

The S. P. of C. and the Third International

AFFILIATION with the Third International (Moscow) re-opens in a new and improved form, the old and much discussed question of tactics, and the onus is upon those desiring affiliation or change in the Parties tactics to produce reasons for so doing. (1) In telling us how affiliation will benefit the Socialist Party of Canada or assist the movement in Canada; (2) increase our propaganda; (3) Make us more revolutionary; and (4) prove that the present conditions warrant a change in tactics.

In stating the position of Local Winnipeg No. 3 upon this question, it is necessary to correct false impressions, (1) of those within our ranks reminding them that there is room within the Socialist movement for analysis and criticism or parties and individuals, without the assumption that he who dares to criticise is a traitor to the movement. Reminding them also that there is a vital difference between the critic and the individual who uses his knowledge for personal gain. The charge of moral cowardice is another feature that can be avoided; (2) the false impressions that are being circulated by the "kept press" regarding our decision of non-affiliation (as they are also using the decisions that have been reached by the many political working-class organizations in Europe) namely, as propaganda against the Bolsheviks, against whom much ink has been used in fabricating stories and misrepresenting facts. The Socialist movement can solve its own differences without the advice of the capitalist press and without the need of its assistance, either in "explaining" our philosophy, or distorting the differences arising from tactics.

The working-class movement the world over is undoubtedly stimulated by the measure of success that has been attained by the Russian workers, and differences that arise with regard to tactics in gaining control, are far from being in opposition to the Bolsheviks, or antagonistic to the Third International, but arise out of the differences in the class-consciousness of the workers in other lands, in relation to the power of their capitalist masters.

The first clause in the conditions for affiliation says: "The dictatorship of the proletariat must not be spoken of simply as a well learnt formula, etc." What does this mean? The dictatorship of the proletariat must be propagated as an object to be obtained, notwithstanding that in the highly organized and industrialized countries, when the workers gain control, the period necessary in the elimination of the capitalist class may be of a short duration! A passing phase, and not a long drawn out struggle compared to the common ownership and the democratic control of the means of wealth production and distribution. If this is so, then how illogical it is, to teach the dictatorship of the proletariat, or speak of it, not merely as a well learnt formula.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a phrase that is used in two ways: first, as a dictatorship of the workers as a vast majority, and, secondly, a dictatorship of a small minority who belong to a small party controlling in the interests of the workers. As used by some "Reds" it implies that by direct action on the part of a small but class-conscious minority it is possible to gain control in a highly developed capitalist state, with its army and navy and its perfected instruments of coercion. This shows the need for a clear understanding of the meaning of words and constantly repeating the meaning implied.

That the tactics of the Third International are highly colored by pre-revolutionary Russian conditions is clearly shown, whether as applied to the agrarian programme or the advocacy of militant demonstrations of the masses in the cities. The success of the movement in Russia has produced the idea that similar methods are inevitable to the emancipation of the workers in different parts of the world, irrespective of the conditions that may prevail. This is to be regretted, for it thereby predicts that every country must go through identically the same phases in every detail. This of course can be denied when we remember the case of Hungary and the establishment of Soviet rule there, even although

it was overthrown later by force of the allied powers.

While the Third International urges the use of parliamentary action, yet it is considered of secondary importance to the development of mass-action in the form of insurrections, strikes, and open civil war. The position of the S. P. of C., being a political party, educational in character, is that it uses the parliamentary institutions existing, for educational purposes, development of class-consciousness, etc. This position has been maintained by the realization that the means that will be adopted by the workers in their emancipation will depend upon the measure of class-consciousness combined with the intensity of their conditions. There is yet much spade work to be done by a Socialist organization, in the making of Socialists, in the spreading of knowledge, as the best means of protecting the Russian revolution, and in changing the system under which we live.

While the Third International has laid down the ruling of rupture with reformism, centrism, social pacifism, etc., and the need of such a clause presupposes advances to organizations of doubtful revolutionary character, yet the Executive Committee of the Third International have allowed non-revolutionary bodies to affiliate. The late John Reed in an article printed by the "Workers Dreadnought" January 1st, tells us that the last convention of the Third International had delegates from all parts of the world. It reads as follows:—

"German Spartacists, Spanish Syndicalists, American I. W. W., Hungarian Soviet and Red Army Leaders, British Shop-Stewards, and Clyde Workers Committees, Dutch Transport Workers, Hindu, Korean, Chinese and Persian Insurrectionists, Irishmen, Sinn Feiners and Communist,—Argentinian Dockers, Australian Wobblies. All these people were not clear on Communism, they had violently divergent ideas about the dictatorship of the proletariat, parliamentarism, the need for a political party, but they were welcomed as brothers in revolution as the best fighters of the working-class, as comrades that were willing to die for the overthrow of capitalism."

What a mixture of ideas. And the problem is, having strict rules and regulations, how is it possible to bind such a conglomeration of ideas into a cohesive force. The mixture of ideas presupposes breadth and latitude in rules and regulations, which, if not allowed, a condition will arise to further splits and confusion, or another Second International.

To fully elaborate upon all the objections to affiliation would take both time and space. So, for the present we will condense same into the form of resolutions that have been passed by Winnipeg Local No. 3:

REASONS FOR NON-AFFILIATION WITH THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL OF MOSCOW.

- (1) The Dictatorship of the Proletariat should not be advocated as an object, when in highly developed capitalist countries its duration may be short-lived.
- (2) That the Third International Executive Committee have allowed non-revolutionary bodies to affiliate.
- (3) That the tactics laid down as a whole are largely Russian in character, drawn up for the specific purpose of dealing with countries that are in open civil war. This condition does not apply to either the U. S. A. or Canada.
- (4) That to support all liberation movements in the colonies, is a policy of bourgeois nationalism, and is not the business of Revolutionary Socialism.
- (5) To adopt tactics, advocating rupture with reformism, centrism, social pacifism, etc., are unnecessary to a party based on the fundamental knowledge of the Revolutionary Class Struggle, which the Socialist Party of Canada has been engaged in propagating since its inception. The adoption of this feature in tactics presupposes the Third International has appealed to organizations of doubtful revolutionary character, and thereby have acted in contradiction to their own clause.
- (6) That the struggle for political power in Canada centres around the education of the masses in

which parliamentary action should be used.

(7) That any minority action would be illegal, necessarily resulting in an underground organization, in which avenues such as the use of parliamentary action, in elections, open forum meetings, use of the mails, would be denied us, therefore limiting our educational facilities in reaching the masses.

(8) That world tactics to overthrow world Imperialism in which latitude would be given, to the varying political and economic conditions prevailing in each country, could only result from a well organized cohesive body, representative of delegates elected from the revolutionary organizations of the different countries, with a thorough knowledge of the conditions prevailing.

(9) That the agrarian programme is not compatible with highly developed countries where the Socialization of the land may be accomplished simultaneously with the socialization of industry.

WINNIPEG LOCAL No. 3.

LETTER

Comrade Editor:

In 1917, when from tortured Russia the news came that the working class there had accomplished the overthrow of their masters, we of the S. P. of C. were thrilled. We drank deep in the wine of our Russian comrades' achievement, and since, as each successive assault of enraged capitalism failed to shake the wall of proletarian knowledge and courage, we have gloried in that failure.

That was the psychological effect of the Russian revolution, and the value to the struggling workers of the world cannot be overestimated.

Nevertheless, we must not allow enthusiasm to outstrip reason, and in this proposal to join the Third International, Comrade Editor, we are falling into the error against which Comrade Lenin has warned us, namely, copying the Bolsheviks. At anyrate, the sponsors of this proposal seem to have accepted a dictum which reads: "If it is good enough for the Bolsheviks, it must be good enough for the S. P. of C."

Comrade Kaplan, in his letter opening the discussion, places before your readers three main objections to joining, and then proceeds to sweep them airily aside, thus: "Sooner or later it will be necessary to proclaim the internal solidarity of the international movement."

Now, I might ask, since when have the spokesmen or press of the S. P. of C. ceased to proclaim an identity of interests and ideas with the Marxists of the world?

Further, there are groups affiliated with the Third International whose ideas and interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the working class. From the article entitled "The World Congress of the Communist International," by the late John Reed, we find the congress was composed of German Spartacists, Spanish Syndicalists, American I. W. W., Hungarian Soviet and Red Army leaders, British Shop Stewards, Clyde Workers Committees, Dutch Transport Workers, Hindu, Korean, Chinese and Persian insurrectionists, Argentine Dockers, Australian I. W. W.

All these people were not clear on Communism. They had violently divergent ideas about the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Parliamentarism, the need for a political party, but they were welcomed as brothers in revolution, as the best fighters of the working class, as comrades who were willing to die for the overthrow of capitalism.

Even the Communist balks at some of the above as comrades. The Glasgow Communist Group in its platform suspends its support of the Third International until such time as that body repudiates its "wobbling" on the question of Parliamentary Action, Workers' Committees, Industrial Unionism, and other reformist or reactionary measures for which the group will not stand.

The logical result therefore, once we become affiliated with the Third International, is to unite forces with the very elements which have fought in the past. This is a step in a retrograde direction, and one which would give credit to the enemies of the working class.

(Continued on page 4)