

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

AGAINST AFFILIATION

(Continued from last issue.)

THE bulk of the argument for affiliation rests on the unsubstantial arias of sentiment and idealist assumption. It is quietly assumed that a central executive can exercise effective authority without the previous welding of conflicting elements by conditioning circumstances; that we can create an international as easily as a "wafler" makes hot cakes; that we can organize the proletariat to order; that as the capitalist class has organized internationally, so should we,—a series of hypotheses which is neither good history nor good logic, and treats fact with the cavalier insouciance of the "kept" press. (*)

So far indeed is the capitalist class from organizing and creating its "international" that the bulk of the class is opposed to it, while such haphazard association as really exists, is not only not the product of thought and consideration, but is the result of the most bitter struggle of political competition. The three or four first powers have been forced, through dire necessity into a sullen, reluctant, and suspicious co-operation, for the temporary safety of their privilege and interests; a co-operation whose dissensions are all too apparent; whose conflicting interests are beyond question; and whose futility is indelibly reflected in the most awful conditions of suffering and degradation that the world has ever seen. And the further conclusion is implicit in itself; that out of such an organization, out of such an incoherent conglomeration of battling interests there can come no solution of world problems. Because the deep-seated cause of those problems is not in the field of its vision.

It is precisely the same with the workers, and for precisely the same reasons. They are not the dominant class, nor are their interests paramount. They are dragged along at the tail of capital—and with their faces turned to the rear at that—forced through the highways and bye-ways of capitalist interest; compelled to find in capitalist expansion their supremest good; to purchase their paltry existence with their freedom. They cannot act on the initiative they are politically inert: they are at the wrong end of the gun, and there they are likely to linger, until necessity compels them to take an active hand in the further unfolding of this fugitive drama of social evolution. They are exponents of "national interests," because, at the spreading table of empire they find satisfaction of their primal wants. Thus they are, alternately, job-worshippers and head hunters—it matters not which. They will build or sink, rear or destroy, make booze or bread, bayonets or blankets, poison gas or jeans, with equal skill and equal zeal. What matters the end, they have the incentive—of necessity. They will follow every Jack-o'-lantern that flits through the political wilderness, every cul-de-sac baited with the right colored shrimp, in their weary pilgrimage for better conditions. The straight road of revolution they cannot go: they must go by the circuitous route of Utopian reform. It is the destiny of individualist philosophy. Therefore the workers will not form into an international because their capitalist masters have devised some sort of inharmonious international arrangement. On the contrary, the steady pressure of world economics, which drove the leading capitalist groups into imperialist conclaves, and holds them there in spite of divergent interests, in the slowly dawning fear of proletarian victory, will also compel the proletariat, first to follow on the trail of their masters, will drive them, and hammer them into comparative unanimity, and then faced with want and extremity, finding the palliatives of their masters in vain, and seeing the devices and institutions of the once proud rulers, crumbling away in the grip of productive and social forces, unable longer to function in their ancient form,— they will take their first sure step to the social commonwealth.

Revolution is the last exit. Because it can only be achieved in the interests of society, as a whole, by a community whose further existence is at stake,

led on, neither by "saviours" or "leaders," but urged by the most omnipotent necessity, to escape the unendurable conflict engendered by the developed forces of production against their old political heritage.

This may be "mechanical philosophy." Well, let it. Revolutions are not made nor Internationals created to our order. They come, both of them, spontaneously, unhindered and unhampered, out of the growing contradictions of class society. All we can do is to prepare for the coming change, to be ready to grasp and turn to our advantage, whatever opportunity may offer, out of the rapidly moving wrack of social upheaval. To go before that,— we cannot.

We have not yet entered the throes of Revolution. When we do, we will probably not like it. But, like it or not, it is coming. And we would do well in all seriousness, to take the measure of the thing we advocate, knowing that at no distant date we will be called upon to support our advocacy with our actions. The present task of the revolutionary is to understand the revolution, so that the awakened and aroused proletariat may not bring down upon itself the bloody wrath of precipitate action.

G. ROSS

(*) Note.—Here, for instance, is a quotation from an advocate of affiliation:

"The proletariat of Russia, single handed, crushed Czarism, knocked to the ground its bourgeoisie and began to realize their future plans. Then the international bourgeoisie . . . began to throw a loop around . . . the new Russia. They would have succeeded in choking her had it not been for the international proletariat who raised their strong hands of toil, and challenged. . . . 'Hands off Russia,'"

That is simply not true. Briefly, what happened was that the Russian people (mostly peasantry), weary of war demanded land, bread, and peace. The rising bourgeoisie under Kerensky, promised this—but could not fulfill the promise. And just as Czarism fell before the first peasant demand so the struggling bourgeoisie fell under the second. And the peasant people secured their demands simply because they knew what they wanted and were united in that demand. The "realization of plans" had little or no place in the affair. Neither was it the proletariat who 'challenged, Hands off Russia.' It was, on the contrary, Liberal bourgeoisie and Manchester free traders etc., etc., who, finding their business operations confounded by imperialist wars and ambitions, started the crusade of "trade with Russia," to save themselves and their privilege of exploitation. Sections of reformist labor joined (subsequently) in the chase. But what an ineffective protest it was, how limited its field of action, and what a pitiful spectacle of proletarian misunderstanding and impotence. And even yet, trade with Russia is not clearly established, nor the blockade lifted. Truth to tell, the very arguments adduced in favor of affiliation are the weightiest evidence against it.

Next Issue: Article by W. A. Pritchard

A LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

New York City,
16th June, 1921

Dear Comrade,—Just a line to say hello, and to keep in touch with you. My few months' stay here among the great structures and rushing multitude has made some very deep impressions, which alter a few of my opinions. I really thought there was some semblance of a revolutionary moment in the principal city of this continent, but, alas, such is not the case.

The S. P. of A. seem to hold the front position, but they do receive some opposition. Their "milky way," Lee, Germer, Dalton, Jaeger et al., are truly petit-bourgeois reformer types. Much worse than I expected. Hundreds of open air meetings are held weekly by the S. P. of A., S. L. P., Communists (under other names) and an army of free lanc-

es. I oft-times ask myself the question, if the movement would be benefited by the suppression of free speech? There are a few good boys—too few—around here who are putting out excellent propaganda. I was considering linking myself up with the S. P. or S. L. P. just for the purpose of being active, but the former are so putrid that one dare not go near them without reporting to the health officer, the S. L. P. are surprisingly close to the social-patriot line. The article by De Leon, "The Flag in Utah," is typical of them, so I cannot see my way to enter their ranks. The Proletarian Party have no local here, I have written to them for their Manifesto and programme. If there is a lack of Socialist propaganda there is certainly not a lack of "Socialist organizations," e.g., S. P. of A., S. L. P., I. W. W., W. I. U., Communist (right and left), Irish-American Labor League, Workers' Educational Society, all Marxists, and all scrapping each other. It's bewildering. Then, of course, there is the Brindleites, New York Central Labor Council, and the hundred and one factions of the A. F. of L., all of which have had a slice taken off their wages. A few hundred thousand are unemployable and "not a word was heard, not a funeral note." If a mass meeting for the unemployed is called a few hundred show up. If a job is advertised a few thousand clamor for it.

JOHN F. MAGUIRE.

Note.—Comrade Maguire, previous to going to New York, was for several years secretary of the P. E. C., Alberta.

The special courts set up by the Social-Democratic president of Germany, Ebert, to try the Communists involved in the March insurrections have sentenced:

| |
|---|
| 252 prisoners to 962 years' hard labor. |
| 166 " 254 years imprisonment |
| 6 " hard labor for life. |
| 2 " death |
| —"Communism and Christianity." |

RUSSIAN FOREIGN TRADE

An Interview With Krassin.

Berlin, May 30—Krassin, who stopped for a short time on the journey through Berlin had a conversation with a representative of "Novij Mir" in the course of which he said: "The greatest difficulties with which Russia has to contend are those of fuel and transport. However, in spite of the difficulties of the conditions of the workers the production of the Donetz Basin is showing a steady increase. In the matter of concessions a co-operation of American capital would be desirable. We wish to give concessions in the Donetz Basin for which German, Swedish, French and English groups have an interest. We have also received enquiries from French and Swedish parties who represent American interests regarding concessions for a number of factories in Siberia.

For some unknown reason, Vanderlip has endeavoured to avoid an interview with me. So far as I know he wished to bring a power of attorney with him after his return to Moscow as well as a certain sum to be deposited as security so that the preliminary contract which had been concluded with him could enter into force. Apparently he was not in the position to fulfill these conditions and he departed.

In regard to the decree over de-controlled trade it has had as a result the complete confidence of the peasantry in the Soviet government. This decree which met the wishes of the working population of Russia has proven the living strength of the Soviet power.

Concerning export, Russia would not be in a position to export for a long time yet in any large quantities. Europe and American would grasp that the reconstruction of Russian economic life is necessary for the reconstruction of the economic life of the world and on this ground they would be compelled to grant credits to Russia. It is no longer Utopian to speak of a loan. Naturally Russia would guarantee the loan with its whole state property.