

Why The Swedish Party Takes Part in Elections.

A CRITICISM OF THE ANTI-PARLIAMENTARIANS.

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(We reprint this article from the British "Communist" by Comrade Z. Hoglund of Sweden, as another contribution to the question of parliamentarism from one who is himself a Communist member of the Swedish Parliament. The whole question of parliamentarism, though a subordinate question in general in the tactics of the Third International, and more or less academic at present insofar as Communist participation in parliamentarism in this country is concerned, due to the outlawing of our party—has still a more important side to it, namely: the effect of understanding this question in its relation to a dialectical understanding of the whole field of Communist tactics. The revolutionist who understands the question of parliamentarism, and its revolutionary use by the Communists will be better able to grasp the position of the Third International in its relation to unionism. Read Comrade Lenin's thesis "Shall Revolutionists participate in Reactionary Trade Unions elsewhere in this issue".)

Particularly is it important to understand these two questions as the I. W. W. have to a great extent corrupted the minds of the class-conscious workers by their dogmatic attitude on both of these questions.)

The Social-Democratic Left Party is a revolutionary Party declaring for Proletarian Dictatorship and the Soviet system.

Why does it participate in the elections to Parliament? Is asked by many who consider this standpoint illogical. Taking a bare surface point of view, it may seem illogical.

But it all depends on what is meant by taking part in elections for Parliament and also by what ways and means we "participate" in the work of Parliament. The difference between us and the Right Socialists is this. We do not, as do the Right Socialists, believe in the possibility of Socialism being established by Parliamentary methods, that is, at your leisure, by elections to gain a majority in Parliament and thereafter when we have gained the half plus the deciding vote, expropriate the expropriators. We know that victory is not a mathematical problem. Not so many votes in Parliament for and so many against, but a hard class struggle in which the ruling class the very day it no longer commands a Parliamentary majority, will put in motion all means to preserve its power and privileges.

The worn weapons of the bourgeois democracy will not avail, will be useless in the last great struggle between capitalism and the proletariat. The decision must be through the clean-cutting sword of the proletarian dictatorship, and in the Soviet system—the new form of State constitution—the working-class find its democratic expression?

When we, nevertheless, in spite of this take part in elections it is not because we wish to raise among the masses false hopes of grand reforms carried by parliamentary means or the "peaceful introduction of Socialism" of which the Right Socialists speak.

On the contrary, we will do all we can to root out such illusions in the working class. But in a revolutionary situation, when the working classes have taken the power of the State into their own hands is it time to discard Parliament in favor of the new representative

body in which the proletarian dictatorship finds its expression. This is the viewpoint of the Third International.

It criticises Parliamentarism but is not anti-Parliamentarian.

The Bolsheviks, whom nobody can accuse of Liberalism, had representatives in the Duma before the Revolution and took part in the elections of State authorities after the Revolution till the moment was ripe for another tactic.

The same position was taken up by the Spartacists in Germany. At their first congress, under the intoxication of the Revolution, an anti-Parliamentarian section gained a victory over Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. It has been proved that among those extra-radical anti-Parliamentarians were several hired agents-provocateurs. The Italian Socialists, who, as is well known, are among the most trusted elements in the Third International, take part in parliamentary activities, as do the Bulgarian Communists, the Norwegian Socialists, etc.

Nothing is more convenient than to abstain from elections, nothing is cheaper than, as our Socialist League of the Young is now doing, to declare an election boycott. To abstain from taking part in elections does not mean the clarifying of the class struggle but the evasion of the issues. The working class is not strengthened but rather weakened by abstaining. The Revolution is not furthered but hindered.

"But Parliament will corrupt the representatives sent there by the workers. They enter as Radical Socialists but leave as respectable moderate reformers". So say the syndicalists and anarchists.

A truth with modifications. That many labor leaders have been corrupted nobody will deny. But it is not necessarily a logical consequence of parliamentary work. Were those Bolshevik members of the Duma the Tsar sent to Siberia corrupted? Was Karl Liebknecht corrupted? Does anyone believe Clara Zetkin and Paul Levy are likely to be corrupted in the German Reichstag, or Serrati in Italy? Did Fredrick Strom get corrupted in the first Chamber?

Those representatives of the workers who have a mental or economic tendency to be corrupted, whether by reason of character or circumstances, or both, will do so whether sitting in Parliament or not. And is not corruption, seeking of personal interests and general slackening more common among Trade Union and Syndicalist leaders than among political leaders?

The reason for this sad state of affairs is not to be found in political activity, but in personal character. Let the Revolutionary workers not be misled or sidetracked by the Anarchist phrasemongers. The only people who stand to gain by following such advice are the Social patriots, who certainly will not neglect to point the moral if the Left Socialists (Communists) should show a diminished strength by reason of such a boycott of election propaganda. The number of votes cast for us will be a measure of our strength and our enemies will look at it in the same light. Let us therefore strike a blow that will prove to them that the ideas of Revolutionary Socialism have taken root and are spreading among Sweden's Proletariat.

Resolution Adopted by the Jewish Branches of the United Communist Party.

To the Membership of the U. C. P.

Dear Comrades:

The disorganizing policies and actions of the C. E. C. of the U. C. P. toward the foreign-language groups have created a condition of affairs which leaves us but two courses open to pursue: one is to completely liquidate all our activities among the Jewish workers of America, the other is to leave the ranks of the U. C. P. and join the C. P. We have chosen the second course, that is, to join the Communist Party of America.

Here are but a few facts from our experiences with the stupid and arrogant leadership of the U. C. P.

(1) We brought into the party a legal weekly magazine which had already exercised a notice-

(2) The sub-district Committee of New York has strictly forbidden the Jewish propaganda committee of the same district to directly communicate and deal with the Jewish branches under its jurisdiction.

(4) All our communications to the C. E. C. demanding publication of propaganda and agitation literature in the Jewish language were left unanswered.

(5) Since the inception of the U. C. P. the C. E. C. has been resisting and putting down every effort of the foreign-language groups to form National Committees for propaganda in their respective languages. To prevent the formation of National propaganda committees the C. E. C. has been threatening expulsion to every member daring to raise his voice in favor of such committees. The C. E. C. has prevented any and all discussions in the party press bearing on the subject. And when the National Conference of the Russian Groups elected a National Propaganda Committee, the C. E. C. ordered the committee to immediately disband under threat of expulsion.

Furthermore, the C. E. C. and its organizers went as far as to ARTIFICIALLY CREATE AND ENCOURAGE ALL KINDS OF DISCORD AMONG THE DISTRICT COMMITTEES OF THE LANGUAGE GROUPS. In the Russian group they pitted one against the other—the district committees of Chicago, Philadelphia and New York. In the Jewish group they played the same game with the District committees of New York and Philadelphia, this all having been done for the single purpose of preventing the establishment of unity and harmonious relations between the Jewish comrades of the U. C. P.

(6) When the Jewish comrades of New York and Philadelphia have finally succeeded in coming to an agreement with regard to the Jewish press and propaganda, THE C. E. C. REFUSED TO RATIFY THIS AGREEMENT, ordering a "clean-up" instead of the Jewish language groups of all elements who dared to demand a National Propaganda Committee. No charges were preferred. No trials held. They simply decided to expel the whole Jewish organization of New York, and to begin the organization anew. The very same operation, somewhat modified in form, has been started in Philadelphia.

Comrades of the U. C. P.!

We split away from the U. C. P. and joined the C. P. with the best intentions. We were willing to co-operate in the building up of a party, combining the revolutionary elements of both the foreign-language speaking workers and the American workers. We accepted the position of the Third International which expressly demands autonomy for the language federations in the conduct of their propaganda and organization. This means nothing else but National Propaganda Committees of the sort that exist in the Communist Party of Russia for the Jewish sections. For this reason we disagree from the start with the constitution of the U. C. P. which did not provide for committees of this kind. But we believed that the C. E. C., upon coming actually in touch with the living needs of the organization would convince itself that without national propaganda committees for the language groups no Communist Party in America will be possible. As a matter of fact, even previous to our joining to the U. C. P., a representative of the C. E. C. assured us at the convention of the Jewish Federation of the U. C. P. that the matter of National Committees was then not yet definitely settled, and that the C. E. C. stood ready to make all necessary changes in the organization to insure the smooth course of the Communist work among the foreign-language speaking workers.

But it turned out quite differently. The C. E. C. of the U. C. P. has learnt nothing. It neglected entirely the most important field of its activities—the Americanized and English-speaking workers. It created not a single English-speaking paper worth the name. It has not succeeded in building up a single Communist group worth mentioning in the large English trade-unions. But it succeeded in sabotaging and paralyzing the useful work of the foreign-language groups. The C. E. C. has destroyed the Russian organization, it ruined the Jewish organization and completely paralyzed the activities of other language groups that joined the U. C. P. In other words, its duties towards the English-speaking movement the C. E. C. has been completely neglected, and its foreign-language movement it has ruined. Instead of a Communist Party the C. E. C. of the U. C. P. has created an apparatus for collecting contributions and selling dues-stamps.

We have committed a serious error by joining the U. C. P., and to rectify it we decided to go back to the Communist Party of America.

able influence upon the class-conscious Jewish workers of America, but the C. E. C., under various excuses, stopped the publication of this magazine, and gave us instead a foolish and ridiculous bi-weekly sheet, which our comrades were ashamed to sell and distribute among the Jewish workers. The C. E. C., presumably for financial considerations, has also ceased to publish our Jewish underground paper.

(2) After we have succeeded at the cost of much time and energy, to build up a number of Jewish Communist groups in the trade-unions of New York, the sub-district committee of the City, with the consent of the C. E. C., stopped all our further activities in the industrial field, cutting us off from all possible communication with the Jewish workers in the trade-union movement.