

THE COMMUNIST

ALL POWER TO THE WORKERS!

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA

Vol. II., No. 6

JUNE 1, 1920

PRICE 5 CENTS

Problems of The Third International

(RAMSEY MACDONALD ON THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL)

By N. LENIN

Number 543 of the French Social-patriotic paper, "L'Humanité", of April 14, 1919, contains an editorial article from the pen of the well-known leader of the British so-called "Independent Labor Party" (but which in fact has always been an opportunistic party depending upon the bourgeoisie)—Ramsey MacDonald. This article is so typical of the position of those elements characterized as the "centre" and branded as such by the First Congress of the Communist International in Moscow, that we reproduce it in full, together with the editorial introduction of "L'Humanité."

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

By Ramsey MacDonald

Before the war, our friend Ramsey MacDonald was a popular leader of the Labor Party in the House of Commons. As a convinced Socialist and man of principle he deemed it his duty to condemn the war as imperialistic, contrary to those who greeted it as a righteous war. Therefore, after August 4th, he retired from the role of leader of the Labor Party, and, together with his comrades from the Independent Labor Party, together with Keir Hardie, whom we all venerated, and openly declared for war against war.

This required no little degree of heroism from day to day.

MacDonald, by his own example showed that courage, quelling Jaurès—"consists in not obeying the law of Triumphant Lie and not to act as the echo for the applause of fools and hisses of fanatics."

At the elections "by command" at the end of November MacDonald was defeated by Lloyd George. This need not disturb us,—MacDonald will get his revenge, and that, in the very near future. (Editors of "L'Humanité.")

The appearance of separatist tendencies in the national and international policies of Socialism was a misfortune for the whole Socialist movement.

There is nothing wrong, of course, with the fact that shades of opinions and differences in methods exists within Socialism. Our Socialism lies as yet totally in the experimental stage.

Its fundamental principles are established, but the method of their best application, the policies which will bring the triumph of the revolution, the organization of the Socialist State,—all these are problems which require discussion and upon which the last word has not yet been said. Only intensive study of all these problems will lead us to the higher truths.

Extremes conflict with each other, and this conflict may assist in the strengthening of Socialist ideas, but the evil begins when everyone considers his opponent as a traitor, as a believer who has been excommunicated and in whose face the gates of the party's heaven should be closed.

When Socialists are permeated by the spirit of dogmatism, as in the early days of Christianity instigated civil war in the name of God and for the destruction of the Devil,—the bourgeoisie can sleep peacefully, because the cycle of its rule has not yet been completed, whatever big local and international successes reached by Socialism to the contrary notwithstanding.

Unfortunately, our movement at the present moment is faced with a new obstacle in its path. In Moscow has been established a new International.

Personally, this fact grieves me very deeply,—for the Socialist-International at the present time is broad enough to admit of all shades of Social-

* Literally, they were called by soldiers who were ordered to vote for the government's candidate.

ist thought,—and in spite of all theoretical and practical disagreements created in it by Bolshevism, I don't see any reason why its Left Wing should have severed itself from the Centre and formed an independent group.

First of all it should be remembered that we are living as yet in the period of the birth of the revolution. The governmental forms which arose out of political and social devastation created by the war have not yet passed the test, and cannot be considered as finally established.

New brooms sweep wonderfully clean in the beginning, but how they will sweep in the end—there can be no assurance beforehand.

AGENDA FOR THE SECOND CONVENTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA

- I. Reports:
 - a) C. E. C. and National Secretary.
 - b) International Relations Committee.
 - c) Editorial Committee.
 - d) Defense Committee.
- II. Current Fundamental Problems.
 - a) Present world situation.
 - b) Present situation in the United States.
 - c) Soviet Russia.
 - d) Communist International and Party International Relations.
 - e) Our attitude towards Parliamentarism.
 - f) Mass Action.
 - g) Industrial Unionism and Syndicalism.
 - h) Our Attitude towards Economic, Educational and other Legal Workers' Organizations.
 - i) Workers' Councils Before, During and After the Revolution.
- III. Revision of the Program and Manifesto.
- IV. Organization Problems.
 - a) Communist Party Centralization and Discipline.
 - b) Underground Organization and its forms.
 - c) Communist Party units and C. P. Shop Committees.
 - d) Functions of Language Federations in the Communist movement of America.
 - e) Propaganda, Agitation and Other Forms of Communist Education.
 - 1) General Propaganda and Agitation.
 - 2) Classes for Propagandists and Other Communist Study Classes.
 - f) Party Press and Literature.
 - 1) Policy.
 - 2) Literary.
 - 3) Technical.
 - g) Communist Unity vs. "Centrist Unity."
 - h) Defense and Relief Work.
- V. Revision of Constitution.
- VI. Resolutions.
- VII. Election of Party Officials.

Russia is not Hungary, Hungary is not France and France is not England and therefore the one who introduces a split into the International taking as a guide the experience of only one nation, demonstrates a criminal narrow-mindedness.

What is the real worth of the experiences of Russia? Who can answer? The Allied Governments are afraid to give us the opportunity for procuring full information. But there are two things which we know.

First of all we know that the revolution was accomplished by the present Russian Government without any preconceived plan. It developed in connection with the trend of events. At the beginning of his fight with Kerensky, Lenin demanded the calling of the Constituent Assembly. Events brought him to the dismissal of this Assembly. When the Socialist Revolution flared up in Russia, nobody suspected that the Soviets would play such an important part in the Government as they did.

Later, Lenin, quite rightly, counseled not to slavishly imitate Russia, but to let the Hungarian Revolution develop freely, according to its own spirit.

The development and variation of those experiences which we are witnessing are by no

means sufficient to warrant a split within the International.

All Socialist Governments need the assistance and advice of the International. The International should follow their experiments with an attentive and critical eye.

I have just heard from a friend who recently saw Lenin, that nobody subjects the Soviet Government to freer criticism than Lenin himself.

If post-war disorders and revolutions do not justify a split, then is it perhaps that this split finds its justification in the position taken by some Socialist factions during the war? I confess frankly, that here may be found a sounder reason. But even assuming that there is some pretext for splitting the International, then, at any rate, the question at the Moscow Conference was handled improperly.

I am one of those who believe that debates at the Berne Conference on the question of responsibility for the war, were merely a concession to the public opinion of non-Socialist elements.

Not only was it impossible at the Berne Conference to pass a decision on that question which would have some historical value (though it might have some political value), but the question itself was not handled in the proper way.

Condemnation of the German Majority Socialists (condemnation which was fully deserved and to which I fully subscribe), could not be an expression of the causes of the war.

The Berne debates were not accompanied by the frank consideration of the position taken by other Socialists towards the war.

Those debates did not lay down any formula of conduct binding for the Socialists during war. All that has been said by the International up to that time consisted of, that when war takes on the character of national defense, the Socialists should co-operate with other parties.

Under such conditions whom can we condemn? Some of us did not know that those decisions of the International had no real value and could not be applied as a practical guide.

We knew that the war should have ended in the victory of Imperialism and, being neither pacifist or anti-pacifist, in the ordinary meaning of the world, we adopted the policy, which, in our opinion, was the only one compatible with Internationalism. But the International never prescribed such a line of conduct to us.

This is the reason why at the moment the war began the International broke down. It lost its authority and didn't issue a single declaration, on the basis of which we would now have the right to condemn those, who were honestly carrying out the resolutions of the International Congresses.

In view of this it is necessary at present to insist upon the following point of view: Instead of splitting on account of differences about the events of the past, let us build a real active International which will help the Socialist movement during the period of revolution and construction which we may have entered.

It is necessary to restate our Socialist principles, if we cannot come to an agreement on the question of freedom and democracy, if our opinion on conditions under which the proletariat can take power into his own hands will be diametrically in opposition, if finally, it will be proved that the war has poisoned with the poison of Imperialism certain sections of the International,—then the split is possible.

But I don't believe such a misfortune will occur.

(Continued on page 7.)