

The S. L. P. in Action

SINCE the development of the Left Wing movement, the Socialist Labor Party (that is, the pitiful remnants of a once virile organization) has, through its official organ, carried on a campaign of gutter abuse and misrepresentation of American Communism. Now this lying, slanderous, provocative campaign against the Left Wing is being carried on against the Communist Party. This campaign would not matter much if it were against the Communist Party as a party; but it is a campaign against Communist principles and tactics, and it is, moreover, a campaign directly instigating Capitalism against the Communist movement.

Capitalism stigmatizes mass action as meaning riots and mob violence—the S. L. P. repeats that mass action means riots and mob violence.

Capitalism stigmatizes the Communist Party as representing Anarchy—the S. L. P. repeats that the Communist Party represents Anarchy.

This S. L. P. campaign of provocation is contemptible. It is treason to Socialism.

We shall not discuss the fact here that the S. L. P. has learnt nothing concerning tactics during the two years of the proletarian revolution in action; it is the privilege of men and women to close their minds to new ideas, and to make moss-backs of themselves. All we shall say concerning this is that an organization that scorns the lessons of the proletarian revolution, that in fact repudiates the tactical fundamentals of the Communist International, is directly counter-revolutionary. But even here we might not quarrel with the S. L. P.; but when the S. L. P. lies vilely about the Communist Party, when it blames Communist "anarchy" for Capitalism arresting and imprisoning agitators—then, in the name of revolutionary honor, we must emphatically protest.

This revolutionary dishonor of the S. L. P. comes to a climax in the November 1 issue of the "Weekly People," the official organ of the Socialist Labor Party. "The People" says editorially:

"The Socialist Party has left a numerous brood, and the name of that brood is anarchy."

This "brood of anarchy" refers to the former Left Wing and to the Communist Party. The fact that fundamental Communist tactics, the tactics of the Communist Party, are a direct denial of Anarchy, does not concern the S. L. P. "The People" continues:

"A house (the Socialist Party) thus divided against itself could produce nothing but continuous disharmony—and the children of disharmony are disorder and anarchy. Thus we witness the S. P. split against itself into left wings and right wings, Communist parties and Communist Labor Parties of innumerable shades, advocating 'mass action,' 'mass strikes,' 'mass struggles,' i. e., physical force, naked or veiled."

Mass action is not anarchy. The S. L. P., the petty bourgeois officials of which claim a monopoly of revolutionary knowledge, should know of the controversy between Anton Pannekoek and Karl Kautsky, in which Kautsky claimed that mass action and mass strikes represented slum-proletarianism and anarchy, and Pannekoek's brilliant answers to Kautsky's stupid misconceptions. But the S. L. P. repeats Kautsky's stupid characterization of mass action.

Anarchy and physical force are not one and the same thing. Physical force is a phase

of revolution under certain conditions: as a mass revolutionary factor, physical force is not an affirmation but a denial of Anarchy. Was Marx an Anarchist when he said that "force is itself an economic power" and that "force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with the new?" The Communist International indicates the function of force in the final revolutionary struggle; according to the S. L. P., the Communist International must, therefore, be an aggregation of Anarchists. And the S. L. P. denies that it repudiates the Communist International!

Nor does the S. L. P. realize that in pre-revolutionary periods the supreme form of mass action is the political strike, and the political strike does not involve the use of physical force—that where physical force may develop out of a political strike it is an expression of capitalist repression and terrorism.

Thus far, "The People" editorial is simply stupid, if viciously stupid; but it proceeds further and steep itself in dishonor when it says:

"Anarchy below produces anarchy above, as well as vice versa. Let not the Socialist Party complain of raids, attacks by 'American Cossacks,' of long jail sentences for its 'martyrs.' It has called this down upon its own head. It has also called it down over the head of the legitimate Labor and Socialist movement of the country." (Our italics.)

It is almost inconceivable that an organization styling itself Socialist and revolutionary should use such language.

The implication of the S. L. P. is that, not Capitalism, but the Socialist Party and particularly the Communists are responsible for the government terror against our movement. Repression is the nature of the beasts of Capitalism; but it seems the S. L. P. does not know that, and blames our imprisoned comrades for being imprisoned!

Then the monstrous complacency of pitying the "legitimate" Socialist movement—pity the poor, cowardly, miserable, "legitimate" S. L. P. that must suffer because of the "anarchy" of the Communists!

The S. L. P. officials are a pretty bourgeois aggregation of mongers of phrases. During the war, the S. L. P. played a cowardly role: we remember the editorial plea of the "Weekly People," at the time the second Espionage act was passed, concerning the S. L. P. being lawful and believing in lawful agitation, but that under the Act even the S. L. P. could not carry on its work, and warning the S. L. P. members against the "radical" Socialists of the Socialist Party!

Nor shall we forget that copies of the "Weekly People" were used during the I. W. W. trial in Chicago by the Government to prove that the I. W. W. advocated anarchy, and was repudiated even by Socialists!

Nor shall we forget that the "Industrial Union News," organ of the S. L. P. organization, the W. I. I. U., when the Bolshevik call for a congress to organize the Communist International was printed in "The Revolutionary Age," branded the call as "having all the ear-marks of the work of agent provocateurs."

It is serious, this campaign of malicious provocation. It is serious, this work of denunciation against Communism by an organization that claims to recognize the Communist International.

Let the virile, revolutionary members of the S. L. P. repudiate this monstrosity.

For the officials of the S. L. P. have neither revolutionary integrity nor revolutionary honor.

Petrograd

THE military campaign against Petrograd has collapsed. General Yudenitch has been driven back, almost routed, and the Red City is out of danger, while the Communist Army of Revolutionary Russia is carrying on a successful joint offensive against Yudenitch and Denikin.

Petrograd is not a vital military centre. The capture of Petrograd by Yudenitch would not materially alter the military situation in Russia, it would be a Pyrrhic victory. Why, then, the glee with which the false reports of the capture of Petrograd were received by the capitalist press? Because Red Petrograd represents the soul of the Russian Communist Revolution, it is a symbol of the Revolution.

Petrograd was the scene of the decisive events of the first Revolution, and the scene of decisive events of the Bolshevik revolution. In the imagination of the Russian people and of the world, Petrograd has become identified with the Revolution.

As the symbol of the Revolution, Petrograd represents an important prize. The attack by Yudenitch upon Petrograd, accordingly, was an attack upon the Idea of the Revolution. The comrades of Petrograd were not simply defending a city, they were defending the Idea of revolution; as this Idea is international, the attack upon Petrograd was an attack upon the developing world Revolution, and the intrepid and successful defense by our Petrograd comrades a defense of the World Revolution.

The decisive aspect in the war against Communist Russia is that it is not so much a war against the Revolution in Russia, as a war against potential revolution in all the developed nations of the world.

The Allies, it is true, are defending immediate interests in Russia—their blood-loans to the Czar, money which was used to murder the Russian people, but which the Allies insist the Russian people repay. They are defending, moreover, potential profits which they may secure by exploiting Russia's natural resources under a capitalist government—for, should the Soviet Government be overthrown, Russia would be dismembered and become an economic and financial vassal of the Allies.

But the Allies might waive these immediate interests, since the war against Russia is unpopular among their masses. But the general interests of Capitalism demand war against Russia because the successful working of a Communist Republic in Russia would inspire the workers of the World to establish similar Communist Republics—and that would mean the end of Capitalism.

Communist Russia is a threat to international Capitalism. Communist Russia is a menace to the stability of the imperialistic peace of violence and plunder imposed by the Peace Conference upon the world.

The existence of Soviet Russia is an assurance of the world Revolution. As long as Soviet Russia endures, the international proletariat must necessarily draw inspiration from that fact and that symbol. Soviet Russia is a living proof that the proletariat can not only conquer power, but can actually rule and reconstruct society, that Communism works. Soviet Russia is the inspiration—it is the heart and brain of the coming revolution of the international proletariat.

The successful defence of Petrograd is a victory for Russia; but, more, it is a victory for the world revolution that is developing and must come.