
The Two Internationals.

By J. R. Campbell

From now until the end of the Easter Conferences the question of the International will be the foremost theme of discussion amongst all active Socialists. It is therefore fitting that a full and comprehensive statement of the position of each of the Internationals should be presented to the rank and file for consideration.

There has been a tendency on the part of the official group of the I.L.P. to misrepresent the position of the Third International, but in this volume are all the authentic documents relating to the formation of that body, which will furnish an effective antidote to efforts of that kind.

The book traces the growing division of the Socialist forces throughout the war, beginning with the setting up of the Zimmerwald Commission, and leading up to the formation of the Third

International. Not that theoretical divisions were not manifest in the Socialist movement before the war, but in practice people of divergent views continued to work together in the electoral activity which was the main form of Socialist activity previous to the war. But the war and later the coming of the Bolshevik revolution cleared the air, and showed the absolutely irreconcilable divergence of opinion between the two wings. The Zimmerwald Conference was merely a gathering of anti-war Socialists, differing from other sections, not so much in their attitude to general Socialist tactics, as in their opposition to the war. But in the subsequent conferences, held at Kienthal, a transition from Pacifist Socialism to Revolutionary Socialism was becoming evident, and with the breakdown of the Stockholm Conference it was decided to make a clean break with the Second International. In the book the manifesto calling the first meeting of the Third International, and also the subsequent manifesto giving detailed arguments in favour of the policy of that body are given in full. Students will have the opportunity of comparing this carefully written and scientifically argued document with the Macdonaldesque pronouncement of the I.L.P., where the failure of Parliamentary democracy is gravely attributed to "the wickedness of Mr Lloyd George," instead of being a phenomenon common to all countries caused by the development of financial Capitalism and expressing itself in the same political corruption everywhere. The Communist theory with regard to the State and Parliamentary democracy is excellently summarised by Mr Dutt. "The theory of the Communists begins with an analysis of the modern state as the machinery of class rule. The typical developed form of this machinery in Capitalist society is held to be political democracy. The ground for this is that political democracy serves to overthrow the last stronghold of pre-Capitalist privilege and allow free play for the forces of Capitalism, while at the same time covering the reality of bourgeois dictatorship with an appearance of popular consent which is rendered unreal by the Capitalist control of the social structure. Political democracy cannot affect the reality of social exploitation, because (a) whatever party comes to power must keep the machinery going—'the King's Government must be carried on. (b) No party that is fundamentally revolutionary can come to power in face of the Capitalist control of all the vehicles of political life and thought; the revolutionary Socialist must either remain in a permanent minority or else dilute his programme and become 'practical' in order to obtain power."

"The main strength of this argument lies in its appeal to the familiar facts of the present regime and its insistence that the existing abuse of the Parliamentary system is not accidental—'the wickedness of Mr Lloyd George'—but inherent. The case of the Communist is strengthened by his claim. The only suggested remedy of the political democrat is propaganda and education, the main organs of which are admittedly in the hands of the Capitalist class."

The book, by merely bringing into contrast the two rival positions and stating them fairly, will do more to show the crushing strength of the Third International position than a violent ex parte statement would do.

The most valuable part of the book for those who will be attending the I.L.P. Conference is the statement of the point of view of those organisations who desire a left wing conference of the advanced groups generally referred to as the Fourth International. The Second International stinks in the nostrils of all sections of the Socialist movement in this country. No one dare openly advocate adhesion to that contemptible body. So the Fourth International is being trotted around to attract the attention of those timid spirits who want to appear revolutionary, while shirking the responsibility of going in for a definite revolutionary policy. The impression is being spread abroad that the Fourth International stands for a fairly homogenous policy, embracing the best elements of Third International tactics with those of the wavering centre. It would be a mighty queer mixture if it did, but an examina-

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tion of the data supplied by Mr Dutt will reveal the fact that the policies of the bodies supporting this project are hopelessly irreconcilable. We have, for example, the German Independents, who are supporters of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Soviet system, and who yet want to convene a left wing conference on the question of the International. Their decision at the last conference was to invite various left wing parties to form a bloc with a view to joining the Third International, the German Independents wanting to get a sufficient body of opinion inside the Third International to balance the "dictatorship of Moscow." At the other end of the scale is the British I.L.P., who ask the Swiss Party to convene a conference with a view to helping to bring into existence one all inclusive International, allowing the fullest autonomy and freedom of action and liberty of tactics to each party connected with it.

It is obvious that the new International that the I.L.P. Executive is hankering after is really the old Second International under a new name. It is to be an "all inclusive International," Noske and Lenin, Albert Thomas and Loriot, Troelstra and Pannenkoek, Arthur Henderson and Wm. Paul. As an organisation it will make the Tower of Babel look like an example of peace and harmony in comparison, but it will be worse than useless as a means of assisting the workers in their struggle with Imperialism. The national parties are to drift along in the way that has been trodden in the past—to compromise as they please, to prostitute Socialism as they please—and this is actually offered as an alternative to the policy of the Third International in one of the most revolutionary periods of the world's history. The I.L.P. are being invited by their Executive to support the old firm under a new name. If they do so they commit suicide as a fighting Socialist party and become a tool of the reaction.

Dutt's book will, we hope, be available before Easter. In the meantime place your orders, and be in time before the rush starts.

"The Two Internationals," by R. Palme Dutt.
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