PARLIAMENTARISM AND ECONOMIC ACTION

PARLIAMENTARISM showed itself utterly futile in the European crisis. The supreme utility attached to parliamentarism was a strong factor in destroying the morale and taming the fighting energy of the German Socialist movement. Marx bitterly satirized those who consider parliamentarism creative and dynamic. Even had the German Socialists had the will to oppose the war, what effective means could they have adopted? Parliament had no control over events; all the Socialist parliamentarians could have done was to vote against the war credits, which would not have averted war. The unions had no initiative, the political movement having always played the dominant rôle. A general Strike? But a General Strike implies virile economic organization, conscious of its power and aware of its decisive utility, accustomed to playing a leading part and not acting in obedience to a parliamentary-mad bureaucracy. The German Social Democracy has always denied the unions any vital function, conceiving them as an auxiliary of minor importance with no revolutionary mission to perform.

Parliament—political government—is essentially a bourgeois institution, developed by the bourgeois in their fight against feudalism, and expressing bourgeois requirements of supremacy. Socialism, of course, cannot ignore political government; it is an expression of class war in capitalist society, and political action becomes a necessary form of action. But the proletariat must develop its own fighting expression, its own organ of government—the revolutionary union. Socialism seeks not control of the State, but the destruction of the State. The revolutionary union alone is capable of dynamic, creative action.

Economic action assumes dominance in our tactics as the Socialist movement becomes more definite and aggressive; political action becomes an auxiliary. Revolutionary unionism develops the initiative and virility of the proletariat, unites the proletariat as a fighting force. It organizes the proletariat not alone for every-day struggles but for the final struggle against Capitalism. Revolutionary unionism prepares the workers for their historic mission of ending political government and establishing an industrial government—the "administration of things." Revolutionary Unionism, finally, can secure for the workers all necessary immediate reforms through their own efforts, without the action of the State. In this process Revolutionary Unionism develops itself as the means for the overthrow of State Socialism.

These are the larger outlines visible in the future of Socialism. The Great War will simply produce new conditions for new Socialist action—not the Revolution. Socialists have believed that a universal war such as that now in progress would end in Revolution. In a letter I received recently Lucien Sanial says: "The present European War is pregnant with a mighty revolution." Engels prophesied revolution as a consequence of the Great War which "must either bring the immediate victory of Socialism, or it must upset the old order of things from head to foot and leave such heaps of ruins behind that the old capitalistic society will be more impossible than ever and the social revolution though put off until ten or fifteen years later, would surely conquer after that time all the

more rapidly, and all the more thoroughly." But it is now clear that the Great War does not mean Revolution; all it will do is provide the necessary factors for new Socialist action productive of ultimate revolution. Let us direct our efforts accordingly.—Louis Fraina, *New Review*.