation of the 21 points which they have pledged themselves to observe, uphold and act upon.

Point 18 says: (Conditions of affiliation). "In conjunction with the above all Parties desiring to join the Communist International must alter their names. Each Party desirous of joining the Communist International must bear the following name: Communist Party of such-and-such country (section of Third Communist International). The question of denomination of a party is not only a formal one, but it is a political question of great importance . . ."

It is to be borne in mind and insisted upon that the question of affiliation with the Third International was argued upon the basis of the 21 points. The vote was called on that basis. This applied in all countries where the matter came up for decision. Those who opposed affiliation opposed it on that basis and those who supported affiliation supported it on that basis. Those who opposed affiliation held that the 21 points could not be lived up to. Those who supported affiliation held that the 21 points could be lived up to.

The 21 points are already broken; they are broken by those whose first pronouncement says they will observe them. They have pledged themselves to support a position they have already retreated from. This strange proceeding has a history.

In Europe practically all parties split ever affiliation with the Third Int. on the basis of the 21 points. Several Parties that were affiliated with the Third in 1919 withdrew in 1920 when the 21 points were laid down as the basis of affiliation. This simple fact disproves the false statements made and erroneous ideas entertained that this is a question of "for or against Moscow," and such like nonsense. As has so often been said and seriously meant, the question has been, affiliation on the basis of the 21

points. Sentiment undoubtedly played a large part in influencing the judgment of many. But we were not called upon to vote on the question on the basis of sentiment, but on the 21 points. These constituted the practical working basis. The first action of the secessionists is to dodge their obligations. Their Party should be called the Communist Party.

The socialist movement in the U. S. A. has been for a year or two in something of a turmoil over tactics and various forms of organisation. Communist propaganda and underground organisations have been common subjects under discussion in that country. The chief trouble there, here and elsewhere seems to have been that manifestos and written documents emanating from Russia have been taken to be words of command to be blindly followed. Heroics, stage-play and thoughtlessness have exaggerated the danger at present to be encountered and in many instances these practises have invited it needlessly. The Communist Party buried itself underground and two years' burrowing were necessary before it came to its senses. Even at that it had to be "instructed" as to what course to follow. It first claimed that the Third International required it to go underground, and then claimed that the Third International instructed it to come to the surface as soon as possible.

In any case, the Canadian Communist Party imitated these practises in a measure, although its life history was brief. But it has followed the course set south of the 49th parallel. The 21 points which were so all-embracing and which formed the basis of action in the U. S. A. have now been found to be impractical and they are to be conveniently forgotten. After all the "militancy" and bluster, revolutionary phrases and so forth, the same people who were responsible for these heroic utterances have now, as the Workers' Party, or as the organisers of it, appeared in their true light. The U. S. A., in the organisation there known as the Workers' Party, has set the lead in assembling a hotch-potch of reformists and opportunists, and the same characterises the Workers' Party in Canada. In Western Canada the new party, where any interest is taken in it, is looked to hopefully by labor politicians who desire election to parliament on an opportunist platform. Organisation and a reform platform will do the work. All the revolutionary phrases ever penned will not cover the bare fact when it shows itself in action. The Workers' Party, the party that is to carry out the dictates of the Third International is an opportunist party at present disguised. So far as the 21 points are concerned, they are ignored. Safety First is the watchword.

Now, to compile all the facts and happenings of the international socialist movement of the past year or two that have a bearing on these matters would take a volume. Splits in Socialist parties have been so common that the spectacular nature of the occurrences has come to the stage where it no longer attracts very much attention. Indeed, we have reason to think that such errors in judgment and evidences of false information concerning other countries found in Russia in the past year or two may be in a large measure charged to an international host of truckling delegates seeking favors for themselves. However it may be, the Third International seems to be learning that scraps of paper, drawn up as 21 points or in any other formula, cannot operate uniformly as a basis for working class action in all countries. They too have had their bubbles.

The "Parting of the Ways" relates something about there being two positions only—the Third International and that known as the 2½ International. That is a lie, and those who framed the document know it. Already there has grown up a Fourth International, the main objection of which to the Third is that the Third has abandoned its revolutionary program and has turned opportunist. In England, the Communist Party is now being called upon to pronounce a definite stand on its indeterminate wibbly-wobbling on the matter of alliance with the labor party, a course they would like to follow but cannot, evidently. So far as we ourselves are concerned, the business of trying to palm the 2½ Int. on to us is a weak effort towards heroics that has no