The Social Revolution

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(Concluded.)

Revolutionary Socialist Tactics.

The Social Revolution implies the overthrow of Capitalism; it implies the overthrow of "political government," and the rearing in its stead of the Socialist industrial government of delegates from the productive industries of the land.

The reason for the rise of "political government"—private property and consequent class rule——now unerringly points to its overthrow. Socialist society will know no class antagonisms; consequently, it will have no use for the coercive mechanism and functions of "political government." The ending of class rule implies the end of "political government"—one is inseparable from the other.

But while the Socialist movement aims at the destruction of the political state, this does not necessarily mean that we are to treat the state under capitalism as something that does not concern our revolutionary activities, that we are not to seek its conquest and use it in our behalf. Socialism is essentially an evolutionary manifestation, not a catastrophe projected from the "inner consciousness" of some crack-brained theorist. "The present is the child of the past, but the parent of the future"; each social system intimately connects with and flows from the preceding one. The Socialist movement is organizing and developing within the womb of Capitalism; hence its tactics and methods of warfare are dictated by the methods of warfare of Capitalist society and by the specific forms of power that the Capitalist Class is entrenched in. The citadel of "political government" is a bulwark of Capitalism: its mechanism serves the function of representing the Working Class: and this dictates the setting up of a revolutionary party that shall contest with the foe the possession of the governmental administration of Capitalism. The *immediate reason* for such a move is the effort to gain control of the political state so as to obstruct its mechanism in the war that it will be waging on the revolutionary Socialist movement, and wherever an atom of political power is gained to use it to aid the Working Class; the *ultimate* aim is the destruction of the political state of Capitalism. The political movement of Socialism, accordingly, is *strictly revolutionary;* its goal is *destructive,* not constructive. The agitation of the political movement, utilizing the field of political action where the potentialities for agitation are boundless, must be revolutionary in tone and action: *it consists in preaching and demanding the Revolution, and the endeavor to unify the proletariat on the economic field in the integrally constructed industrial organization that foreshadows the organic structure of the Socialist Republic.*

The structure and function of the political movement of Socialism unfits it to take control of the industrial administration of the land. The basis of representation in the legislative chambers of "political government" is arbitrarily geographic. "Political government," we have seen, came into being at the need of a ruling class for repressive institutions to tyrannize over a ruled class; the thought of production was absolutely absent; and Capitalist government being, not a central administration of the productive forces of the land, but the organized might of the Capitalist Class to curb, to repress, to keep the workers quiet while they are being robbed, its constituencies can have no purpose of directing production; its mechanism is repressive and negatively destructive. This renders the mechanism of "political government," the State, too cumbrous and complicated to assume control of the administrative functions of production.

"Government," using that term to denote the central administrative authority of Society, is not a passing institution, as the vaporings of the Anarchists would make one believe; its functions change, but it remains permanent. We have seen "economic government" existing under Primitive Communism, its work consisting in directing the productive labor of the tribe. With the rise of private property and consequent class rule, "economic government" was supplanted by "political government," the task of which was to maintain order while the ruling class pursued its mission of exploiting the toilers. Government, accordingly, took on a wholly repressive aspect, which the Social Revolution will discard. Socialist society, knowing no classes, will create a change in the nature of the central directing authority that will restore the latter to its pristine nature; its repressive features will disappear and will be superseded by the legitimate function of directing production—"economic government" will be restored to society. The Socialist movement, therefore, cannot preserve the mechanism of "political government;" the Working Class must build its own government. The central administrative authority of the Socialist Republic, the only legitimate, because necessary, function of which being the directing of production, its constituencies must be exclusively industrial. The different industries—the mining, the textile, the transportation, the agricultural, etc., regardless of geographic demarcations—will be the constituent bodies of the new social authority; its representatives will be the men and women actually working in the industry they represent; its legislative work will not be the repression of liberty under the guise of "law and order," but the necessary one which consists in ascertaining the wealth needed by society, the wealth producible, the work required, and the issuance of necessary instructions to the various industries to act accordingly. Such an economic government cannot be legislated into existence; the Social Revolution must carry it within its folds; it must be ready to assume the administrative functions of Socialist society on the day of proletarian victory. This implies the *integral industrial organization—Industrial Unionism.*

Mission of Unionism.

Often is the cry heard that "Unionism is an impotent weapon against Capitalist aggression," that "Capitalist industrial concentration has crippled the power of Unionism," that "Unionism is bound to perish"—in short, that the mission of Unionism has long since been accomplished, and now survives merely because of tenacity born of reverence for a fetishism.

The charges hurled at craft unionism are true. Nevertheless, they are but a part of the truth; and partial truths are the worst of lies. Unionism is no passing institution; a product of capitalist conditions, Unionism is seen to develop in even tempo with the development of the Capitalist mode of production; what is bound to and will pass away is the false form of union organization: craft unionism: false because, though adapted to a particular stage of Capitalism, it is wholly out of place in the later phases of Capitalist development, and to-day survives as a relic of the past, an incubus that restrains the revolutionary activity of the Working Class.

At its inception, craft unionism confined its efforts at organization to the skilled-labor portion of the Working Class, ignoring the unskilled-proletarian element. The union was far from being a weapon of aggression; its primary function was defensive; its aims were (1) to insure its members jobs, to realize which end prohibitive initiation fees were adopted to restrict the union membership, and efforts made to corner jobs in certain shops; and (2) to protect its members from falling to the level of unskilled workers, and this was accomplished by raising wages as high as possible and by opposing[9] the introduction of skilled-labor displacing machinery. In these efforts, craft unionism was partially successful. Capitalist production at that period was still in its infancy; industrial concentration was as yet a thing of the future; neither had improved machinery rendered skilled labor a negligible quantity. Consequently, when a particular craft union went on strike, it had no large industrial combination to cope with, merely individual employers; and, controlling the skilled labor, which was an absolute necessity to production, and withal difficult to substitute with scabs, it was enabled to paralyze production in the particular shop wherein the strike was on, and thereby force concessions from the employer.

Conditions at the present time are wholly different. Production on a small scale has become practically a thing of the past, and has been superseded by such huge industrial combinations as "trusts" and "corporations;" and the Capitalist system of production is now so interdependent as to make the Capitalist Class practically a unit, who, however many may be the struggles waged within its ranks between contending Capitalist factions, always present a united front to the Working Class in times of economic war. The machine process, furthermore, has become so simplified as to almost eliminate the necessity of technical skill on the part of most workers; and so simplified has this process become that children of ten and twelve years of age, as in the cotton mills of the South, are capable of operating machines of high mechanical efficiency. These conditions have crippled the power of craft unionism. When strikes are declared, not only has the particular craft union on strike to cope with the full industrial power of the Capitalist Class, or trustified sections thereof, but it is comparatively easy for the employers to hire strike-breakers to take the place of the striking workers, as, the necessity of technical skill being eliminated, raw recruits from the huge unemployed army can easily take the places of the old men on strike. Hence, the record of union strikes for the last decade or two presents a depressing view of tragic defeats. Craft unionism has been powerless to maintain high wages, and the workers' standard of living has declined.

To the insufficiency of craft organizations to cope with Capitalist industrial concentration, is added the factor of the *organized scabbery of craft unionism,* engendered by its false form of organization.

When Unionism came into being, classes were fluid, in a state of flux and reflux; there was no sharp class struggle, and the organizations of the Working Class were necessarily affected by this. They were based on the "identity of interests between labor and capital;" and this error of thinking themselves equal to their employer, coupled with the insularity and selfishness of view of craft unionism, led the workers into the shambles of the "contract system." Each particular craft looking after its own particular interests only, each signs a contract with the employer, expiring at a certain date; and the wily employer sees to it that his contracts with the unions expire at *different* dates. The employers, aided by the "labor-leaders," foster reverence of contracts in the minds of the workingmen. Accordingly, when a craft has a grievance against the employer, and goes out on strike, the other crafts, shackled by their contracts, remain at work, and thus scab it on their fellow-workers on strike. And so we see one craft scabbing it on another craft in the employ of the identical capitalist-exploiter of both; and to this orchestration of organized scabbery, the Working Class has sustained many and dire defeats. Such cases of union scabbery are more than numerous; one that comes to mind occurring during the great railway strike of 1894, when the council of the A. F. of L. refused to aid the men on strike, and, as Gompers has since boastfully declared, thereby crippled the vigor of the strike. And this organized scabbery is the very flesh and bone of craft unionism.

To destroy these evil results is only possible by Unionism adapting itself to the changed conditions of the times. Capitalist industrial concentration can only be met by similar concentration on the part of the Working Class; and this can be done by adopting the *industrial form of organization*—Industrial Unionism.

Industrial Unionism shatters prohibitive initiation fees, allowing all proletarians to become members; it shatters craft autonomy, and organizes every man and woman working in a particular industry into ONE industrial union—Industrial Union of Steel Workers, Industrial Union of Textile Workers, Industrial Union of Transportation Workers, etc., embracing all individuals working in that particular industry. Accordingly, when a portion of the railroad workers, for instance, have a grievance and go on strike, instead of the others remaining at work scabbing, all the railroad workers will strike, as a unit; and so with other industries. And if one industrial union alone is helpless the other unions will strike to aid their fellow-workers, even to a General Strike. An injury to one is the concern of all; and Industrial Unionism implies *one class union,* the different industrial unions electing representatives to a General Executive Board that will correlate and unify the different unions into ONE Industrial Union of the Working Class. And so organized, the workers can resist Capitalist aggression.

Industrial Unionism organizes on the basis of the Class struggle, to wage an uncrompromising battle with the master class. It has an immediate mission to perform waging the every-day fight with the employing class, improving the conditions of the workers, where possible; but its real mission is ultimate: the overthrow of Capitalism and constituting itself the material structure of Socialist society.

For reasons already stated, the political organization of Socialism cannot take and hold the administrative control of industry; accordingly, two things may happen: either the Capitalist Class will count our revolutionary ballots and seat our candidates, in which case they would retain office just long enough to allow the industrial organization to take possession and set its gear in motion; or, what is more likely, the Capitalists will refuse to recognize a Socialist victory at the polls, in which event, the industriallly organized Working Class will execute the revolutionary act, not by a General Strike, which is not a revolutionary move in that it implies a defensive, not aggressive, posture, but by putting into effect the *GENERAL LOCK-OUT OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS;* that is to say, by the organized workers taking possession of the plants of production, electing their industrial government, and usher in the Socialist Republic. This act would require a high degree of strength and efficiency on the part of the industrial organization; and this can be attained only by using both the political and industrial weapon simultaneously; for if the political organization should become more powerful than the industrial, and achieve a premature victory, a catastrophe would sweep over the land.

Conclusions.

Allow me to sum up the issue implied in the Social Revolution:

Within primitive communal society equality prevailed, but it was the degrading equality implied in common universal poverty. Due to the undeveloped state of the tool of production, the supply of wealth was not sufficient to supply the needs of all human beings; and this fact rendered the life of primitive man one long series of privations—his nose ever held constantly to the grindstone of toil, the yield of his labor was nevertheless so meagre as to keep him always on the ragged edge of poverty. Leisure and material security being absent, the individuality of primitive man was dwarfed, bereft of all opportunity for development.

As soon as, due to the increased productivity of the tool making a leisure class possible, Class Rule came into existence—a class arose that, taking advantage of the new economic conditions, so arranged matters as to make leisure for itself possible. It was this leisure class that created the civilization of ancient times, with its wonderful development of art, literature, and science. Progress would have been hardly imaginable without the existence of a leisure class. But this imposing structure was based on slavery and exploitation of the Working people; the blood and tears of the latter fructified and made possible the existence of ancient and, following progress to our day, modern, civilization. A passage from Antonio Labriola's "Socialism and Philosophy" well epitomizes this fact:

"History is indeed an interminable succession of painful struggles. Labor, which is the distinguishing mark of human life, has been the means of oppressing the vast majority. Labor, which is the prerequisite of all progress, has pressed the sufferings, the privations, the travail, and the ills of the multitude into the service of the comfort of the few. History is like an inferno. It might be presented as a sombre drama, entitled The Tragedy of Labor.

"But this sombre history has produced out of this very condition of things, almost without the conscious knowledge of men, and certainly not through the providence of any one, the means required for the relative perfection, first of very few, then a few, and then of more than a few. And now it seems to be at work for all. The great tragedy was unavoidable. It was not due to any one's aberration or degeneration, not to any one's capricious and sinful straying from the straight path. It was due to an imminent necessity of the mechanism of social life, and to its rythmic process. This mechanism operates on the means of subsistence, which are the product of human labor and co-operation under more or less favorable natural conditions. Nowadays, when the prospect opens up before our eyes of organizing society in such a way as to give to every one the means of self-protection, we see clearly the reasonableness of this view, because the growing productivity of labor supplies all the requirements for a higher culture for all. It is this fact on which scientific Socialism bases its right to existence, instead of trusting in the triumph of universal goodness."

Class Rule at one time was necessary, was unavoidable; and those afflicted with Anarchist vulgarity of thought, who consider Class Rule a result of ignorance, avoidable if the ancient workers had been intelligent, grasp not the laws of social development. Class Rule was an unavoidable and necessary stage in the progress of the race to a fuller civilization. But the conditions necessary for the existence of Class Rule have now passed away. Leisure is now no longer a treasured boon for the few, but a potential possibility for all; the increased productivity of human labor, the result of the large co-operation rendered imperative by the modern machine process; the ampleness of wealth producible with a minimum of labor—these point to ripeness of social conditions for the end of Class Rule. The issue, accordingly, presented by the Social Revolution, is no dream, no mental aberration: it is pivoted on economic reality. The ushering in of the Socialist Republic means the end of class oppression; it means economic freedom and material well-being for the human race, out of which all freedom must necessarily arise; it means the end of the brutal struggle for existence, with all the ills that that implies; it may mean—who knows?—the realization of the ages-old dream of freedom and fraternity, for then the human race, freed from the sordidness bred of private property, will guide its conduct in accord with the maxim, "All for each and each for all," will earnestly set to work, "with light of science" as its guide, studying the laws of nature, moulding the conduct of the individual in harmony with them. Private property in the means of life creates master and slave, debases man physically, mentally, morally; the Socialist Republic will elevate man and make him realize the capabilities of his species. The progress possible in Socialist society is immeasurable in its scope.

All this is to be achieved by waging the class war bitterly to a successful issue—the Social Revolution; by discarding all dreams of a future ideal social system, and concentrating our efforts on the hard task of organizing the proletariat for its historic mission of revolutionizing society.

[9] In shops where the workers are unorganized the employer is in constant danger. If the men have a grievance, they, not being shackled by craft autonomy and contracts, strike in a body. This was well demonstrated by the McKees Rocks strike last summer, where the workers struck as a unit, with the exception of the organized union machinists, who at first refused to quit work, and had to be actually forced to do so. A comprehensive instance of the evil results bred of craft union autonomy was the strike of the San Francisco street car workers during the first year of Mayor Schmidt's administration, and subsequent events. When the men struck, all crafts quit work—motormen, conductors, ticket agents, repairers, engineers, firemen, in short, all the workers on the street cars struck in unison, and fought shoulder to shoulder. This spirit of solidarity was crowned with a splendid victory. But as soon as the strike was over, the virus of craft union autonomy entered their ranks, and the car workers' organization was split up by distributing the members among various crafts unions—Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, International Union of Steam Engineers, etc. Accordingly, when the second strike occurred in 1907, the disintegrating effect of craft unionism was shown when the car workers, split into autonomous, ipdependent crafts, could not strike as a unit, and absolute failure crowned their strike in consequence.

The End.

BOURTSEFF ON THINGS RUSSIAN

Stolypin, Man of the Old Regime—Tracking Azeff.

Stolypin, Premier of Russia, was denounced by Vladimir Bourtseff, of the Russian revolutionaries, who has spent years of his life in tracking down so-called leaders of the Liberal Party in their affiliations with the Czar's Government. The Premier was regarded when he came into office as the friend of reform, but Bourtseff declares that he has in his possession a secret circular issued by him as long ago as 1906 to the Governors of the Russian provinces in which he announced that it would not be long before the Constitution would be abrogated and the old tyrannical regime set up again.

"Stolypin," he said through an interpreter, "expresses the opinion of a liberal, but in all his actions has proved himself a reactionary. He has given his word to the Czar to preserve the old order of things. He is now at work to bring about the dissolution of the third Duma, which was considered by those who desired Russian freedom to be conservative enough in all conscience, and to cause the selection of a fourth Duma which will be nothing but the executive organ of the 'Union of the Russian People,' the notorious Black Hundred."

Bourtseff said that he had been informed by one of the provincial Governors that the autocracy was working trough the Governors to control the elections. The provincial officials have been called together in convention and have been instructed to distribute freely money, medals, and jobs in order to make certain the return of the "right" candidates.

The Czar, in Bourtseff's opinion, is not the uniformed weakling that he is so often represented to be in America. He is acultured, well-read gentleman, thoroughly familiar with the conditions of his country. He is fond of Shakespeare and Tolstoy, and the stories about the great influence exercised over him by the Empress are baseless. It is he himself who does not wish to do anything for the people, and he has a great