

# Problems of Revolutionary Socialism

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THE following letter from a comrade who, in the past rendered great services to the Socialist Party, is so representative of the ideological confusion in some parts of our party that I believe it deserves to be discussed publicly. Omitting some personal passages, the letter states:

"It is hardly necessary to tell you that it was painful for me to part company with you after having fought side by side for the same ideals, and the same party for so many years. However, you must admit it was your fault and not mine. You have changed. I have not. I am, and will always be, a Social Democrat, while you have abandoned Social Democracy.

"I still cling to the old ideal of Democratic Socialism, while you have changed it for the theory of revolution and dictatorship. I still believe that it is our business to serve the trade union movement, while you want to control it.

"You will admit after all, that the only real problem that confronts us is how to organize a real mass Socialist Party in America, or what amounts to the same thing: how to reach the mass of the American workers with our Socialist message. You surely do not believe that you can reach these masses by writing articles and lecturing on revolution, dictatorship, etc. If we could for a while forget these purely theoretical problems, and devote ourselves to organizing the workers for their daily needs and demands, we would, I am sure, be much more successful in our difficult task.

—A. S."

The arguments of A. S. are not original and, therefore, are representative. Everyone has heard similar arguments at our meetings and has read them in our press. The personal tone is purely accidental. The arguments are not against any individual comrade; they are directed against the large and growing body of revolutionary, or to use the American



term, Militant Socialists. It is well that we take up their arguments and dispose of them once for all.

## What Is Social Democracy Now?

It has become the fashion among certain American Socialists to refer to themselves as Social Democrats. When Social Democracy was alive, active, and growing, the term Social Democracy was rather unpopular among American Socialists. One was referred to then as a Social Democrat instead of just a Socialist, somewhat contemptuously, at best ironically. It meant an un-Americanized Socialist, one who constantly "bothered his head" about "European" theories. Only lately have the same people who expressed this contempt begun proudly to call themselves Social Democrats.

Up to 1914, the term Social Democrat had a well defined and very specific meaning. Since then it has lost all meaning. The Communists have frightfully abused it in their propaganda. In Communist literature a Social Democrat is not only every anti-Communist, but also every non-Communist. It has become a word of derision and contempt for them. In Communist literature one can find a label of Social Democrat pinned on Karl Kautsky and John Dewey, on Leon Blum and Bertrand Russell, on Otto Bauer and Arthur Henderson, on George Plekhanov and Abraham Cahan. Even Trotsky is said to have returned to Social Democracy. A term so loosely and so indiscriminately used loses all meaning.

Unbelievable as it may seem, the Social Democrats, especially the American Social Democrats, have practically accepted the purely negative Communist definition of Social Democracy. Social Democracy, for them, is also nothing more than anti-Communism. It has no positive content. They accuse left wing Socialism of having abandoned Social Democracy, because they believe that militants have certain sympathies for Communism, or at least, for Soviet Russia.

One can not state what the Social Democratic attitude to revolution is because there are many Social Democrats who hold opposing opinions. Zyromsky is a Social Democrat



who believes in revolution, while William Bohn is one who explains to readers of the New Leader that every revolution is a misfortune to be avoided. Otto Bauer is a Social Democrat who believes that the dictatorship of the proletariat is an inevitable stage on the road to Socialism, while Karl Kautsky is a Social Democrat who believes that a belief in proletarian distatorship is incompatible with Socialism. There are Social Democrats who believe that Socialism is being built in Russia, and Social Democrats who believe that everything Russian comes from the devil. . . . Both Harry Lang of Hearst fame, and Heinrich Ehrlich, the eminent leader of left wing Socialism in Poland, are Social Democrats. A volume could be filled with such comparisons—but these will suffice.

If one can be a Social Democrat and accept everything that other Social Democrats reject, and reject everything that others accept—the term has lost its meaning. It stands for nothing. When Comrade A. S. says that he is a Social-Democrat, he makes only one thing clear,—that he is not a Communist. But he has not in the least explained what he *is*.

If an individual is permitted to use this vague and now meaningless term, no such permission can, however, be granted to a party. A party can not be based on such a purely negative basis as anti-Communism. A party must first of all be based on a positive program. Social Democracy at the present moment does not stand for anything positive. Any-one accused of having abandoned Social Democracy, is justified in asking: To which Social Democracy do you refer, Comrade? To the Social Democracy of Otto Bauer or Otto Wels, of Karl Kautsky or Heinrich Ehrlich, and so on and so on. And then the entire question becomes absurd.

## **What Social Democracy Was**

Until the outbreak of the war, Social Democracy had a very specific, limited meaning. It was synonymous with Marxian Socialism. The two terms, Social Democracy and Marxism, were interchangeable. There were non-Marxian Socialists also, but they did not call themselves Social Demo-

crats. The non-Marxian Socialists in Russia were known as Social Revolutionists, (S. R.). The non-Marxian Socialists in Great Britain organized in the Independent Labor Party never called themselves Social Democrats. The small group of Marxists in England, under the leadership of H. M. Hyndman on the other hand, proudly called themselves Social Democrats.

There were differences of opinion within the Social Democratic movement. There were differences of opinion within the Marxian movement, different interpretations of various phases of Marxian philosophy. The Social Democratic movement was not monolithic. No party that is alive and does not want to become a sect is, or can be, monolithic. Monolithism is the special contribution of Stalin to the Communist misfortunes. The Bolshevik Party was a Social Democratic party up to 1917. It never was monolithic. Differences of opinion within it were always freely expressed. Even after 1917, when the name of the party was changed to Communist, monolithism did not become part of the discipline of the new party. Differences of opinion within the party were legitimate, and were expressed freely in the party press until Communism was discarded in favor of Stalinism, and intolerance became the chief article of faith of what was left of the Communist International.

In spite of the differences of opinion, Social Democracy retained its specific meaning. Briefly stated, it rested on the following foundations.

(a) It accepted Marxism as the ideological foundation of its practice.

(b) It was proletarian. It based all its hopes on the working class alone, and formulated its tactics in the interest of the proletarian class struggle.

(c) It looked upon its reform activity and its fight for immediate demands of the workers as nothing more than a preparation for the inevitable social revolution by means of which the working class would get control of the state and use it for the purpose of establishing Socialism.

These fundamental bases of the Social Democratic move-



ment were theoretically justified and vehemently defended by Karl Kautsky, George Plekhanov, Emil Vandervelde, as well as by Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky and Nicolai Lenin. In fact, it was Karl Kautsky who declared that whoever did not accept the inevitability of the social revolution was no Socialist at all, and strange as it may sound to some, it was not Lenin but the Menshevik Plekhanov who found the dictatorship of the proletariat to be the heart of Marxism, who elaborated on it and defended it against its critics. Even in his later years when he fought bitterly against the Soviets, his thesis was not that the dictatorship of the proletariat was not a necessary transitory stage to Socialism, but that Russia was not ready for it, and that it would therefore end in disaster.

It is therefore clear that if there is any talk of abandoning Social Democracy, it is not the left wing Socialist who is guilty. The fundamental principles of Social Democracy were abandoned by those who persist in using, or rather misusing, the name. The militant Socialist is the real heir to the Social Democratic tradition and the fundamental principles which were abandoned by those who now call themselves Social Democrats. We will not fight about a name. Those who usurped it may have it. But, those who accuse us of having abandoned the fundamental principles of Social Democracy, thereby only display their ignorance.

### **Democracy—Its Limitations**

"I still cling to the ideal of democratic Socialism," declares Comrade A. S. This implies, of course, that other Socialists, the left wing Socialists, have abandoned the idea of democratic Socialism. What have they substituted? Presumably, dictatorial Socialism. I have read this logical nonsense in more than one "Socialist" argument. It is logical nonsense because dictatorial Socialism is contradictory. Socialism presupposes democracy. Socialism is the highest form of democracy. No amount of nationalizing of industries, no amount of government control can produce Socialism unless coupled with the fullest democracy. There is no Socialism in Russia, in spite



of its success in destroying all vestiges of private property in industry and agriculture. There will be Socialism in Russia only when genuine democracy, workers' democracy, is introduced. The argument that the left wing Socialist has abandoned the ideal of democratic Socialism evidently means something else. It really means that the left wing Socialist has abandoned the hope that democracy, i.e., democratic political forms in some country, would make all other means of struggle for Socialism unnecessary.

Let us for a moment again turn to the history of the Social Democratic movement. Social Democracy was always "democratic Socialism." The victory of Marxism over all other schools of Socialism was not only the victory of one philosophy over another. As a matter of fact, the purely philosophic teachings of Marx had very little influence on the socialist movement. While for a handful of philosophers the all important problem was dialectic vs. formal logic, materialist vs. idealist epistemology, the problem for the living and fighting movement was the Marxian theory of social revolution as opposed to all other theories, the Marxian road to Socialism as opposed to all other roads. And what was it that distinguished the Marxian road from all others? It was the fact that Marx and Engels based their hope for the social revolution not on the activities of conspiratorial groups who "will make the revolution," but on the broad, open, legal political and democratic struggle of the working class. In existing democracy, in spite of its many defects and shortcomings, Marx and Engels saw the most important, the most powerful weapon that the working class could use in its fight for Socialism.

Both Marx and Engels, however, knew that while democracy was a powerful weapon to be used in the class struggle, it did not take the place of the class struggle. It cannot serve as a substitute for it. Under a democratic form of government the different social classes meet in the political arena, where they try to fight out purely economic issues. They have simply translated their economic interests into political terms. In this fight where, theoretically, all classes meet on terms of equality, the forces are far from equal. All the advantages are on the

side of the ruling class. It controls the most important means of communication, as well as the power of economic coercion. When the ruling class of California was beginning to be really afraid that Upton Sinclair might be elected governor, thousands of workers received notice a few days before election that the factories in which they worked were closing, because they would have to move to other states should Sinclair be elected. The notices also informed the workers that in case Sinclair were defeated, they need not wait for further notice but were to come to work the following day.

Volumes could be written about the democratic victories of the masses, of which they were robbed as soon as they had won them. Much more than a vote is necessary for the working class to retain its democratic victories. A proletarian political party that can not supplement its political gains by its economic strength is a weak thing indeed. The New York Socialist assemblymen who were legally and democratically elected after decades of hard political work were unceremoniously thrown out by the ruling class. Their protestations to the effect that they were "the people's choice" helped them very little. There was no danger that this violation of democracy would be met by a general strike, and therefore there was nothing to be afraid of. The class-conscious bourgeoisie understands the nature of capitalist democracy much better, it seems, than right wing Socialists.

Many years ago Leon Trotsky excellently formulated the class-conscious bourgeois thought on democracy. "The capitalist bourgeoisie calculates," says Trotsky, "in this fashion: 'while I have in my hands lands, factories, workshops, banks; while I possess newspapers, universities, schools; while, and this is the most important of all—I retain control of the army, the apparatus of democracy, however you reconstruct it, will remain obedient to my will.'"

### **Democracy Through the Eyes of a Right-Winger**

The right wing Socialists', or as they prefer to call themselves, the "Democratic-Socialists'," view on democracy has



been best expressed in an article by William E. Bohn. After decades of silence Bohn no longer could endure the "smart revolutionists" who had learned all of their wisdom from European sources. He decided once for all to "set 'em right." *"The trouble with these smart revolutionists is that they don't know what our democracy really is! In our country power is actually in the hands of the people."* And what do the people do with the power that is actually in their hands? *"And the people use it as skilled publicists teach them to use it,"* is Bohn's answer.

It is therefore not a matter of changing the form of the state, of securing power for the people. It is only a matter of re-educating or changing the "publicists" and having them teach the people how, in a wiser way, to use the power they actually possess.

Bohn's article, (The Road to Power in America, New Leader, April 13, 1935) is a polemic against the "smart professional revolutionists," who, he imagines, want "to make" a revolution in America. The article was written in order to make clear to Socialists what the real road to power is, and, of course, what Socialists are to do about it. The real road to power, then, turns out to be a change of "publicists" who will teach the people how to use their power.

All this talk about "publicists" is of course far from clear. Who are these publicists? Does Bohn mean the press, the radio, the priest, the rabbi, the professional politician? There is no doubt that they influence the masses in favor of capitalism. But what is the Socialist Party to do about it? "The purpose of the party," Bohn explains, "is to influence the inhabitants of this territory toward the Socialist way of living, the cooperative, democratic way." Perhaps some people understand what Bohn means. I confess my ignorance. The only thing that is clear in the article is that "every revolution, every fracas that looked like a revolution, has been a curse to the thinkers of the next generation."

Our duty, it seems, is to save the "thinkers of the next generation" from this curse. We can do it by understanding that "power is *actually* in the hands of the people" and by



teaching the "inhabitants of this territory" the Socialist way of living. Remember, it must be the Socialist way of *living*, not of *fighting* for Socialism. Once it was the "Christian way of living," now it is the Socialist way.

What is the source of this confusion? Elsewhere (*American Socialist Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 1) I termed this kind of Socialism "The Socialism of the Hopeless." This unlimited belief in democracy, and the confusion of ideas which follow, are the result of the hopelessness of reformism on the one hand, and on the other, the belief in the strength of capitalism which cannot be overcome by the workers. Bohn states this very clearly:

"Our shouting about the downfall of capitalism is like the beating of tomtoms by a medicine man. The various features of the system which we call capitalist are very old and flexible. They can always adapt themselves to new situations."

All of the talk about the decline of capitalism sounds like so much nonsense to Bohn. He views the decline of capitalism not from the larger economic and technological point of view, but from the point of view of the corner grocery store. As long as that store can pay its bills on time it is not declining.

"Despite the tremendous strain of the present depression, the credit of the American government and of the central financial and industrial institutions of this country is secure for an indefinite period."

This is all that matters. Capitalism can pay its bills. It is true it can no longer pay its bills to the millions of workers and farmers and white collar slaves; it can no longer assure the millions even the meager prosperity and security on which it prided itself in the past. And it is likewise true that the condition of the masses grows from bad to worse, that no means of reemploying the unemployed has yet been found and that their number is growing. But, if you have a "good check," any bank will cash it for you. If the government owes you money, you'll be sure to get it. And this is sufficient guarantee for Bohn that capitalism is not declining!

There are of course better, more learned, and more per-

suasive representatives of Neo-Social Democracy than Bohn. He, however, has the advantage of being more naively frank than the others. In reality, all Neo-Social Democrats hold these views, only they are not so frank and outspoken as he is.

The real difference between the right and left wing Socialists is that the former base their tactics on the belief that capitalism is secure in its rule, while the latter believe that capitalism has definitely entered a stage of decline.

### **Democracy in Time of Crisis**

When the right wing Socialists extol the virtues of existing democracy, and never tire of telling us how important democracy and civil liberties are for the working class, they simply waste time, ink and energy. Every Socialist, no matter how left, how revolutionary, recognizes the importance of civil liberties for the class struggle. Realizing the class character of existing democracy, knowing all of its defects, every Socialist, nevertheless, is ready to fight against its enemies to the right.

The fight against fascism, now paramount in the Socialist movement, is naturally a fight for the maintenance of democracy and civil liberties. Should any danger to democracy and civil liberties arise, the revolutionary Socialist would be in the front lines for their defense. The revolutionary Socialist has always fought bitterly against the anti-democratic agitation of the Communists, which they, by the way, have now abandoned.

A clear Marxian analysis of the tendencies of declining capitalism clearly shows that the working class is more and more becoming the sole defender of democracy and civil liberties, while declining capitalism tends to become more and more fascist. The widespread belief that capitalism and democracy always go together has been thoroughly disproved. Capitalism holds on to democracy so long as democracy serves its purposes, and discards it so soon as democracy becomes dangerous.

Historical experience has shown that democracy is



adapted only to normal and peaceful times. It cannot survive any deep-going crisis. In time of crisis, democracy always gives place to some form of dictatorship. During the war democracy was virtually abolished, as it is virtually abolished wherever there is an effective strike. Let us for example take a report of conditions in Harlan, Kentucky, during a coal miners' strike. A committee, appointed by Governor Lafoon found that:

"There exists a virtual reign of terror . . . financed in general by a group of coal mine operators in collusion with certain public officials. The victims of the reign of terror are coal miners and their families."

Harlan is part of the United States, where a special body of nine old lawyers zealously guard its democracy. What Governor Lafoon's committee found in Harlan, other committees have found in other places. But in the majority of cases there were neither committees nor reports. What happened to democracy in Harlan? It was not abolished. It was simply "laid aside" until the crisis was over.

This, of course, was a local crisis. Is there any good reason to believe that no such reign of terror will break out in time of a national crisis, when, instead of a group of miners asking for higher wages, the proletariat as a class demands the nationalization of industries? Have not the experience of Germany, of Italy, of Austria, and the growth of the fascist movement everywhere shown, beyond any doubt, what the answer of capitalism will be when really menaced by Socialism?

After a long and thorough analysis of the tendencies of contemporary economic and political life, Prof. Harold J. Laski comes to this conclusion:

"When the political democracy seeks to transfer that ownership (i.e., the ownership of the means of production—H. K.) to the community, the capitalist class will, if it can, use the state power to suppress democratic institutions."

The words, "if it can," can have only one meaning: If the masses are ready to fight for democracy with undemo-



cratic means, if necessary, since the democratic road will already by that time be blocked.

Militant Socialists do not belong to the alarmists in our movement who see the shadows of fascism unavoidably covering all capitalist countries. When the Communist movement began labeling anyone with whom it disagreed or anything it didn't like as fascist, we bitterly criticised it. We believe that it is not only silly but positively harmful to declare the NRA, the Wagner Bill, the Guffey Bill and other such liberal reform measures as fascist.

Such a misuse of the word "fascist" defeats its own purpose. Instead of frightening the masses, all the Communists gained by their "scare screams" was that the average worker said to himself: Well, if this is fascism, let us have more of it!

It is as dangerous, because just as unrealistic, to see fascism in anything we don't like, as it is to lull the masses to sleep in a false sense of security that America is not Germany, etc. Both, the anti-democratic propaganda of the Communists, as well as the nothing-but-democracy propaganda, must be repudiated in the light of the revolutionary experiences of the post-war years.

Democracy is the most valuable and the most important weapon of the working class in its fight for a new society. But, in itself, it is not enough to guarantee success.

## **Democracy and Reform**

In a nut shell, the following is the theory of social reformism: Democracy offers a wide field for the fight for reforms; having no limits, it affords an opportunity for those who want to reform present day society most radically, the Socialists, to achieve their goal in the most peaceful, legal and democratic way. According to this theory, Socialism is the result of the numerical accumulation of reforms. In the pre-war, social democratic movement this view was known as "Revisionism." Social Democrats fought against it bitterly. A national congress of the German Social Democratic Party,

as well as an International Socialist congress, officially condemned revisionism. It is worth while reminding the self-appointed heirs of Social Democracy that the leaders in the fight against revisionism were Karl Kautsky and George Plekhanov.

What were their arguments against revisionism? Briefly, they may be summed up in the following words: That existing democracy offers great opportunities for the workers to fight for immediate gains, no one doubts. That the workers must use existing democracy to their advantage is beyond question, but that this reform activity has no limit is not true. Its limit is capitalism. The fight for reforms can be peaceful, legal, democratic as long as it is a fight to *reform capitalism*. It changes its character when it becomes a fight to *abolish capitalism*. All reforms within a given social order are to reform that order, not to abolish it. There is only one way to predict the future, and that is by learning from the past. History knows of no instance where a ruling class has given up, or allowed itself to be abolished peacefully, without fighting for its life. That it has always lost is, of course, true. This is inevitable, because the life and death struggle between the old and the new never seriously begins before the old has not only outlived its usefulness, but has become an impediment rather than a help to society. The ruling class of today can, of course, learn from history and submit to its fate. But to hope that it will do so, would be naive. The desire to live is so great that it usually blinds the most far seeing.

Capitalism, Marxists believe, must reach a point when no further development is possible. When it reaches its zenith it must begin to decline. Having reached its limit, all real reforms in favor of the toiling masses will also have reached their limit. At that stage reforms are possible, but these reforms are intended only to stay the decline of capitalism. That these reforms may in a certain sense benefit the masses is true, but, according to their nature these reforms cannot endure, because the decline of capitalism can not be artificially stopped. Economists, politicians and statesmen, not necessarily Socialists or radicals, seem to be agreed, the pleas of the right



wing Socialists notwithstanding, that capitalism *has* entered its period of decline.

### Social Democrat vs. Social Democrat

To make the issue still more clear, let us cite a "new" Social Democrat. This Social Democrat counselled us, only a few years ago, to throw Marx's "Capital" on the garbage heap of history, and to stop all this nonsense about the class struggle. At that time Professor Carver made a greater appeal to him than Marx. Now, he is *the outstanding leader* of the newest Social Democrats (special American edition) and the outstanding fighter against the militant Socialists. I refer to Abraham Cahan.

Abraham Cahan seems to distinguish between two kinds of Socialism: The old and the new. The old is that of Karl Marx. Marx, Cahan says, believed in revolution; he saw no other way to Socialism. There was, however, one thing that Marx did not foresee. Capitalist development caused the development of the labor movement. The labor movement, once developed, realized that it could not wait for the revolution. It had to fight for social legislation today; for the minimum wage, unemployment insurance, social security, the right of collective bargaining, etc. This is exactly what Roosevelt is fighting for, says Cahan, and he asks, can any one doubt the nearness of Roosevelt's ideas to Socialism?

There it is! The outstanding leader of the new American Social Democracy is very frank. His Social Democracy consists in the replacement of Marx by Roosevelt. I am sure that some readers will exclaim: But he can't mean it seriously. How could any one seriously maintain that Marx did not foresee the development of the labor movement when he placed all of his hopes on this development. Cahan must have been joking! No. No matter how funny this kind of "theorizing" may sound, the author of the theory was not joking. I am quoting from a very long and very serious article, a polemic against "all kinds of anti-Roosevelt Socialists" called "The Decision



of the Supreme Court Seen Through Socialist Eyes" (Forward, Western Edition, June 8, 1935).

The problem that Cahan raises, aside from his special sympathies for Roosevelt, is the old problem of reform and revolution, but with only one difference. In traditional Social Democratic literature the problem was always one of reform *and* revolution. For Cahan it is reform *or* revolution.

The traditional and universally accepted view of reform and revolution was formulated by Karl Kautsky (before the war) in the following words:

"There are some Socialists," Kautsky wrote, "who, when an expected revolution does not come at the time set, do not draw the conclusion that industrial development may have altered the form and character of the coming revolution from what might have been expected from the experience of previous capitalist revolutions. On the contrary, they at once conclude that, under the changed conditions, revolutions are not to be expected, are not necessary, and indeed are hurtful.

"On one side they conclude that a further extension of the achievements already gained—labor legislation, trade unions, cooperation—will suffice to drive the capitalist class out of one position after another, and to quietly expropriate it, without a political revolution, or any change in the nature of governmental power. *This theory of the gradual growth into the future state is a modern form of the old anti-political utopianism and Proudhonism.*" (The Road to Power, p. 9-10)

Compare Cahan and Kautsky, and then try to settle the question which right wing comrades raise. Who has betrayed his Social Democratic principles?

"... we are not discussing the question of whether labor legislation and similar laws in the interest of the proletariat and unions and cooperatives are necessary and useful or not. There are no two opinions among us on that point. What is disputed is the view that the exploiting class that controls the power of the state, will permit such a development of these factors, as will amount to abolishing capitalist oppression, without first making such a resistance, with all the means at its disposal, that it can be abolished only through a decisive

they have majority support securely behind the party." (Daily Worker, August 9, 1934).

In other words, the Communists, who even now are much nearer to Blanqui than to Marx, were forced by reality to return to Marx's dictum as expressed in the *Communist Manifesto*: "All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority." (Communist Manifesto).

Social revolutions, Marxism teaches, are not made at will. In fact, they are not *made* at all. The social revolution is not an act; it is a process. For years it grows and gathers strength. Professor Edwards in his "Natural History of Revolution" even maintains that a thorough study of revolutions in the past shows that it is a mistake, though it may be added, a very popular and widespread mistake, to believe that "revolutions are sudden, unpredictable and exceedingly rapid in their development." His own studies of past revolutions show that "there is not, so far as the writer is aware, a real revolution in all human history which developed in less than three generations."

It is a mistake to identify revolution with its last and violent stages. It is historically true that revolutionary processes usually end, at least have usually ended in the past, in violent outbreaks, street fighting, uprisings. That, however, does not mean that artificially engineered armed uprisings or street battles are revolutions. Long ago Engels warned the working class that, "the rebellion of the old style, the street fight behind the barricades which up to 1848 gave the final decision, has become antiquated."

"Let there be no illusions about it," Engels warned, "a real victory over the military in a street battle, a victory as between two armies, belongs to the great rarities." That was written in 1895. If Engels were to write in 1935, he would certainly substitute the words "utter impossibilities" for "rarities." The ideal of insurrectionism which flares up from time to time in the hearts, rather than in the minds, of revolu-



tionary romantics, has in our time become not only an absurd utopia, but also a real danger to the Socialist. It tends to replace the clear realistic outlook of Marxism with utopian dreams and illusions that belong to the past rather than to the present.

### **The Example of Russia**

The proletarian revolution in Russia is usually advanced as proof that "you can *make* a revolution if you want to." It is, it seems, a matter of revolutionary will and determination. Under the influence of Communism, clothed in Marxian phraseology, a new kind of purely subjective interpretation of history has arisen. The successes and failures of the revolutionary movement were due to the presence or absence of revolutionary will among the leaders. No one, of course, will deny the role of the will to revolution, the determination to fight, the importance of good leadership. Yet, these are not enough to make a successful revolution. The will to revolution, the determination to fight, superb leadership,—all these factors were present at the time of the revolution in 1905. Yet the revolution failed. Why? Because will, determination and leadership could not stand up against a well-organized, well-disciplined and well-armed army; and the Czarist army in 1905, in spite of the defeat in the Russo-Japanese war, remained true to the existing order, despite the dissatisfaction among its rank and file.

It was different in 1917. The revolutionary forces under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky neither began, nor did they make, the revolution. They completed a revolution already in full force before the Bolsheviki had gained leadership. The country was economically ruined, politically disorganized, and the army was weary and demoralized. The Kerensky government was but a shadow. It lacked force; it had no army to rely upon. The peasants were expropriating the landlords; the workers had taken possession of the factories; and the soldiers had deserted by tens of thousands, long before the November revolution. The ruling class was



battle." (The Road to Power, p. 10-11. I quote from a very bad and clumsy English translation. Where I find myself now, I can not get hold of the original. H. K.)

## **Social Revolution**

The essence of social revolution is the transfer of political power from one class to another. Without such a complete transfer of power no really radical transformation of society is possible. How will this transfer be accomplished? Pre-Marxian revolutionaries had a very definite answer to the question: A well organized, armed revolutionary minority will initiate a surprise insurrection, capture the state, and the revolution will be over. Marx, Engels and all Marxists from Kautsky to Lenin have fought this view of social revolution bitterly. "We are a revolutionary party, but not a revolution-making party," Kautsky declared, and this declaration has been accepted by every Marxist. For a short time the Communist International deserted this Marxian principle and accepted the principle of revolutions by minority insurrection. Karl Radek who, up to 1917, lectured the European Socialists that Europe was not yet ready for a social revolution, suddenly discovered that the obstacle to revolutions was the idea that revolutions are made by majorities. "The notion that the proletariat should undertake no revolution until it was satisfied that it had the majority of the people at its back is nonsense," maintained Radek. Radek, of course, expressed the dominant mood of the Communist International. It is safe, however, to say that even the Communists have now given up the idea of a social revolution "made" by the insurrection of a minority. Right after the San Francisco general strike, Earl Browder and Sam Darcy, in the name of the Communist Party, published a statement from which the following excerpt is taken:

"Are the Communists proposing to make a revolution now? Beginning in San Francisco? No, that is absurd nonsense. The Communists do not propose to make a revolution until, by comradely discussion and conviction of the toiling masses,

weak, demoralized, and leaderless. There was no middle class to speak of in Russia.

This was a unique, a specifically Russian situation. As early as 1924, I interpreted the success of the Bolshevik revolution in the following words: "The Bolsheviks fought not a capitalist state, but a shadow. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia was the result of such unique, specifically Russian circumstances that they can not and will not be repeated elsewhere." (*The Rise and Decline of Neo-Communism*, p. 17). One must be ignorant in the highest degree of the real history of the Russian Bolshevik revolution, as well as of the forces operating in the modern capitalist state, to imagine that "what was done in Russia could be done anywhere else." The contrary is true. What was done in Russia can not be repeated anywhere else.

### **The Example of Germany**

Revolutions are preceded by revolutionary situations. They are the culminations of such situations. The most important characteristic of revolutionary situations is the change in the psychology and moods of the masses. The fear of, and reverence for, existing institutions gradually disappear and make place for contempt and ridicule; faith is replaced by a feeling of hopelessness. Great masses of people, not necessarily members of the most oppressed class, but of all other classes in society with the exception of the ruling class, gradually begin to believe that though all social evils from which they suffer can be solved, there is no hope that they will be solved either by the present rulers or through the present institutions.

The general feeling spreads that something new must be tried; at any rate, that the old is not worth saving. This is the time when revolutionary parties, usually having a clearer view of the crisis and a definite plan, can get a hearing for which they may have been striving without success for years. Of course, such situations are fraught with grave danger, not only for the existing order of society, but also for the revolu-



tion itself. These are the opportune times not only for the honest revolutionary, but also for the dishonest demagogue. A revolutionary situation may culminate in reaction as well as in revolution.

The example of the triumph of fascism in Germany is very illuminating. In 1933 "there was no revolutionary situation in Germany," explains O. Piatnitsky, trying to justify the tragic capitulation of German Communism before the fascist onslaught. To justify his statement he produces a quotation from Lenin and points out that certain details in the German situation did not conform to Lenin's definition of what a revolutionary situation *should be*. However, in the same pamphlet, Piatnitsky clearly shows that the German masses were desperate, that they had lost all confidence in the existing government and social institutions, that they were ready for a change.

Why did they not turn then to the Social Democratic Party or to the Communist Party? For the very good reason that both parties had shown themselves incapable of using the existing situation to their advantage. The histories of the two parties inspired neither confidence nor belief in them. The German masses saw no hope in either of them. The Social Democratic Party had shown itself impotent and unwilling to fight. It wanted, of course, to preserve the Weimar republic, but it was not ready to fight even for that.

"Numerous discussions with leaders of the Social Democratic Party in 1932," Prof. Calvin B. Hoover testified, (*Germany Enters The Third Reich*, p. 44) "convinced the writer that if these men had ever had any idea of setting up a Socialist society, they had long since abandoned it. When they were confronted with the collapse of the capitalist system in Germany in 1931, they were as frightened as any capitalist, and far from making any attempt to offer Socialism as a substitute, they were only concerned with somehow proping up the existing system."

Evidently the desperate German masses could not turn to the Social Democratic Party. They were ready for a

change, but the Social Democratic Party was not. It had nothing to offer the masses.

And the Communist Party? Why did not the masses turn to the Communist Party? For the same reason. The Communist Party had even less to offer. The German Communist Party, like all other Communist parties, managed to talk in a revolutionary manner and to act in the most confused opportunistic way. Piatnitsky, in his pamphlet quoted above, (*The Present Situation in Germany*), in defending his German comrades, could not refrain from showing up some of their mistakes. They failed to win the confidence of the masses; they failed to utilize many opportunities. They generally minimized the danger of fascism. The most important slogan that the party put forth was "Hit the fascists wherever you meet them," and Piatnitsky complains, "even now we sometimes hear it said: If this slogan had not been withdrawn at that time and the party members had really beaten up the fascists then, the fascists would not be in power now" (p. 9). This is the power of "beating up!"

Fortunately, I am quoting an important leader of the Communist International. If he sounds utterly ridiculous we are not responsible. After all, it is not much worse than the slogan of the American Communists, only lately withdrawn, "When you meet a Socialist, spit on him!" Communist tactics are Communist tactics, everywhere.

As is usual with Communist leaders who from time to time indulge in harmless self-criticism, Piatnitsky omits a few details that are of great historical importance. He omits the fact that Communists actually believed, and stated quite openly, that a fascist victory would do nothing but clear the way for a Communist victory. In spite of all Communist denials, it is historically true that Communists did interpret fascism as a necessary stage on the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Nor does Piatnitsky mention the fact that until the actual victory of Hitler had become an established fact the Communists, in the press, literature, and by word of mouth, diligently taught the German workers that the real enemy was not fascism but social fascism (i.e. Socialism),



thus making impossible that united action about which they *talked* so eloquently.

The one positive element in Communist agitation was: Follow the Russian example! Give us power and we will do "just like Russia!" That was a mistake, as it is indeed a mistake to suppose that everywhere Russia may serve as an example of a bright and alluring ideal.

The example of Russia may indeed be very alluring to a small minority of unselfish idealists. This small minority reasons thus: It is true that eighteen years after the revolution the standard of living of the Russian masses is far below that of the poorest European countries. It is true that the Russian masses have paid for their experiment with immense sacrifices of life, liberty and happiness, but it is worth all the sacrifices. Just think of what Russia will be when all the sacrifices have resulted in a Socialist classless society! To expect, however, that the desperate, hungry millions of workers and middle class people can share the same enthusiasm for sacrifices, is naive. Many of these millions are quite ready to sing the praises of the wonderful Russians who are sacrificing themselves for a great ideal, but for themselves they want something right now. "The actual experience of German workers who went to Russia to work, and who returned with accounts of the appallingly low standards of life there, served also to strengthen the conservatism of the better-paid workers," Prof. Hoover again testifies. (p. 47). This, however, was all that the German Communists had to offer.

This clearly shows that just as a revolutionary party is powerless when there is no revolutionary situation, so a revolutionary situation may result in reaction if there is no revolutionary party that knows how to take advantage of it. If a revolutionary situation should develop in America, and there unquestionably are very significant symptoms of it in contemporary American life, the exact counterpart of the German situation would be found: A Communist Party talking revolution and acting in the most confused reformist manner; a Socialist Party (if controlled by the right wing, or old

guard) that has practically given up all thought of fighting for Socialism, and a trade union movement controlled largely by a reactionary leadership that would probably devote all its energy to fighting the "red menace,"—and, naturally the victory of fascism would be assured. This is something for every Socialist to ponder over.

## **The Meaning of Proletarian Dictatorship**

In dozens of articles and in hundreds of speeches, we are told that anyone who accepted the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary transitory stage between capitalism and Socialism, betrayed democratic, or Marxian, Socialism. A writer in the right wing "Forward" who, together with many other right wingers, suddenly has discovered that he is a Social Democrat, has even declared, that only demagogues and misleaders accept the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Space does not permit quotations; besides, it really is not necessary. The right wing Socialists have made it clear enough that, for them, dictatorship of the proletariat is incompatible with Social Democracy.

The impression is created in all of the writings and speeches of the right wing that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the special invention of Lenin. If it were not for that arch-enemy of democratic Socialism, everything would be all right. Whoever accepts the dictatorship of the proletariat therefore exchanges Marxism for Leninism. Before we can discuss the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat itself, we must again make an excursion into Socialist history to see how much truth there is in the assertion that Lenin is the inventor of all our difficulties.

The history of Socialism discloses what must be a very embarrassing fact for our Neo-Social Democrats, namely, that: There were no Social Democrats, no Marxists, no Democratic Socialists before October, 1917, since all Social Democrats up to that time professed a belief in proletarian dictatorship. And, anyone who believes in proletarian dictatorship is for the new-fangled American Social Democrats a Com-



munist and a betrayer of democratic Socialism. The list of these "Communists" and betrayers" begins with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and includes Kautsky, Mehring, Liebknecht, Plekhanov and Otto Bauer.

The first to promulgate this heresy was Karl Marx. He goes so far as to say that he really found the theory of the class struggle ready made in the writings of the bourgeois historians and economists. All he did was to add something to it.

"I have added," Marx confesses, "as a new contribution the following propositions: 1. That the existence of classes is bound up with certain phases of material production; 2. That the class struggle leads necessarily to the dictatorship of the proletariat; 3. That the dictatorship is but the transition to the abolition of all classes and to the creation of a society of equals." (*Letter to Wedemeyer.*)

It is lucky for Marx that he was not under the jurisdiction of the old New York State Committee of the Socialist Party or he would have been expelled for such a frank admission.

Karl Kautsky, a little bashfully, admits that he too has sinned. In his article on "What is the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (New Leader, March 23, 1935) he admits that "We, Marxists have always approved this conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Upon it, for example, is based my own work, 'Parliamentarism and Democracy'." Only, he adds, by dictatorship of the proletariat, he really, it now seems, meant neither "dictatorship" nor "of the proletariat." In his former works he never took the trouble to make it clear that he had a definition of dictatorship of the proletariat all his own. It is only now that the "truth is revealed" to us. Formerly he simply used the term as all other Marxists used it.

The arch enemy of Bolshevism, the eminent Menshevik philosopher, and the outstanding Marxist in the pre-war Socialist International, G. V. Plekhanov was an ardent defender of proletarian dictatorship. In his brilliant study of the development of the class struggle philosophy before Marx,

and of Marx's addition to it, we read: That the parliamentary and legal work of the party (he refers to the Social Democratic Party) is especially important, on account of its educational work.

"It weakens the spiritual basis of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and creates the spiritual conditions for the possibility of the future dictatorship of the proletariat." (*Collected Works, Russian* Vol. II, p. 317-326.)

He knew of course that there were certain Socialists, the so-called revisionists of the Bernstein school, who repudiated the proletarian dictatorship. But for these Socialists he had nothing but contempt.

It would be easy to quote one Social Democratic authority after another and fill a formidable volume with such quotations. However, the above quotations are enough to convince those who can still be convinced, that the acceptance of proletarian dictatorship is certainly not a betrayal of Social Democracy. On the contrary, those who now proudly proclaim themselves Social Democrats, and reject the dictatorship of the proletariat, betray it. They have appropriated a name, but are very careful not to accept anything that this name stands for.

The revolutionary Socialists of Germany have published a program. They have learned their lesson, and are careful not to repeat again the mistakes of their former leadership. This new program speaks about the dictatorship of the proletariat and of a Soviet Germany. The "Communist International," (Vol. 12, No. 9) does not like this new program. Its main argument against the new program is expressed in the following quotation:

"Those who drew up the program want, as they declare, to win and to build a Soviet republic in Germany. They set forth in detail their views on State construction and the economic policy of the future German Soviet republic. It would seem that the program should use the living example of the Soviet Union on every one of its points. Yet there are only a few lines in the program about the Soviet Union, and those are chiefly abusive."



It is an old Communist trick to identify the proletarian dictatorship with the dictatorship of the Stalinist bureaucracy. If you accept proletarian dictatorship, then, you accept Communism, and if you accept Communism, you accept "the Russian way" as the only way to Socialism. For the Communist, dictatorship of the proletariat means "as in Russia." The dictatorship in Russia is constantly changing, but its meaning does not change for the Communist. It is still, and will always be for him, "as in Russia."

### **Workers' Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship**

The revolutionary Socialists in Germany, however, certainly were right in making clear to the German masses that the dictatorship of the proletariat can not be *and should not be* "as in Russia." Every revolutionary Socialist will always be careful to make this clear. The present dictatorship in Russia is not of the proletariat, but over it.

If Lenin's conception of proletarian dictatorship was, as one of his Marxist critics expressed himself "Marxism brutalized by the abnormal Russian conditions," Stalin's perversion of it has left out the "Marxism" entirely. Only the "... brutalized by Russian conditions" remains. Stalinism has nothing in common with the Marxian conception of proletarian dictatorship.

The form that the proletarian dictatorship took in Russia was unexpected and unforeseen either by the Bolshevik party or by Lenin himself. Lenin's conception of proletarian dictatorship before and even on the eve of the October revolution was that of a worker's democracy, not of a party dictatorship. Up to the victory of the revolution, and even after the victory, Lenin did not believe that Russia was ripe for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The World War inspired Lenin with hopes of a socialist revolution in the west, but not in Russia.

"In Russia," Lenin argued, "in view of the fact that this country is most backward and has not yet completed its bourgeois revolution, the task of the Social Democrats (that was the name of the Bolshevik party.—H. K.) is as heretofore,

to achieve the three fundamental conditions for consistent democratic reform, viz. a democratic republic, (with complete equality and self determination for all nationalities), confiscation of the land of the landlords and an eight hour day." (*The War and the Russian Social Democracy.*) Lenin believed, however, that the Russian revolution would be the signal for a world revolution which could and should be a socialist revolution.

But history played a trick on Lenin. The world revolution has not come, and the bourgeois democratic revolution, "in the most backward country" was forced to take a purely Socialist turn. It was a minority revolution. Though it did not face the opposition of an organized majority, it had to suppress democracy, fearing that under a democratic regime the unorganized majority would organize and overthrow it. It faced a hostile world, sabotage from within, civil war and terrorism from without. Under such conditions the dictatorship gradually took on a purely military and terroristic character.

And yet, even then some semblance of democracy was left. The Soviets, in whose name the dictatorship rules, were never more than a screen for the Communist Party. There never was a Soviet Government. It was always a government of the Communist Party, but there was democracy within the party, there were differences of opinion within the party, there were hot and passionate discussions on party policy; but no Communist was sent to jail because he disagreed with Lenin.

All this has been changed since Lenin's death and Trotsky's exile. The Communist Party governs as little as do the Soviets. All discussions on party policy are dead and forgotten. There is a strange and terrible unanimity in the party on everything. Stalin speaks and the party murmurs "Yes Sir." Whoever has not learnt to say "Yes, Sir," finds himself in jail or in exile. Communists often proudly point to the fact that at party conferences and conversations Stalin and his policies are never opposed. They fail, however, to add that everyone who might dare to oppose Stalin was



"removed" long before he had a chance to voice his opposition.

Even high officials of the Soviet government, old Bolsheviks, with great names and reputations are removed from their offices, jailed, exiled, and not only the world outside, but the members of the Communist Party in Russia, never know why. The accused are never given a trial and have no chance of defending themselves. Who knows. They may have committed some heinous crime, or simply thought, or whispered to a friend that Stalin was not infallible.<sup>1</sup>

No! No Socialist will accept this caricature of proletarian dictatorship as a model for workers' rule. For a Marxist the dictatorship of the proletariat is not the dictatorship of one monolithic party within the working class which must inevitably degenerate into a dictatorship of one man, but the rule of the working class and its class allies, a real workers' democracy, where the state power is not only in the hands of those who work and is used in the interest of those who work, but also where it is democratically controlled by those in whose name it governs.

Proletarian dictatorship for a Marxist cannot mean anything but the political rule of the working class and its allies in a workers' democracy. When Rosa Luxemburg declared that the Marxian concept of proletarian dictatorship is not a repudiation of democracy, she was right. It is a different kind of democracy; a higher form of it. A workers' instead of a capitalist democracy.

The special connotation given to proletarian dictatorship by the Russian revolution, and its degeneration under Stalin's dictatorship makes it impracticable to use this term. It conveys a false idea about our aims. The term workers' democracy is more expressive of it. When the program of the American Militant Socialists proposed to use the term workers' democracy instead of proletarian dictatorship they did not desert Marxism, as some Communist critics asserted, they simply repudiated the Communist perversion of this Marxian concept.

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<sup>1</sup> This was written a full year before the trial and execution of Zinoviev and Kameneff.

## Can Socialism Come Through Democracy?

One of the most popular impressions that Socialists must clear up is the belief that acceptance of the principle of workers' democracy necessitates the repudiation of the belief in the possibility of a democratic victory for Socialism. This is why the American Neo-Social Democrats tell us that we must choose between the two.

The Communists are largely responsible for this false view. In his interview with the first American labor delegation to Soviet Russia, Stalin explained that "the fundamental idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the political domination of the proletariat, and as the method of overthrowing the reign of capitalism by violence was created by Marx and Engels." (*Leninism*, Vol. 2.) The implication is that Marx and Engels believed that only by violence could the reign of capital be overthrown.

This is a downright falsification of Marxism. It conveys the false idea that Marx and Engels believed that there was only one road to power for the working class—the road of violence. The truth is that Marx made it very plain that there was no one royal road to power.

According to Marx, the road to power for the working class will be determined in each country by the specific situation under which the class struggle will necessarily have to be conducted. The methods of struggle will be determined by the economic conditions, the political situation, as well as by the historic and psychological conditions in each country. As a matter of fact, Marx openly expressed his conviction that in some countries the transfer of power from the ruling class to the oppressed class would be a very peaceful process.

One may or may not agree with Marx, but no one has a right to impute opinions to Marx which he did not hold. And this is what Stalin has been doing.

Those who despair of the possibility of a legal, democratic victory somehow manage to forget that the transfer of political power can only take place in a revolutionary situation, that is, at a time when the majority, not only of the working



class, but also of its allies (poor farmers, lower middle class, part of the intelligentsia), are thoroughly disillusioned and disgusted with the existing order—at a time when this majority is ready for a change. It would be most natural for these disillusioned masses to express their disillusionment first of all by voting power to a revolutionary party, provided of course that capitalism had not abolished democracy beforehand.

For the social reformist, for the Neo-Social Democrat, especially the American Social Democrat, this is the end of his struggle. The victory is complete. For the revolutionary Socialist this is not the end but the real beginning of the struggle for Socialism.

### **The Necessity for a Basic Philosophy**

*Of course a Socialist government may content itself, as some Socialist governments have done in the past and are doing now, with helping capitalism solve its difficulties: by reforming capitalism. Such governments may be good, honest and efficient, but no matter what they do, they do not further the cause of Socialism. They often retard it. They exchange their Socialist aspirations for the good will of the ruling class. Insofar as such Socialist governments do not try to alter the property relations on which capitalist society rests, they meet with very little or very weak opposition.*

Should a Socialist government, however, really try to use the state machinery, not for the reform of capitalism, but for its abolition, it would meet with opposition of a different kind. First of all, the state machinery that it would inherit would not lend itself to the task. The existing state constitution, the institutions, are built for and adapted to the special task of serving capitalism. A Socialist government would first of all have to change the form, content, and the very nature of the state itself. Marx very aptly remarked that:

*"The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes."*

It would have to build a new state adapted to the new

and unusual task of destroying capitalism and building Socialism. This initial step would at once produce an opposition that would stop at nothing, an opposition ranging from sabotage to open civil war.

*A Socialist government that would not be prepared to meet and crush such an opposition, would be entirely helpless. Indeed it would be nothing but a short-lived experiment.*

*A Socialist government could not last a month if it were to allow the powerful capitalist press, the radio, church and movie to initiate a red scare, to spread lies, misinformation, and "atrocities stories" about the new government as it undoubtedly would do, on a scale never known before.*

*A Socialist government would not last long if it were to permit reactionary officers in the army and navy to remain at their posts and turn the army into an anti-government, counter-revolutionary force.*

*A Socialist government could not leave the civil service machinery or the judiciary untouched, thus affording the ruling class a first rate opportunity for sabotage.*

*A Socialist government would thus, willy-nilly, have to break many time honored customs, infringe upon freedom of expression, crush and subdue its enemies in a fashion that is illegal from the point of view of a capitalist legality, unconstitutional from the point of view of a constitution devised for safeguarding capitalist property relations, and immoral from the point of view of capitalist morality.*

In short, being a legally, democratically elected government, it would have to act in a dictatorial manner.

It would not have to resort to "The Russian method" and repeat everything that had been done in Russia, as the Communists believe and the reactionaries fear, because the specific Russian conditions that determined "The Russian method" would not be present. But it would be a dictatorship nevertheless.

But naive people claim we do not face these problems at present. Why discuss them at all now? Why bother about what may happen in the future? Because the future is not only to a great extent determined by the present, but also



because we are practical people. Unfortunately, being practical is confused with being opportunistic in our movement. The right wing Socialist who tells us that we must leave all problems of the future to the future and meanwhile be practical, really means meanwhile "be opportunists."

Social reformism is really very impractical and hopeless. If we succeeded in convincing a worker of the necessity of this or that practical reform, without connecting the fight for reforms with Socialism, the most logical thing for that worker to do would be to join the Roosevelt forces. It is true that he knows that "Wall Street" will fight every Roosevelt reform, yet there may be some hope in Roosevelt.

When right wing Socialists became so enthusiastic about the New Deal, and particularly about the NRA, they were very consistent. If the fight for social reforms is divorced from Socialism, the New Deal and the NRA would be all that one could demand for the present. But then, why join the Socialist Party? Why not simply join the Roosevelt forces?

We want to organize a strong and efficient Socialist Party. There are no differences of opinion on that score. How can we do it? By convincing people that Socialism is the only real solution for all social evils. The most natural query is—but how are you going to accomplish it? You don't want me to join a party without knowing what the party intends to do, what methods it intends to use, what plans it has for the future? To say "the future will take care of itself" is equivalent to saying we want Socialism but we really don't know how to get it. We will somehow muddle through! This is certainly not the basis on which a strong and effective Socialist Party can be built.

In order that a Socialist Party may live and grow, it must have a clear cut program. It must know exactly what it wants and how it hopes to get it. We propose revolutionary Marxism as a basis for the party. The Right Wing is privileged to make any other proposal. But to propose that the best way to build a party is to base it on no foundations at all is not only far from practical, it is a proposal for suicide, which Socialists, not yet tired of their Socialism, cannot accept.

## POSTSCRIPT

When these articles were written for the *Socialist Call* in the summer of 1935, it was understood that they were to appear later in pamphlet form. It is our great regret that they were not reprinted in Haim Kantorovitch's lifetime. He knew, however, that the pamphlet would be out in the fall.

Written more than a year ago, his keen analysis and foresight have proved how correct he was. The Old Guard capitulated to Roosevelt. The recent trial and execution of the sixteen Bolsheviks in Russia have born out his analysis of the present Soviet regime.

He believed that we could not decide on the type of party we wanted unless we knew what we expected that party to accomplish, and how we thought it might be accomplished. Theoretic and programmatic clarity, he believed, must come first. "This is both the foundation and cement of the party."

Haim Kantorovitch devoted his life to clarification of a revolutionary position both as lecturer and writer. Revolutionary Socialism has lost its most outstanding theoretical leader.

This pamphlet is published as the first, in a series, of his most important articles. Later, a number of his articles will be assembled in book form.

Anna Bercowitz.

OCTOBER 6, 1936



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