

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

THE discussion upon the terms of affiliation to the Third International has, up to the last issue of the "Clarion," consisted of a critical analysis of the 18 points in so far as they applied to this country. It has remained for A. Kohn, who is not a member of the Party, though he was employed as an organizer for Local Winnipeg, to take part in the discussion, not in the manner of other contributors, but in a spirit of hostility to the Bolshevik Party, the Soviets, and above all the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

To do this he has resorted to mis-statements and the misconstruing of excerpts from the writings of prominent Bolsheviks. According to him the call for the Third International utterly ignored the necessity of Socialist education preceding action, yet we find that the terms of affiliation demand the daily dissemination of Communist propaganda. He then quotes Lenin on tactics, and denounces this teaching as unsound, basing his judgment on parliamentary elections in England and in Winnipeg elections in which "after the war" patriotism and the newly granted female franchise played quite a part. Of course Lenin has only had the experience of a revolution and is thus limited as compared with Kohn.

Dealing with the Dictatorship of the proletariat he says "Why all this stress upon a phrase that has become popular since the Russian revolution, if, as Radek says, it only applies to backward countries."

Radek does not say so, but on the contrary says just the opposite.

Kohn then inserts an excerpt from Radek's "Development of Socialism from Science to Practice," and emphasizes certain words for the express purpose of twisting the meaning of the paragraph.

He then says: "Here we have the dictatorship defined as unnecessary in the advanced countries, and by such a prominent Bolshevik official of the Third International as Radek." If the "Clarion" readers will strike out the emphasis he has placed under certain words, and instead emphasize the words "Were it otherwise" at the beginning of the sentence, the distortion becomes apparent.

Then again: "Why make as your object and insist upon propagating a condition which must, in the very nature of emancipation be a brief transitional stage?"

Why not preach brotherly love, instead of telling the workers that as by force they are held in subjection, so by force must they maintain themselves against reaction, until the last spark of bourgeois reaction is crushed?

The idea of the Proletarian Dictatorship seems crude and uncomfortable to some of our revolutionary (?) Marxists, who no doubt pray for the transition to take place whilst they are away for a week end holiday.

The same opposition is noted in his reference to the Soviets. They are apparently not perfect. They may even be captured by reactionaries. True! He cannot say that they are not functioning, because they are in existence as State organs in the only country in which the revolution has taken place.

His doubt as to whether Soviets, or Workers' Councils, are really necessary, is shown by his statement below in reference to the hostility of Political Democracy:

"Further, this attitude of hostility to political democracy is backed up by reference to the failure of parliamentary action, which up till now has not been Socialist parliamentary action, but the action of workers supporting their enemies."

I heard the same argument put forward by J. R. Clynes, M.P., one of the most reactionary of the so-called labor M.P.'s, in defense of the parliamentary institutions during the debate on Direct Action as a means of forcing the Nationalization of Mines, March, 1920. Any freak organization or reform party can put up that defence of the parliamentary institutions.

There is, however, a difference between Kohn's capture of political power by way of parliament, and communist parliamentary activity for the purpose

of exposing its uselessness to the workers, as outlined in the programme of the Third International.

His ability in piecing together clippings from papers, quoting portions of statements, and generally twisting the same to suit his purpose, might be all right in the occupation of an A. J. Andrews, but it has no place in the working class movement.

I would suggest to Kohn that those in Russia are working as well as theorizing, working against odds which are not lessened by criticisms such he has delivered during the past two years.

To come to Comrade Harrington's article: He says we must face the facts. That is true, and though he may put forward the contention that my first argument "would go a long way towards having our application rejected, should we apply," the fact still remains that one cannot apply terms to conditions which are non-existent.

Concerning the position of the Party, Comrade Harrington says: "Still, as a matter of actual fact Marxism, as we interpret and expound it, is a method of understanding social institutions, their development or decay, and therefore if our position was sound in the past, it must be equally so as long as we maintain it, theoretically or practically."

Marxism, as I understand it, is something more than the foregoing. It is also the application of the foregoing for the purpose of organizing the working class for the capture of political power.

If the explanation of social phenomena comprised Marxism, then the Rand school of Social Science, of the Plebs League, or organizations of that character, could carry on all the work necessary in that sphere.

As a political party we are out to organize the workers in order to conquer the Powers of State. Inasmuch as the Party officially is not an advocate of parliamentarism, we are necessarily forced, if we intend to function, into the organized masses of workers in order that our work may bear fruit.

The relevancy of my objection to his argument against clause 2, in which he questions the utility and states that the bitter struggles would hamper, and in the end nullify our educational work, is questioned.

If a demonstration of the superiority of one concept over another is not relevant to educational work, to what is it relevant?

In Comrade Harrington's review of "The Communist Bulletin," he introduces a thesis from that on "Trades Unionism and the Communist International," adopted at the Second Congress, in opposition to clause 2 of the terms. As a matter of fact the thesis simply outlines what the experience and practice of the industrial struggle has already taught us, and is an explanation of tactics in connection with clauses 2 and 9.

"Recent events in local history" are not restricted to taxpayers refusing to increase appropriations. The action of Mayors and Councils in Vancouver and Winnipeg during the strike of 1919, impress the workers more than that of the taxpayers.

To come to clause 8: If quotations from statements of prominent members of the Third International can be used to define certain clauses, if the quotation from Lenin is to be accepted, there is then no occasion for Comrade Harrington to emphasize all colonial liberation movements.

There is a vast difference between the Quebec and Boer secessionist movements and those in the other dependencies. There is no threat to vested interests in the above-mentioned, whilst it is very much in evidence in the case of the revolting colonies. In this connection the Manifesto of the Third International also has this to say:

"On the other hand, in contrast with the yellow International of the social-patriots, the Proletarian Communist International will support the plundered colonial peoples in their fight against Imperialism, in order to hasten the final collapse of the Imperialistic world system."

I must take exception to the method used in analysing tactics. Quoting me as follows: "Every success of a revolting colony against an Imperialist State weakens the power of that State," Comrade Harrington says: "Historically we find the reverse is true. To take but one example—Britain's loss of the American colonies left her in a more powerful position than at any period in her history, and so far as dealing with revolution at home goes the loss would no doubt leave her weak, and these same causes might give her ample means to crush a revolution at home."

To parallel the loss of a revolting colony prior to the Industrial Revolution to a similar happening at the high tide of capitalist imperialism, is to stretch the Marxian method to its limits.

That the loss of the American colonies improved Britain's power is extremely debatable. America was a market for textiles and that market was closed for some considerable time. Dealing with the machine breaking riots in 1779 Hammond says in "The Skilled Laborer": "Trade was depressed in consequence of the war with America, and the new factories and the jennies that turned a number of spindles were looked on as partly responsible for the want of work."

It was the Industrial Revolution which made Britain the most powerful State of the 19th century and not the loss of colonies.

The loss of colonies by revolt at this stage of capitalist development, means a loss of surplus values. State power necessarily develops and decays in proportion to the rise and fall of surplus wealth accruing to the ruling class.

The loss of Ireland, India or Egypt would not only mean the loss of a market, if that did result, but would mean the loss of interest upon investments in the shape of foodstuffs, raw material, etc.

Apart from the fall in revenue, which directly affects State Power, the adverse economic situation created by such a happening tends to imperil the State from within.

I find nothing in any of the terms applicable to the country to which I could object. If the Bolsheviks are Marxists, and we don't dispute it, then they are Marxists with a wider range of knowledge of tactics than most. They have experienced revolution. If we are Marxists our place it with them.

J. KAVANAGH.

## OUR SOCIALISM

Stephen Decatur's lines: "Our country: in her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country right or wrong," have become famous amongst those who proclaim that America's policy, whatever that may be, should in all cases predominate, in any international question of importance.

Likewise the class struggle carried on in Canada, by that class in society which is struggling to liberate itself from wage slavery, namely the working class, has been proclaimed by wise sages to be the private and personal property of the Socialist Party of Canada: The contention being that its position on the class struggle is the only correct one, and the tactics set down by its members, the most revolutionary methods advisable to adopt in this struggle.

Instances of this egotism may be found in most of the articles against affiliation with the Third International, which to date have appeared in the "Western Clarion." Let us for example refer to a letter of Comrade Charles Stewart, in the issue of March 1st: "So let us cease basking in the sunshine of our Russian comrades' victory, and get on with the business of educating the working class to an understanding of Marxian Socialism." The inference in this article is that those who are basking in the sunshine of Russian communism, are hindering the work necessary to pursue from day to day

(Continued on page 5)