

Class Principles and Graft.

Slackness or laxness in principles—which includes principles lax in themselves and laxness in adhering to principles—has been the characteristic of the parties of the Second International. Its principles indeed were once correct but were reduced to mere formula, and when it came to the supreme test of 1914 they were thrown to the winds in favour of Chauvinism and Imperialism; or, in other words, the working-class was sacrificed to the bourgeois class.

It is not a mere question of "honesty." Ordinary honesty on the part of a clerk or book-keeper, for instance, has no great social value except to the boss concerned. It is usually "the best policy," anyway. Honesty in a good cause is far more valuable; and the only really good cause in the present stage of society is the working-class cause. Conversely, the worst form of dishonesty is dishonesty towards the cause of the working-class.

Laxness in political principle carries with it laxness in business morality. Sale of principles and corruption on public bodies, seat-hunting and boodle-hunting, go hand in hand. The S.A. Labour Party reached a comparatively high level of class consciousness, and was at the same time comparatively free from graft, up to the outbreak of war in 1914. After that, one after another abandoned class war principles for Jingo Social patriotism—and simultaneously the tale of Labour graft began to be told on all sides. The result of the class betrayal was that many got positions and many got bribes. Labour in place meant place before Labour.

It is no accident that the sale of S.A.L.P. independence for a mess of Cabinet pottage coincides with the Syferfontein scandal. And when we were told

that "the political side" were for Coalition and "the industrialists" against it, the real position was that the MIDDLE CLASS Labourites were for and the WORKING CLASS against—a distinction that explains all the divisions in the Labour movement.

The only principle of a true workers' party is, not J. H. Thomas's "Co-operation of Capitalism and Labour," but a fight between them to a finish—of Capitalism. That should have been the only principle at the Berkeley Rooms Conference. It is the only principle of the Communist Parties of the world. It is a clear-cut principle, and therefore they honestly stick to it and never sell it. While the school of the Second remain silent and inarticulate, ashamed to avow or even unable to define their actual motives, those of the Third will always appeal to this principle above all—the principle of conformity to the interest of the working class.

And that is why, first, NO COMMUNIST PARTY HAS EVER ENTERED INTO A COALITION GOVERNMENT with the bourgeoisie—there is no coalition in Russia, unlike other countries—and, secondly, IN NO COUNTRY IN THE WORLD HAS A BREATH OF SUSPICION OF CORRUPTION EVER BEEN BROUGHT AGAINST A COMMUNIST PARTY.

Not much longer now will the working-class continue to support Parties of the Second International. When they realise that these Parties must by their nature be corrupt—and when they get a few bullets from their Labour leaders into the bargain—they will at last find out with which Party their true interests lie.

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