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EDITORIAL

SOCIOLOGIC FATALISM.

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IF the *International Socialist Review*—an organ of the Socialist party, a party of “pure and simple political Socialism”; a party that ignores, if it does not deny the necessity of the economic organization in the achievement of the Social Revolution; a party with which “votes!” is the sole answer given to, and is considered a sufficient refutation of all charges regarding its economic and political vagaries and even iniquities;—if the *International Socialist Review* had for its purpose, not simply to pad its December issue, but to throw discredit upon the Socialist principle that political action alone, unaccompanied by the proper economic organization of the proletariat, is a flash in the pan, and a source of corruption—if that was the purpose of the *Review* it could hardly have done better than to publish Mr. Albert E. Averill’s article “The Political Organization of the Proletariat.”¹ If, indeed, Mr. Averill’s views are representative of the views of those who reject “pure and simple political Socialism,{}” then, even the pure and simple political Socialism of the Socialist party were preferable. It, at least is action, some kind of action; Averillism is fatalism, and that spells bleeding to death in inactivity.

Political institutions—the institutions that are summed up in the technical term the “Political State,” or “Political Government”—are born of class distinctions. “Political Government” makes its appearance as a necessary agency of a tyrant class over a class to be tyrannized. The foundation of “Political Government” is the economic power of one class, and the economic impotence of another. Before “Political Government” there was “Economic Government.” “Political Government” gradually supplanted its predecessor in the measure that the property necessary to produce with was transformed from collective to private property.

Whatever the reason, the fact is that under the communistic social system of

¹ [To be appended.—R.B.]

old, which reflected the “Economic Government,” the production of wealth remained at a minimum. Human emancipation from the thrall of toil for bare existence failed to progress. Hand in hand with the transformation of public into private property came increased production, increased wealth. The progress made in the potentiality of human happiness was paid for by the actuality of mass oppression. Private ownership of the necessaries wherewith to produce deepened the cleft between class and class, and thereby reflected itself into more and more sharply marked political institutions. Thus the enjoyment of human progress became the attribute of a small class, which helped itself to the “Political Government” as a means to keep the economically dispossessed class in subjection.

The contradiction between the economic possibilities of well-being and the economic fact of increased mass distress, coupled to the contradiction of collective labor conducted with the aid of privately owned means of production, not only marks the ripening of the time when the evolution from collective to private ownership, is forced to the next evolutionary stage, but it also designates imperatively what that next stage must be.

It is the stage in which the permanent good, that has been attained in the transition from the collective to the private system of ownership, shall be stripped of the evil that blights the good. That next stage is Socialism—or the Communism of old upon a 20th Century basis.

The return of society to the collective ownership of productive property, wipes out class distinctions. The restoration of the communistic social basis wipes out the “Political Government,” which was reflected by a social system of classes, and in turn restores, by reflecting, the “Economic Government” of old.

This is the pending Social Revolution.

The nature of the pending Social Revolution dictates the means to carry it out.

The “Economic Government” must be ready to dethrone the “Political Government” which of old crowded it out, and itself assume the reins of production. The readiness of the “Economic Government” to step in implies the integrally and industrially organized productive and service forces of the land. The organization of these forces implies and requires previous revolutionary political action and agitation, in other words, a Socialist political party, that either shall have ushered

the required economic organization into existence, or that shall have been projected by the same; that shall enable the economic organization to recruit its forces by officiating as its mouth piece in preaching the revolution upon the civilized plane of the hustings; and that, cause and effect acting and reacting upon each other, shall itself gather strength from the strength it imparts, until ultimate triumph is achievable in whatever way the eventual conjunction of events may enable, or compel, achievement.

Mr. Averill starts with a hopeless confusion of thought regarding the rise and growth of “Political Government”—an evolution that points with mathematical conclusiveness to the eventual and inevitable death, or collapse of “political institutions,” along with “political power,” etc. Of this Mr. Averill knows nothing and cares less. Proceeding from such a fundamental error, he speaks of the “political power” as a permanence, which, however, is to adapt itself to altering “economic powers”; and thus sliding from error into error, he pictures the industrial organization of the proletariat as the “political form,” through which will be exercised the “political power” of future society. In other words, not realizing that the “Economic Government,” implied in the Industrial, or Socialist Commonwealth, necessarily does away with and makes tabula rasa of “Political Government,” “political institutions,” and, consequently, of the “political power” that flows from the same, Mr. Averill causes the two contradictory and mutually repellent forms of “Economic” and of “Political Government” to be merged into one.

As always happens with fundamental errors, they drive to fatally wrong conclusions. The sociologically untrue premises from which Mr. Averill proceeds push him to false tactics—if the fatality of abject fatalism can be called tactics.

Mr. Averill is no dynamiter, veiled or otherwise—that much must be said in his favor. While his whole line of reasoning, as the conclusion of his premises, is a repudiation of political action, the repudiation does not remotely imply pure and simple physical forcism. With Socialist science Mr. Averill declares that capitalist exploitation quickens proletarian consciousness; with *The People* Mr. Averill recognizes that capitalism shapes the mold for the integrally industrial organization of the proletariat. From that point on Mr. Averill parts company with facts and reason. True enough he recommends “a general conference of labor Unions” but the

conference is only to spread its apron, so to say, in order to catch the falling apple of the new social order. The work, the real work is left to the capitalist class itself. It is to go on quickening and molding, until—until—until what?—until the capitalist shall “disappear,” and capitalist power shall have “vanished.”

That’s fatalism.

Capitalism will not VANISH. It will remain until OVERTHROWN.

The Socialist Republic is unavoidable; the restoration “Economic Government,” or Administration, is inevitable—they are unavoidable and inevitable just because ours is not a generation of fatalists; just because our generation will not lie down or stand up with its arms crossed, but will organize the industrial battalions of Labor; just because our generation will avail itself of the weapon of political action whereby to make such organization possible.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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