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ESSAYS ON REVOLUTION

No.7



5p.

The policy of the Revolutionary International

The International does not ask any worker if he is of a religious or atheistic turn of mind. She does not ask if he belongs to this or that political party. She simply says : Are you a worker? If not, do you feel the necessity of devoting yourself wholly to the interests of the working class, and of avoiding all movements that are opposed to it? Do you feel at one with the workers and have you the strength requisite if you would be loyal to their cause? Are you aware that the workers - who create all wealth, who have made civilisation and fought for liberty - are doomed to live in misery, ignorance and slavery? Do you understand that the main root of all the evils that the workers experience is poverty? And that poverty - which is the common lot of the workers in all parts of the world - is a consequence of the present economic organisation of society, and especially of the enslavement of labour - ie the proletariat - under the yoke of capitalism - ie the bourgeoisie.

Do you know that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie there exists a deadly antagonism which is the logical consequence of the economic positions of the two classes? Do you know that the wealth of the bourgeoisie is incompatible with the comfort and liberty of the workers? Do you understand that, for the same reason, the prosperity and dignity of the labouring masses inevitably demands the entire abolition of the bourgeoisie? Do you realise that no single worker, however intelligent and energetic he may be, can successfully fight against the excellently organised forces of the bourgeoisie - a force which is upheld mainly by the organisation of the State - all States?

Do you not see that, in order to become a power, you must unite - not with the bourgeoisie, which would be a folly and a crime, since all the bourgeoisie, so far as they belong to their class, are our deadly enemies? - Nor with such workers as who have deserted their own cause and have lowered themselves to beg the benevolence of the governing class? But with the honest men, who are moving, in all sincerity, towards the same goal as you? Do you understand that, against the powerful combinations formed by the privileged classes, the capitalists or possessors of the means and instruments of production and distribution, the divided or sectarian organisations of labour, can never triumph? Do you not realise that, in order to fight and vanquish this capitalist combination, nothing less than the amalgamation, in council and action, of all local, and national labour associations - federating into an international association of the workers of all lands, - is required.

If you know and comprehend all this, come into our camp whatever else your political or religious convictions are. But if you are one of us, and so long as you are at one with us, you will wish to pledge the whole of your being, by your every action as well as by your words, to the common cause, as a spontaneous and whole-hearted expression of that fervour of loyalty that will inevitably take possession of you. You will have to promise :

(1) To subordinate your personal and even your family interest, as well as political and religious bias and would-be activities, to the highest interest of our association, namely the struggle of labour against Capital, the economic fight of the Proletariat against the Bourgeoisie.

(2) Never, in your personal interests, to compromise with the Bourgeoisie.

(3) Never attempt to secure a position above your fellow workers, whereby you would become at once a bourgeois and an enemy of the proletariat: for the only difference between capitalists and workers is this: the former seek their welfare outside, and at the expense of the welfare of the community, whilst the latter is dependent on the solidarity of those who are robbed in the economic field.

(4) To remain ever and always true to this principle of the solidarity of labour: for the smallest betrayal of this principle, the slightest deviation from this solidarity, is, in the eyes of the International, the greatest crime and shame with which a worker can soil himself.

II

Socialism and the Working Class

The pioneers of the International act wisely in refusing to make philosophic or political principles the basis of their association, and preferring to have exclusively the economic struggle of Labour against Capital as the sole foundation. They are convinced that the moment a worker realises the class struggle, the moment he - trusting his right and the numerical strength of his class - enters the arena against capitalist robbery: that very moment, the force of circumstances and the evolution of the struggle, will oblige him to recognise all the political, philosophic and socialistic principles of the class struggle. These principles are nothing more or less than the real expression of the aims, the one underlying and supreme purpose, is the abolition - from the political as well as social viewpoint - of:

the class divisions existent in society, especially of those divisions imposed on society by, and in, the economic interests of the bourgeoisie.

all Territorial States, Political Fatherlands and Nations, and on top of the historic ruins of this old world order, the establishment of the great international federation of all local and national productive groups.

From the philosophic point of view, the aims of the working class are nothing less than the realisation of the eternal ideals of humanity, the welfare of man, the reign of equality, justice and liberty on earth, making unnecessary all belief in heaven and all hopes for a better hereafter.

The great mass of the workers, crushed by their daily toil, live in ignorance and misery. Whatever the political and religious prejudices in which they have been reared individually may be, this mass is unconsciously Socialistic: instinctively, and, through the pinch of hunger and their position, more earnestly and truly socialistic than all the "scientific" and "bourgeois socialists" put together. The mass are Socialists through all the circumstances of reasoning; and, in reality, the necessities of life have a greater influence over those of pure reasoning, because reasoning (or thought) is only the reflex of the continually developing life-force and not its basis.

The workers do not lack reality, the zeal for Socialist endeavour, but only the Socialist idea. Every worker, from the bottom of his heart, is longing for a really human existence, ie. material comfort and mental development founded on justice, ie. equality and liberty for each and every man in work. This cannot be realised in the existing political and social organisation, which is founded on injustice and bare-faced robbery of the labouring masses. Consequently, every reflective worker becomes a revolutionary socialist, since he is forced to realise that his emancipation can only be accomplished by the complete overthrow of present-day society. Either this organisation of injustice with its entire machinery of oppressive laws and privileged institutions, must disappear, or else the proletariat is condemned to eternal slavery.

This is the quintessence of the Socialist idea, whose germs can be found in the instinct of every serious thinking worker. Our object, therefore, is to make him conscious of what he wants, to awaken in him a clear idea that corresponds to his instincts : for the moment the class consciousness of the proletariat has lifted itself up to there level of their instinctive feeling, their intention will have developed into determination, and their power will be irresistible.

What prevents the quicker development of this idea of salvation amongst the Proletariat ? Its ignorance; and to a great extent, the political and religious prejudices with which the governing classes are trying to befog the consciousness and the natural intelligence of the people.

How can you disperse this ignorance and destroy these strange prejudices ? "The liberation of the Proletariat must be the work of the Proletariat itself", says the preface to the general statute of the (1st) International. And it is a thousand times true! This is the main foundation of our great association. But the working class is still very ignorant. It lacks completely every theory. There is only one way out therefore, namely - PROLETARIAN LIBERATION THROUGH ACTION. And what will this action be that will bring to Socialism the workers? It is the economic struggle of the Proletariat against the governing class carried out in solidarity. It is the Industrial Organisation of the workers.

The organisation of the International (1869)

The masses are the social power, or, at least, the essence of that power. But they lack two things in order to free themselves from the hateful conditions which oppress them: education and organisation. These two things represent, today, the real foundations of power of all government.

To abolish the military and governing power of the state, the proletarian must organise. But since organisation cannot exist without knowledge, it is necessary to spread among the masses real social education.

To spread this real social education is the aim of the International. Consequently, the day on which the International succeeds in uniting in its ranks a half, a fourth, or even a tenth part of the workers of Europe, the State or States will cease to exist. The organisation of the International will be altogether different from the organisation of the State, since its aim is not to create new states but to destroy all existing government systems. The more artificial, brutal, and authoritarian is the power of the State, the more indifferent and hostile it is to the natural developments, interests and desires of the people, the freer and more natural must be the organisation of the International. It must try all the more to accomodate itself to the natural instincts and ideals of the people.

But what do we mean by the natural organisation of the masses? We mean the organisation which is founded upon the experience and results of their everyday life and the difference of their occupations i.e. their factory and industrial organisation. The moment all branches of industry are represented in their International, the organisation of the masses will be complete.

But it might be said, since we exercise, through the International, organised influence over the masses, we are aiming at a new power equally with the politicians of the old State systems. This charge is a great mistake. The influence of the International over the masses differs from all government power in that, it is no more than a natural, unofficial influence of ordinary ideas, without authority.

The State is the authority, the rule, and organised power of the possessing class, and the make-believe experts over the life and liberty of the masses. The State does not want anything other than the servility of the masses. Hence it demands their submission.

The International, on the other hand, has no other object than the absolute freedom of the masses. Consequently it appeals to the rebellious feelings. In order that this should be strong enough and powerful enough to overthrow the rule of the State and privileged class, the International must organise.

To reach this goal, it has to employ two quite just weapons:

- the propagation of its ideas
- the natural organisation of its power or authority, through the influence of its adherents on the masses.

A person who can assert that, such organised activity is an attack on the freedom of the masses, or an attempt to create a new rule, is either a sophist or a fool. It is sad enough for those who don't know the rules of human solidarity, to think that complete individual independence is possible, or desirable. Such a condition would mean the dissolution of all human society, since the entire social existence of man depends on the interdependence of individuals and the masses. Every person, even the cleverest and strongest - nay, especially the clever and strong - are at all times, the creatures as also the creators of this influence.

The freedom of each individual is the direct outcome of those material, mental, and moral influences, of all individuals surrounding him in that society in which he lives, develops, and dies. A person who seeks to free himself from that influence in the name of a metaphysical, superhuman and perfectly egotistical "freedom" aims at his own extermination as a human being. And those who refuse to use that influence on others, withdraw from all activity of social life, and by not passing on their thoughts and feelings, work for their own destruction. Therefore this so-called independence, which is preached so by the idealists and the metaphysicians: this so-called 'individual liberty' is only the destruction of existence.

In nature as well as human society, which is never anything else than part of that same nature, every creature exists on condition that he tries, as much as his individuality will permit, to influence the lives of others. The destruction of that indirect influence would mean death. And when we desire the freedom of the masses, we by no means want to destroy this natural influence, which individuals or groups of individuals, create through their own contract.

What we seek is the abolition of the artificial, privileged, lawful, and official influence. If the Church and State were private institutions, we should be, even then, I suppose their opponents. But we would not have protested against their right to exist. True, in a sense, they are, today, private institutions, as they exist exclusively to conserve the interests of the privileged classes. Still, we oppose them, because they use all the power of the masses to force their rule upon the latter in an authoritarian, official, and brutal manner.

If the International could have organised itself in the State manner, we, its most enthusiastic friends, would have become its bitter enemies. But it cannot possibly organise itself in such a form. The International cannot recognise limits to human fellowship and equality, whilst the State cannot exist unless it limits, by territorial pretensions, such fellowship and equality.

History has shown us that the realisation of a league of all the States in the world, about which all despots have dreamed, is impossible. Hence those who speak of the State, necessarily think and speak of a world divided into different **States**, who are internally oppressors and externally despoilers i.e. enemies to each other. The State, since it involves this division, oppression, and despoilation of humanity, must represent the negation of humanity and the destruction of human society.

There would not have been any sense in the organisation of the workers at all, if they had not aimed at the overthrow of the State. The International organises the masses with this object in view, to the end that they might reach this goal. And how does it organise them?

Not from the top to the bottom, by imposing a seeming unity and order on human society, as the State attempts, without regards to the differences of interests arising from the differences of occupation. On the contrary, the International organises the masses from the bottom upwards, taking the social life of the masses, their real aspirations, as a starting point, and encouraging them to unite in groups according to their real interests in society. The International evolves a unity of purpose and creates a real equilibrium of aim and well-being out of their natural difference in life and occupation.

Just because the International is organised in this way, it develops a real power. Hence it is essential that every member of every group should be acquainted thoroughly with all its principles. Only by these means will he make a good propagandist in time of peace and a real revolutionist in time of war.

We all know that our program is just. It expresses in a few short words the just and humane demands of the Proletariat. Just because it is an absolutely humane program, it contains all the symptoms of the social revolution. It proclaims the destruction of the old and the creation of the new world.

This is the main point which we must explain to all members of the International. This program substitutes a new science, a new philosophy for the old religion. And it defines a new international policy, in place of the old diplomacy. It has no other object than the overthrow of the States.

In order that the members of the International scientifically fill their posts, as revolutionary propagandists, it is necessary for every one to be imbued with the new science, philosophy and policy: the new spirit of the International.

It is not enough to declare that we want the economic freedom of the workers, a full return for our labour, the abolition of all classes, the end of political slavery, the realisation of all human rights, equal duties and justice for all: in a phrase the unity of humanity. All this, is, without doubt, very good and just. But when the workers of the International go on repeating these phrases, without grasping their truth and meaning, they have to face the danger of reducing their just claims to empty words, cant, which is mouthed without understanding.

It might be answered that not all workers, even when they are members of the International, can be educated. It is not enough, then, that there are in the organisation, a group of people, who - as far as possible - are acquainted with the science, philosophy and policy of Socialism? Cannot the wide mass follow their 'brotherly advice' not to turn from the right path, that leads ultimately to the freedom of the Proletariat?

The authoritarian communists in the International often make use of these arguments, although they have wanted the courage to state them so freely and so clearly. They have sought to hide their real opinion under demagogic compliments about the cleverness and all-powerfulness of the people.

We were always the bitterest enemy of this opinion. And we are convinced, that, if the International split into two groups - a big majority, and small minority of ten, twenty or more people - in such a way, that the majority were blindly convinced of the theoretical and practical sense of the minority, the result would be the reduction of the International to an oligarchy - the worst form of State.

The educated and capable minority would, together with its responsibilities, demand the rights of a governing body. And this governing body would prove more despotic than an avowed autocracy, because it would be hidden beneath a show of servile respect for the will of the people.

The minority would rule through the medium of resolutions, imposed upon the people, and afterwards called "the will of the people". In this way, the educated minority would develop into a government, which like all governments, would grow every day more despotic and reactionary.

The International then can become a weapon for liberating the people, when it frees itself: when it does not permit itself to be divided into two groups - a big majority the blind tool of an educated minority. That is why its first duty is to imprint upon the minds of its members the science, philosophy, and policy of Socialism.

address on: The International pt.1 the workers & the sphynx

I. The international claims for each the full product of his labour: meaning by that his complete and equal right to enjoy, in common with his fellow workers, the full amenities of life and happiness that the collective labour of the people creates. The International declares that it is wrong for those who produce nothing at all to be able to maintain their insolent riches, since they do so only by the work of others. Like the Apostle Paul, the International maintains, that, "if any would not work, neither should he eat."

The International avers that the right to the noble name of labour belongs exclusively to productive labour. Some years ago, the young King of Portugal paid a visit to his august father-in-law, the King of Italy. He was presented to a gathering of the Working Men's Association at Turin: and there, surrounded by workers, he uttered these memorable words: "Gentlemen, the present century is the century of labour. We all labour. I, too labour for the good of my people."

However flattering this likening of royal labour to working-class labour may appear, we cannot accept it. We must recognise that royal labour is a labour of consumption and not of production. Capitalists, proprietors, contractors also labour : but all such labour is parasitic, since it has no other object than to transfer the real products of labour from the hands of the workers, whose toil creates them, into the possession of those who do not create them, to serve the purpose of those who do not create them, to serve the purpose of further gain and exploitation. Such labour cannot be considered productive labour. In this sense, thieves and brigands labour also. Roughly, they risk every day their liberty and their life. But they do not work.

The International recognises intellectual labour - that of men of science - as productive labour. It places the application of science to industry, and the activity of the organisers and administrators of industrial and commercial affairs, in the category of useful or productive labour. But it demands for all men a participation as much in manual labour as in the labour of the mind. The question of how much manual and how much mental labour a person shall contribute to the community must be decided not by the privileges of birth or social status, but by suitability to the natural capacities of each, developed by equal opportunity of education and instruction.

Only thus can class distinctions and privileges disappear.

2. The International declares that, so long as the working masses are plunged in the misery of economic servitude, **ALL SO-CALLED REFORMS AND EVEN SO-CALLED POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS** of a seeming proletarian character, will avail them nothing. They are condemned to live in a forced ignorance and to accept a slave status by the economic organisation of wage-slave society.

3. Consequently, the International urges the workers in their own interests, material as well as moral, - and moral because so completely and thoroughly and equally materially for each and all - to subordinate all seeming political questions to definite economic issues. The material means of an education and of an existence really human, are, for the proletariat, the first condition of liberty, morality and humanity.

4. The International declares that the record of past centuries, the legacy of class exploitation, as well as contemporary experience, should have convinced the workers that they can expect no social amelioration of their lot from the generosity of the privileged classes. There is no justice in class society, since justice can only exist in equality; and equality means the abolition of class and privilege. There never has been and there never will be a generous or just ruling class. The class - s and orders existing in present day society - clergy, bureaucracy, nobility, bourgeoisie - dispute for power only to consolidate their own strength and to increase their profits within the system. The International exists to express the truth that henceforth, the working class must take the direction of its own affairs into its own hands.

5. Once the working class clearly understands itself, its solidarity will find expression in the workers' councils, or federation of councils. Then there will remain no power in the world that can resist the workers.

6. To this end, the International affirms that the proletariat ought to tend, not to the establishment of a new rule, or of a new class for its alleged profit as a class, but to the definite abolition of all rule, of every class. Dictatorship, political sectarianism, all spell power, exploitation, and injustice. The working class through its international

organisation must express the realisation of justice and liberty, without distinction of race, colour, nationality, or faith - all to fully exercise the same duties and enjoy the same rights.

7. The cause of the working class of the entire world is one, is solidarity, across and in spite of all State frontiers. Expressing that common purpose, that complete working class identity of interest. The International proclaims the international oneness of the workers' cause. It pioneers the definite international association of the workers of the world in a chain of workers' councils.

The cause of the workers is international because, pushed by an inevitable law that is inherent in it, bourgeois capital in its threefold employment - in industry, commerce, and in banking speculations - has been tending, since the beginning of the 19th., towards an organisation more and more international and complete, enlarging each day more, and simultaneous in all countries, the abyss which separates the working world from the bourgeois world. From this fact, it results that, for every worker endowed with intelligence and heart, for every worker who has vision and affection for his companions in misery and servitude; who is conscious of the situation of himself and of his class, and of his actual interest: the real country is henceforth the international camp of labour. And the true local organisation of that camp is the workers' council.

To every worker, truly worthy of the name, the workers of so-called foreign countries, who suffer and are oppressed as he is oppressed, are infinitely nearer and more immediate kin than the bourgeoisie of his own country, who enrich themselves to his detriment. Because of this the workers' councils will replace the geographical unit of false democracy, the national State.

8. The deliverance of the working class from the oppression and exploitation which it enjoys in all countries alike, must be international. In those lands which are bound by means of credit, industry, and commerce, the economic and social emancipation of the working class must be achieved almost simultaneously by a common struggle ending in a triumphant challenge to the existing political constitution of the world. The economic emancipation of the working class is the foundation of the political emancipation of the world. Realising this the International preaches the proletarian duty and message of fraternity.

By the duty of fraternity, as well as by the call of enlightened self-interest, the workers are called upon to establish, organise and exercise the greatest practical solidarity, industrial, communal, provincial, national and international: beginning in their workshop, their home, their tenement, their street, their political group and extending it to all their trade societies, to all their trade propaganda federations, a close industrial solidarity.

They ought to observe this solidarity scrupulously, and practice it in all the developments, catastrophes, and incidents of the incessant daily struggle of the labour of the worker against the stolen capital of the bourgeoisie; all those demands and claims of hours and wages, strikes, and every question that relates to the existence, whether material or moral, of the working people.

The revolt of the workers and the natural organisation of human solidarity through the free but involuntary and inevitable federation of all working class groups in the workers' council! This, then, is the answer to the enigma which the Capitalist sphynx forces us today to solve, threatening to devour us if we do not solve it.

pt. 2 solidarity in liberty

From this truth of practical solidarity or fraternity of struggle that I have laid down as the first principle of the International, flows a theoretical consequence of equal importance.

The workers are able to unite as a class for class economic action, because all religious philosophies, and systems of morality which prevail in any given order of society are always the ideal expression of its real, material situation.

Theologies, philosophies and ethics define, first of all, the economic organisation of society; and secondly, the political organisation, which is itself nothing but the legal, and, violent, consecration of the economic order. Consequently, there are not several religions of the ruling class; there is one, the religion of property. And there are not several religions of the working class: there is one, the piety of struggle, the vision of emancipation, penetrating the fog of every mysticism, and finding utterance in a thousand prayers.

Workers of all creeds, like the workers of all lands, have but one faith, hope and charity: one common purpose overleaps the barriers of seeming hatreds of race and creed. The workers are one class, and therefore one race, one faith, one nation. This is the theoretical truth to be induced from the practical fraternal solidarity of the International organisation. Church and State are liquidated in the vital organisation of the working class, the genius of free humanity.

It has been stated that Protestantism established liberty in Europe. This is a great error. It is the economic, material emancipation of the bourgeois class which, in spite of Protestantism, has created that exclusively political and legal liberty, which is too easily confounded with the grand, universal, human liberty, which only the proletariat can create.

The necessary accompaniment of bourgeois legal and political liberty, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, is the intellectual, anti-Christian, and anti-religious emancipation of the bourgeoisie. The capitalist ruling class has no religion, no ideals, and no illusion. It is cynical and unbelieving because it denies the real base of human society, the complete emancipation of the working class.

Bourgeois society, by its very nature of interested professionalism, must maintain centres of authority and exploitation, called States. The labourers, by their very economic needs, must challenge such centres of oppression.

The inherent principles of human existence are summed up in the single law of solidarity. This is the golden rule of humanity, and may be formulated thus: no person can recognise or realise his or her own humanity except by recognising it in others and co-operating for its realisation by each and all. No man can emancipate himself save by emancipating with him all the men about him.

My liberty is the liberty of everybody. I cannot be free in idea until I am free in fact. To be free in idea and not free in fact is to be in revolt. To be free in fact is to have my liberty and my right, to find their confirmation, and sanction in the liberty and right of all mankind. I am free only when all men are my equals. (first and foremost economically).

What all other men are is of the greatest importance to me. However independent I may imagine myself to be, however far removed I may be from mundane considerations by my social status, I am enslaved to the misery of the meanest member of society. The outcast is my daily menace. Whether I am Pope, Czar, Emperor, or even Prime Minister, I am always the creature of their circumstance, the conscious product of their ignorance, want and clamouring. They are in slavery, and I, the superior one, am enslaved in consequence.

For example, if such is the case, I am an enlightened or intelligent man. But I am foolish with the folly of the people, my wisdom stunted by their needs, my mind palsied. I am a brave man, but I am a coward of the people's fear. Their misery appals me, and every day I shrink from the struggle of life. My career becomes an evasion of living. A rich man I tremble before their poverty, because it threatens to engulf me. I discover I have no riches in myself, no wealth but that stolen from the common life of the common people. As a privileged man I turn pale at the people's demand for justice. I feel a menace in that demand.

The cry is ominous and I am threatened. It is the feeling of the malefactor dreading, yet awaiting for inevitable arrest. My life is privileged and furtive. But it is not mine. I lack freedom and contentment. In short, wishing to be free, though I am wise, brave, rich, and privileged, I cannot be free because my immediate associates do not wish men to be free; and the mass, from whom all wisdom, bravery, riches, and privileges ascend, do not know how to secure their freedom. The slavery of the common people make them the instruments of my oppression. For me to be free, they must be free. We must conquer bread and freedom in common.

The true, human liberty of a single individual implies the emancipation of all: because, thanks to the law of solidarity, which is the natural basis of all human society, I cannot be, feel, and know myself really, completely free, if I am not surrounded by men as free as myself. The slavery of each is my slavery.

It follows that the question of individual liberty is not a personal but a social and economic question that depends on the deliverance of the working class for its realisation. That in turn, involves the spontaneous organisation and capacity for economic and social action through the voluntary and free grouping of all workers' organisations into the workers' councils. The Red Association of those who toil!

Violence and Conspiracies

Political freedom without economic equality is a pretence, a fraud, a lie: and the workers want no lying.

The workers strive after a fundamental transformation of society, the result of which must be the abolition of classes, equally in economic as in political respects: after, a system of society in which all men will enter the world under special conditions, will be able to unfold and develop themselves, work and enjoy the good things of life. These are the demands of justice.

But how can we from the abyss of ignorance, of misery and slavery, in which the workers on the land and in the city are sunk, arrive at that paradise, that realisation of justice and manhood? For this the workers have one means: the workers' council.

Through the association they brace themselves up, they mutually, improve each other and, through their own efforts, make an end of that dangerous ignorance which is the main support of their slavery. By means of the association, they learn to help, and mutually support one another. Thereby they will reach, finally, a power which will prove more powerful than all confederated bourgeois capital and political powers put together.

The council must become THE organisation in the mind of every worker. It must become the password of every political and agitational organisation of the workers, the password of every group, in every industry throughout all lands. Undoubtedly the council is the weightiest and most hopeful sign of the working class struggle, an infallible omen of the coming complete emancipation of the workers.

Experience has proved that the isolated associations are not more powerful than are the isolated workers. Even the federation of all workers associations of a single country would not be sufficiently powerful to stand up in conflict with the international combination of all profit-making world capital.

Economic science establishes the fact that the emancipation of the worker is no national question. No country, no matter how wealthy, mighty, and well-served it may be, can undertake - without ruining itself and surrendering its inhabitants to misery - a fundamental alteration in the relations between capital and labour, if this alteration is not accomplished, at the same time, at least, in the greatest part of the industrial countries of the world. Consequently the question of the emancipation of the worker from the yoke of capital and its representatives, is above all, an international question. Its solution is only possible, therefore, through an international movement.

Is this international movement a secret idea, a conspiracy? Not in the least. The international movement, the federation of councils, does not dictate from above or prescribe in secret. It federates from below and wills from a thousand quarters. It speaks in every group of workers and embraces the combined decisions of all the factions. The council is living democracy; and whenever the association formulates plans, it does it openly, and speaks to all who will listen. Its word is the voice of labour recruiting its energies for the overthrow of capitalist oppression.

What does the council say? What is the demand it makes through every association of those who toil and think, in every factory, in every country? What does it request?

JUSTICE ! The strictest justice and the rights of humanity : the right of manhood, womanhood, childhood, irrespective of all distinctions of birth race or creed. The right to live and the obligation to work to maintain that right. Service from each to all and from all to each. If this idea appears appalling and prodigious to the existent bourgeois society, so much the worse for this society.

Is the workers council a revolutionary enterprise? Yes and no.

The council is revolutionary in the sense that it will replace a society based upon injustice, exploitation, privilege, laziness, and authority, by one which is founded on justice and freedom for all mankind. In a word, it wills an economic, political and social organisation, in which each person, without prejudice to his natural and personal idiosyncrasies, will find it

equally possible to develop himself, to learn, to think, to work, to be active, and to enjoy life honourably. Yes, this it desires: and we repeat, once more, if this is incompatible with the existing organisation of society, so much the worse for this society.

Is the council revolutionary in the sense of barricades and violent uprisings? No: the council concerns itself but little with this kind of 'politics'; or, rather, one should say that the council takes no part in it whatever. The bourgeois revolutionaries, anxious for some change of power, and police agents finding occupation in passing explosions of sound and fury, are annoyed with the council on account of its indifference towards their activities and schemes of provocation.

The workers council, the Red association of those who want and toil, comprehended, long since, that each bourgeois politic - no matter how red and revolutionary it might appear - served not the emancipation of the workers, but the tightening of their slavery. Even if the council had not comprehended this fact, the miserable game, which, at times, the bourgeois republican and even the bourgeois socialist plays, would have opened the workers' eyes.

The workers' council, ever evolving more completely into the workers international movement, holds itself severely aloof from the dismal political intrigues, and knows today only one policy: to each group, to each worker: his propaganda, its extension and organisation into struggle and action.

On the day when the great proportion of the world's workers have associated themselves through councils, and so firmly organised through their divisions into one common solidarity of movement, no revolution, in the sense of violent insurrection, will be necessary. From this it will be seen that anarchists do not stand for abortive violence which its enemies attribute to it. Without such methods, justice will triumph. Oppression will be liquidated by the direct power of the workers through association. And if that day, there are impatient heads, and some suffering, this will be the guilt of the bourgeoisie refusing to recognise what has happened, through their machination. To the triumph of the social revolution itself, violence will be unnecessary.

Parliamentary 'democracy'

In the most democratic and free countries, such as England, Belgium, Switzerland, and the U.S.A., the freedom and political rights which the workers enjoy ostensibly are merely fictitious. They, who are slaves to their masters in the social sense are slaves also in the political sense. They have neither the education, nor the leisure, nor the independence which are so absolutely necessary for the free and thoughtful exercise of their rights of citizenship.

In the most democratic countries, those in which there is universal suffrage, they have one day of mastery, or rather of festival, Election day. Once this day, the bourgeoisie, their daily oppressors and exploiters, come before them, hat in hand and talk of equality, brotherhood, and call them a sovereign people, whose very humble servants and representatives they wish to be.

Once this day is passed, fraternity and equality disperse like smoke; the bourgeoisie become once more the bourgeoisie; and the proletariat, the sovereign people, continue in their slavery. This is why the system of representat-

ive democracy is so much applauded by the radical bourgeoisie, even when in a popular direction, it is improved, completed, and developed through the referendum and the direct legislation of the people, in which form it is so strenuously advocated by a certain school of Germans, who strongly call themselves Socialists (the Marxists).

FOR, SO LONG AS THE PEOPLE REMAIN SLAVES ECONOMICALLY, THEY WILL ALSO REMAIN SLAVES POLITICALLY, EXPRESS THEIR SENTIMENTS AS SUCH, AND SUBORDINATE THEMSELVES TO THE BOURGEOISIE, WHO RELY UPON THE CONTINUANCE OF THE VOTE SYSTEM FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THEIR AUTHORITY.

Does that mean that we revolutionary socialists are opposed to universal suffrage, and prefer limited suffrage or the despotism of an individual? By no means. What we assert is, that, universal suffrage in itself, BASED AS IT IS ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY, will never be for the people anything but a bait, and that from the side of the democratic bourgeoisie, it will never be aught but a shameful lie, the surest implement for strengthening, with a make-believe of liberalism and justice, the eternal domination of the exploiting and owning classes, and so suppress the freedom and interests of the people.

Consequently we deny that the universal franchise in itself is a means in the hands of the people for the achievement of economic and social equality.

On this ground we assert that the so-called Social Democrats (eg the Labour Party EDS.), who, in those countries, where universal suffrage does not exist yet, exert themselves to persuade the people that they must achieve this before all else - as today the leaders of the social democratic parties are doing when they tell the people that political freedom is a necessary condition to the attainment of economic freedom - are themselves either the victims of a fatal error or they are charlatans. Do they really not know, or do they pretend not to know, that this preceding political freedom i.e. that which necessarily exists without economic and social equality, since it should have to precede these two fundamental equalities, will be essentially bourgeois freedom, that is, founded on the economic dependence of the people, and consequently incapable of bringing forth its opposite, the economic and social freedom, and creating such economic freedom as leads to the exclusive freedom of the bourgeoisie alone?

Are these peculiar Social Democrats victims to a fallacy or are they betrayers? That is a very delicate question, which I prefer not to examine too closely. To me it is certain, that there are no worse enemies of the people than those who try to turn them away from the social upheaval, the only change that can give them real freedom, justice, and well-being, in order to draw them again into the treacherous path of reforms, or of revolutions of an exclusively political character whose tool, victim, and deputy social democracy always has been.

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