

# Tactics—a la Mode

THAT the labor movement is apathetic all recognize, and almost all will agree that the vanguard of the proletariat has been affected thereby. There is movement, however, in the ranks of the class-conscious in the call to action. Whether the activity is merely a back-wash, a change of position of but a few, or a simple forecast that the crest of the apathy has been reached and passed, remains to be seen. Periodically the movement is so stirred to activity and the awakening ones invariably conceive of "new methods" of propaganda.

## Ideas Within.

Within the revolutionary movement there is an idea that Socialism has not made the advance that it might have done. Blame is attributed to the tactics of one section by the other, and is sometimes very strongly expressed. Remarkable it is considering that with all the efforts combined, with all their different tactics, the great mass are still untouched except by a few stray ideas which have become commonplace. This is the substantial gain. Some censure the working class for its submissiveness, and the logical implication is that the mass is class-conscious but had reclined to ways of ease. Others think the educational process too slow and tedious and if approached upon the subject would exclaim: "Why, if we wait until the working-class is 'educated,' they will never be emancipated." Hence the conception prevails that somehow—in some way—the revolution is coming, and when it comes—presto! Capitalism will be abolished. The revolution is therefore sometimes spoken of as though it was something existing somewhere outside of human society, instead of being a struggle for power between two diametrically opposed interests.

## A Struggle for Power.

It is frequently suggested that a revolution can occur without even the workers being "ready" for it. Get them to act in their own immediate interests and then direct the issue into a struggle for power and control. The word direct and also the direction means much in the way of elementary spade work yet to be performed by the Socialist movement, and this point is sometimes overlooked. The Socialist movement is often condemned for not having gained the support of the worker, which is evidently without the full realization of the difficulties of our task.

## The Task.

There is no short route to revolutionary changes in human society. Revolutions are born of conditions of which the revolutionary movement is but an expression, and the movement in return is impelled by the conditions to the spread of ideas. The great rank and file of the working class are not yet class conscious and do not realize the need for change. They have been trained in capitalistic ideology, which permeates the whole of the existing educational institutions. From infancy members of our class are "educated" in their masters' interests, because these institutions reflect the interests of the class predominant. The workers therefore are, in a measure, anti-Socialists. Our task is to assist them to understand that the only way out of the stress and uncertainty of their existence lies in the abolition of the present method of exploitation. Deeply-rooted are the traditions of the past in the "education" received. Our task is to help them to see the need for change, not in reforms which do not reform, but in the establishment of a new social order. Conditions combined with an extensive efficient and systematic educational effort will in time bring about that realization.

There is not only impatience expressed in the various notions, but also the idea that there is a short

route to a revolutionary change in modern society, which have undoubtedly been engendered on the fact of the Russian revolution. The fact is that capitalism and its institutions were not deep-rooted in Russia, the mass was less learned in the ways of capitalistic ideology than the workers in more highly industrialized countries, and therefore they had less to "unlearn." Out of the soil of extreme conditions, ideas of change proved fertile.

In highly developed capitalist countries the ideology of capitalism is more strongly entrenched and acts as a retard to change. But the unlearning process is going on, due to the conditions, which includes the revolutionary movement.

If revolutions were born out of conditions in the past, then does it not equally apply to the present age of mechanical and chemical warfare of the air, sea and land. An "intelligent minority" can do nothing when the mass is not "with them." Our task therefore is to convince the mass, and when we understand the intensity of struggle in the birth of a new social order we also realize the task before us.

## Parties.

If we may be permitted to parody Marx in his opening lines in the first volume of "Capital," we would say the movement in those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails presents itself as a vast accumulation of policies, its unit being unit—y. If by the word movement we include all expressions of radical thought within the labor movement (calling themselves Socialists) the movement then is divided into many factions. Reformists and Revolutionary, Parliamentarians, Evolutionists and Revolutionists, Industrial Actionists and Political Industrialists and their variations, and now there has bloomed into being another faction namely Reformist-Revolutionists in the form of the Workers Party. The Workers Party of Canada is expressly out to "take part in the struggles of the workers," to "lead" them in all activities. We are not told in what way, however, the advocacy of a closed shop, contending against wage reductions, etc., etc., is going to lead the workers to Communism. Let's be "liberal" minded and allow that its party's speakers will dwell more upon Socialism or Communism than upon any immediate demand. Great as this concession is, how to teach revolutionary Socialism without sometimes creating an echo. It is a problem that even the W. P. of C. cannot solve. In effect, the various reform parties' platforms differ only in form of statement, with their advocacy of a living wage, collective bargainings, etc. This is the evolutionary method of reforming capitalism to finally bring about Socialism. The Workers' Party of Canada, however, disclaims reforms and merely uses them as the "means of struggle." We are apt to ask a pertinent question, i.e., when is a reform not a reform. Is it when it is advocated with revolutionary intentions and by the W. P. of C? Respecting the point of leadership, the revolutionary movement knows that the outstanding feature of it is its reactionary tendencies to retain both office and popularity. It not only is the embodiment of the great man idea in a "great party" but it suggests that it can "lead" the workers to Communism in spite of the antipathy prevailing.

In examining the "tactics" of the various parties within the revolutionary movement, one can draw some very general conclusions. Obviously the movement has been and is much concerned in the question of how the workers are going to gain their emancipation. Is it by the industrial, political or mass route, the futility or the efficiency of political and industrial action, the power of the industrial arm to enforce political gains, the different interpretations to the terms political and mass action, etc. etc? These questions have all been important subject matter for discussion, and are undoubtedly in-

teresting, but the most vital problem to be faced by the movement is in devising the most efficient means of making inroads into the minds of the workers.

(2) Each conclusion forms part of the educational teaching of each party.

(3) Being composed of workers, all disseminate ideas in much the same way, i.e., among their fellows on the job, in local or mass meetings, and in the distribution of literature.

(4) Each are subjected and limited to the same economic conditions. We are all a part of that mass by economic necessity, and therefore are in its struggles. One can expect an association of revolutionary intellectuals who are bourgeois in social standing to "resolve" to take part in the struggles of the workers, but for us of the revolutionary section of the proletariat, we can not escape. We are of the mass.

## The Means.

While there are some essential differences in the "tactics" of the various parties, still, much controversy is philological in character, to which vague notions of "short routes" to emancipation considerably adds to the complexity. Apart from the "new methods," which, upon analysis, are found to be very old, but clothed in different phraseology, the most important problem for the movement is how to increase our activities. We need more leaflets, pamphlets, papers, magazines, periodicals and many printing plants. The movement requires more speakers, writers and teachers, debaters and propagandists, and the more efficient means of producing them in the form of classes and some Marxian colleges. Obviously the business of a Socialist organization is the making of Socialists and arousing class-consciousness in the workers. Comrades and fellow-workers—unwilling members of a struggling slave class—the means consists of organizing our educational activities and in increasing them, of intensifying the avenues of propaganda. But there are our financial limitations to consider and the apathy, vague notions, controversy and word splitting—and the need for clarity.

A. J. BEENY.

## HERE AND NOW.

Our programme of immediate demands, here and now, is a programme of action for "Clarion" suos. If it resolves itself into mass action so much the better.

We've abandoned the bright idea of pointing to ourselves with pride as very useful people—Kirk has undertaken to catalogue our virtues and our job is to say amen to his prayers.

The "Clarion," let it be noted, is unable to persuade any printer to give it credit, and its funds cannot be said to be low—it just simply hasn't got any. If we are to survive we must have more subs. If we don't get them we'll go under and become a monthly.

What's the answer?

Following, \$1 each: M. Nelson, G. White, J. MacKenzie, J. Woods, J. Allan, J. Pollock, F. H. Leavers, C. McNab, A. W. Love, O. Romstad, Wm. Pasch, E. P. Solomon, \$2; W. Hoare, \$6; H. W. Speed, \$3; Jim Cartwright, \$3; Wm. Erwin, \$7; Wm. Seyer, \$2; Alex. Shepherd, \$2; Martin Ophus, \$2; A. S. Wells, \$3; J. Bone, \$1.

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