

Tactics and Other Things

BY J. A. McDONALD.

SOME weeks ago, due to the freakish propaganda emanating from the Clarion, I was prompted to ask for a definite official reply to the question, Has the S. P. of C. changed its attitude towards reform parties?

Answers to the query were furnished by three members of the Party. In his Secretarial Notes the editor wrote, "Comrade McDonald asks for an official answer to the question as to whether or not the Party attitude has changed towards the British Labor Party. The answer is that it has not changed its attitude towards reform parties."

In the same issue Comrade "C" contributes the following, "At the outset I hasten to inform him there has been no alteration in the official position of the S. P. of C. as he is familiar with it, as laid down in the Party Constitution and Platform and its Manifesto."

In the next issue Comrade Harrington tells us that "The Canadian Labor Party and our attitude towards it is another matter and we are bound to meet the issue without equivocation. The plain fact is that officially we have taken a new stand on the matter. We have recognized them as a working class party and have co-operated with them in an election. We have done this before but never officially." (Emphasis this).*

Now, could confusion ever be worse confounded than here? Were it not for the fact that I have watched Party affairs somewhat carefully during recent times I would still be at sea concerning what the official attitude is. However, I am able to accept Comrade Harrington's statement because it happens to be the only one that squares with the facts.

When I wrote my article, "Was Marx a Reformer?" the Harrington contribution was not yet published. I wrote under the mistaken impression that "C" and the Editor provided me with correct data. Had I then known what I know now I scarcely should have interrupted the smoothness of the Party machine. The change in attitude was officially made, and a working agreement entered into with the C. L. P. and, then, the membership was invited to discuss the new policy. Truly, a democratic procedure!

I am not quite egotistic enough to postulate a reversion to type by the S. P. of C. because of any effort of mine. I can see no other alternative but to allow the Party to wallow in the mire of reform till the undertaker duly arrives. Once an organization reaches such a stage of tolerance that it refuses to attack any of its rivals, then it has by such a position taken its first decided step in the direction of the morgue. That the S. P. of C. has about completed its journey should be obvious to all.

I asked "C" to point out where any official statement was ever rendered to the effect that the Party considered all reforms inimical to working class progress. In reply he invites me to read the final paragraph of the Manifesto. The item in question has been thoroughly perused and no such statement nor even an implication of such has been found. Here is the paragraph:

"The Party platform—a short and scientific exposition of sound working class principles and tactics—is broad enough to embrace all who are Socialists and narrow enough to exclude all those who are not. Since all political parties must be the expression of certain class interests the S. P. of C. enters the political field determined to wage war on all other political parties, whether openly capitalist or so-called labor. Understanding the futility of reform and the danger of compromise, it stands

square with science and practical experience, wasting not its time and energy on mere effects but dealing only with root causes. Realising furthermore, that no "step-at-a-time" policy, no remedial legislation or political quackery can be substituted for working class knowledge its propaganda, therefore, is one of enlightenment and education."

Anyone who reads the English language for the purpose of understanding it should have no difficulty in seeing that this paragraph contains precisely what I contended in my article was the Party position. It explains that we were concerned with revolutionary means rather than wasting energy in pursuit of petty reforms. But it cannot be construed to state that each and every reform measure must necessarily militate against social progress.

Of course, the Manifesto is now a thing of the past. It does not sponsor the universal brotherhood of the new policy. It was written to apply exclusively to social affairs of the ante-bellum days, and now must surely give way to a broader and nobler document which I trust we shall soon have the pleasure of perusing.

In his keynoting campaign "C", like every opportunist that comes down the pike, claims for himself a monopoly of all the intellectual virtues. He possesses the only open mind, the only broad comprehension, the only powers of analysis worth having, while all his "left wing" opponents are afflicted with "closed minds" and "fixed ideas."

There are many who take a stand directly at variance with that of "C" who keep abreast of the times in all departments of science. Who study the latest literature in regard to anthropology, psychology, economics, biology, anthrope and economic geography, etc. And, what is even more to the point, they have a capacity at least equally great to assimilate what they read.

This does not imply that they should change their philosophy every time they read a book. Neither does it follow that because of their efforts in the field of social and psychical research Marx must be replaced by Veblen and MacDougall. That "habit" is a factor of great importance to social progress no student will deny. But that it possesses the great influence accorded it by "C" no Marxian worthy of the name will concede. He has made a fetish of habit.

When the O. B. U. movement was launched in Canada a few years ago many members of the S. P. of C. rushed to its sheltering wing. They had naught but compassion for the obtuse minds that could not see in that organization the harbinger of all progress. New intellectual avenues were being opened and they, the favored of nature, with their keen, scintillating thinking equipment were called upon to be the pioneers of a new era.

But where is the O.B.U. today? The "common as muck" minds refused to be serenaded into its folds. In their imbecility they anticipated its ultimate failure. They saw greater results in the political educational movement. The wise brannigans eventually dropped their plaything and returned to the status quo.

The present immigration into the domain of labor politics will meet a similar fate. It may provide some of our political exhibitionists another opportunity to sublimate the libido but it will not serve to enhance the class struggle. Even if the S. P. of C. group maintained an "impossibilist" attitude in the Labor Party (which is altogether unlikely) it would spell no more advance than if they remained outside. The tail is not going to wag the dog. The incessant conflict of opinions would tend to obscure the issue for the average worker.

True, a small educational organization in opposition to all other parties means labor and inconvenience to those who carry the war into Africa. But this is the work that really counts in the revolution-

ary movement. The progress may appear slow but we must realize that, despite the revolutions and abortive revolutions, the collapsing of national exchanges, and the switching of boundaries that have juzzed our existence since the war, the movement on this continent is still in a study class stage and will likely remain there for several moons yet.

"C" tries to make it appear that we are simply waiting for the system to collapse and then trust to luck in the consequent confusion. This is not the attitude and "C" knows it is not. There is much work to do right now and some of us are engaged in doing it.

Personally, I do not lay claim to being the only one who reads and studies Marx. Neither do I feel a fondness for "C's" method of eulogising Marx when he finds a quotation that appears to coincide with his twaddle, and, again, when the evidence is against him he suddenly discovers that Marx is half a century old. But, still, I expect that this is an attribute inherent in the new universal mind.

PLATFORM

Socialist Party of Canada

We, the Socialist Party of Canada affirm our allegiance to, and support of the principles and programme of the revolutionary working class.

Labor, applied to natural resources, produces all wealth. The present economic system is based upon capitalist ownership of the means of production, consequently, all the products of labor belong to the capitalist class. The capitalist is, therefore, master; the worker a slave.

So long as the capitalist class remains in possession of the reins of government all the powers of the State will be used to protect and defend its property rights in the means of wealth production and its control of the product of labor.

The capitalist system gives to the capitalist an ever-swelling stream of profits, and to the worker, an ever increasing measure of misery and degradation.

The interest of the working class lies in setting itself free from capitalist exploitation by the abolition of the wage system, under which this exploitation, at the point of production, is cloaked. To accomplish this necessitates the transformation of capitalist property in the means of wealth production into socially controlled economic forces.

The irrepressible conflict of interest between the capitalist and the worker necessarily expresses itself as a struggle for political supremacy. This is the Class Struggle.

Therefore we call upon all workers to organize under the banner of the Socialist Party of Canada, with the object of conquering the political powers for the purpose of setting up and enforcing the economic programme of the working class, as follows:

- 1—The transformation, as rapidly as possible, of capitalist property in the means of wealth production (natural resources, factories, mills, railroads, etc.) into collective means of production.
- 2—The organization and management of industry by the working class.
- 3—The establishment, as speedily as possible, of production for use instead of production for profit.

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* Editor's Note: This recognition was given in our correspondence with the B. C. Section of the C. L. P. Concerning official affiliation with that body the actual state of the matter, as it stands today, was given there. The correspondence was published in the Clarion of June 2.