

PATRIOTISM, NATIONALISM, INTERNATIONALISM, REVOLUTION.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY MATT LYGATE

During the past few months the Workers' Party of Scotland has held a series of meetings in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow at which the question of Scotland's struggle for independence and the form that it should take was discussed in conjunction with the Manifesto of the W.P.S.1

Arising from these discussions, it was decided that the most important questions which had been raised at these meetings should be dealt with in the 'Scottish Vanguard' in order that all interested people could have the opportunity of understanding our policy on these matters.

Q. How can the W.P.S. as an Internationalist Party, support the Nationalist movement in Scotland?

A. "There is one, and only one, kind of internationalism in deed: working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) such a struggle, such, and only such a line in every country without exception." *1

As a Marxist Party we hold that not only can we but we must be patriots. How can anyone claim to be an internationalist without supporting their own national struggle for independence, when one in fact is an extension of the other? When we extend our support of the national struggle in our own country to the support of the national struggles for independence in other countries, then, we are in deed internationalists.

As "the specific content of Patriotism is determined by historical conditions", we must make clear our position of support. *2

There is the 'patriotism' which goes under the slogan of 'our country right or wrong.' Such 'patriotism' is used by Imperialism to mobilise their working class as a force against the interests of the workers and the Governments of other countries. The Australian Govt. under the leadership of Menzies, in their support of the U.S. Imperialists, stated "We follow America, right or wrong!" This form of 'patriotism' has been witnessed many times, and recently here in Scotland with the lauding of the Scottish Regiment and 'Mad Mitch' on their return from Aden (see June issue of 'Scottish Vanguard' p.2.) In the U.S.A. we see, under the guise of patriotism, citizens of that country branded as 'Un-American' because they have the intelligence and the courage to speak out against the Fascist measure being used by their government in their attempt to subject the heroic people of Vietnam to the will of U.S. Imperialism.

This is the 'patriotism' of Hitler, a reactionary patriotism which must be exposed and rejected by the people.

The true progressive patriotism is that which supports the national liberation movements and the struggle against oppression and suppression of one nation by another. Scotland, like other nations, has her heroes who led in the struggle for National Independence like Wallace who said at the Battle of Stirling Bridge, "... We come not to treat, but to Fight and set Scotland free!" This is patriotism. A patriotism which we see more and more to-day being expressed by the new emerging nations opposing U.S. and British Imperialism.

NATIONAL LIBERATION

Q. Why support the movement for Scotland's Independence?

A. Unlike some other 'Marxists' the W.P.S. recognises that Scotland is a Nation with the right to self-determination. The history of the Union is there for all concerned to read. Scotland was brought into the Union against the will of the Scottish people and regiments were sent in to suppress and quell the riots which resulted in this forced union with England (The Glasgow Riots, etc.) Furthermore the people of Scotland have a right to secede from this compulsory Union, especially since the British ruling class immediately violated and continues to violate the Act of Union.

The movement in Scotland for National Liberation is tied up completely with the decline and crisis of world imperialism. History proves that as the crisis of imperialism deepens so more and more the national question must come to the fore. This spontaneous movement in Scotland is revolutionary by nature of the fact that it is aimed at the existing social and political order of things and must be supported by all revolutionary people. *3

We are of the firm belief that the secession of Scotland from the Union can only quicken the process of disintegration of the British Imperialist State. John MacLean recognised this when he stated, "Scottish separation is part of the process of England's imperial disintegration and is a help towards the ultimate triumph of the workers of the world." Historical conditions have created a situation whereby Socialism could be achieved much quicker in Scotland than in England as a result of separation. Radical movements have always been that step ahead in Scotland with England following on at the rear. For many years now the Scottish working class has voted for a return of Labour yet to-day we witness the steady flow of votes from Labour towards the S.N.P. In England on the other hand what votes were for Labour are now swinging at an alarming rate towards support of Tory candidates and although this is not surprising considering what the policy of the Labour Government is, it is interesting to note that while the people in England are still at the stage of Tory-Labour, the people in Scotland have rejected both and are clearly seeking an alternative, and change.

Once having achieved independence it will be for the Scottish working class to overthrow the national bourgeoisie and ruling class and establish Workers Power.

Q. Will the secession of Scotland weaken the British Working Class movement.

A. Those who say that when one nation demands Independence from another it weakens the united working class movement, are themselves Imperialist minded. Unity must be based on principle. No one can demand unity - it must be the conscious will of both sides to unite. A person who 'demands' unity, demands slavery and demands to be the oppressor. Before anything can form a unity it must itself be a separate aspect, and so, before there can be a complete unity of the English and Scottish workers there must be a separate organised effort on both sides. The Scottish Workers with their own Government would be in a better position to assist their class brothers in England.

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When Norway seceded from Sweden, the fraternal class solidarity of the Norwegian and Swedish workers gained from the fact that the Swedish workers recognised the right of the Norwegians to secede. (4)

The task then for English Marxists and other leaders of the English working class is to raise the ideology of the workers towards the support of their class brothers in Scotland in their demand for independence.

"The working class should be the last to make a fetish of the national question, since the development of capitalism does not necessarily awaken all nations to independent life, but to brush aside the mass national movements once they have started and to refuse to support what is progressive in them means, in effect, pandering to nationalistic prejudices, viz., recognising "one's own" as the "model nation." (5)

A VANGUARD MOVEMENT

Q. The W.P.S. claims to be a vanguard movement. Is a vanguard movement necessary?

A. To-day in Scotland there is developing a tremendous movement of the people for self government and the question, long ago answered by Lenin, is spontaneity not enough, is once again raised.

What is spontaneity? It is in essence nothing more nor less than consciousness in its earliest form - when the workers lose faith in the system which oppresses them they begin to sense rather than understand the need for collective resistance. (6) This means that the level of consciousness has developed to economic demands and certain changes, but not to the level of understanding the need to overthrow the system of Capitalism and establish working class power.

"... The role of Vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory." (7) Without a revolutionary theory there can be no successful revolution!

The development and victory of a revolution depend on the existence of a revolutionary party - there must be a revolutionary party able to integrate the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the revolution in its own country - only such a revolutionary party can lead the proletariat and the broad masses of the people in defeating imperialism and its lackeys, winning a thorough victory in the national democratic revolution and winning the socialist revolution. (8)

The ideology existing in any spontaneous movement is none other than the ideology of the ruling class with a developed trade union consciousness and can go no further than economic reforms.

"The communists" (not the CPGB)" are on the one hand practically the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others. (9) There cannot be any 'Spontaneous' scientific leadership of the class struggle, it must be consciously provided. The Workers' Party of Scotland provides realistic leadership and through the 'Scottish Vanguard' is playing a great part in the socialist education of the working class in the need not only to interpret life, but to struggle to change it. The WPS has accepted its role as vanguard fighters in the struggle to establish a Workers' Republic of Scotland.

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'HARDSHIP' & INDEPENDENCE

Q. Will there be hardship after Independence?

A. The question here overlooks the fact that there is hardships to be endured at present, and it is from this to a certain extent that the movement for Home Rule has developed. The system applied at present in Scotland with half a million poverty stricken people, 100,000 unemployed, tremendous housing shortage, and shocking slums resulting in 50,000 emigrants leaving Scotland every year, can be called nothing other than hardship.

"Even with the most peaceful course of events, the present system always and inevitably exacts countless sacrifices from the working class." (10)

The old adage 'nothing gained without sacrifice' is true and the WPS believes that Scotland's independence will not be given but must be fought for. The amount of sacrifice and hardship which will have to be endured by the Scottish people in their struggle can only be gauged by the opposition to it by those in Power in England. One thing is certain however, and that is that those so called leaders who believe that everything will be plain sailing and that if we all vote for independence then we will be 'granted' it, are either living in a fools paradise or they are deliberately deceiving the people and at the first real sign of state opposition they will quietly surrender and betray the cause, (a good example is the C.P. in France and their peaceful transition to socialism policy, the same as the rubbish written in 'The British Road to Socialism' policy of the C.P.G.B.) These people have betrayed the working class and the revolutionary movements and will continue to do so since they have forgotten or fail to recognise the class character of the State as being the apparatus by which one class subordinates another, as being "a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and what is more, of the majority by the minority." (11) Whoever considers a revolution can be made only if everything is plain sailing, only if there is an advance guarantee against sacrifices and failure, is certainly no revolutionary. (12) Make no mistake about it, that separation of Scotland from 'Britains' Imperialist state is a revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things and will meet with the strongest opposition. It is the task of the vanguard movement to prepare the people for the struggle that lies ahead so that as little as possible suffering will be endured by them.

STALIN'S TRIBUTE TO
JOHN MACLEAN.

At a celebration meeting of the BAKU SOVIET on Nov. 6th, 1920, Joseph STALIN, declared that "Whereas at that time three years ago, we had only small groups of Sympathisers in the West, the Groups of Lorient in France, of MacLean in Britain, of Lieberich, who was murdered by the capitalist scoundrels in Germany, now, three years later a grand organisation of the International Revolutionary Movement has sprung up. . . "
