

Proletarian Dictatorship

ONE of the most frequent criticisms directed by the Right Wingers against the Communist position assumed by the Left Wing (and this exactly parallels the European Social-patriots' criticism of Bolshevism), is that the Left Wing repudiates Democracy and stands for Dictatorship—Proletarian Dictatorship, it is true, but still, Dictatorship. The bad Bolsheviki, who are pictured in the bourgeois press and the corridors of the Rand School as advocating disembowelment, mayhem and the suppression of all our "hard-won liberties," are described as endorsing the Dictatorship of the Proletariat out of sheer devilishness.

Socialism is a science. Marx scientifically proved that Capitalism generated within itself the forces which would destroy it; and that it also generated the class-antagonisms which would unite the workers to rise against it, and finally to overthrow it. He also predicted that during the transition period between Capitalism and Socialism, the working class would be the ruling class; and, to make his meaning perfectly clear, he went on to say that this working class rule of society in transition "cannot be anything else but the dictatorship of the proletariat."

There are very few Socialists today who do not see that Capitalism is approaching its doom with tremendous speed; that the forces generated within the system have, under the intensifying pressure of war, finally burst it asunder. Also, the very desperation with which Capitalism attempts to reconstruct the shattered world, reveals in all its naked class-character as the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie. This, with gigantic strides, is awakening and uniting the working class, and sharpening its class consciousness to the point of action for the overthrow of Capitalism. So are the main points of Marx's thesis proven true.

We American Socialists have had so little to do with shaping the course of working class action, that we find ourselves taken unaware by such demonstrations of working class mass action as the strikes in Seattle, and the general strike in Canada. After all, these strikes, which began as demands for immediate and temporary aims, developed a revolutionary character, in that, for a short time, they displaced the capitalist political government by a government of their own.

This characteristic of the Seattle strike, and more particularly of the Canadian strike, must be em-

phasized. The Seattle workers, after they had tied up the city, discovered that a human community cannot be tied up. The workers must be fed, the sick must be attended, the dead buried, refuse removed, and lights, water and such public needs supplied. Moreover, the city must be policed.

The Strike Committee thus found itself "licensing" certain industries and services to operate, in order that, primarily, *the working class should not suffer*. The restaurant and hotel employees being also on strike, the Committee established its own restaurants. In order to safeguard lives and goods of the workers, a proletarian police was established.

In Winnipeg and Toronto today the same condition is observable. The General Strike, by paralyzing industry, paralyzes government. The Strike Committees are forced to rule the cities, to "exempt" certain industries and services in order to provide for elementary human needs; they must police the cities themselves. Willy-nilly, this "production for use and not for profit" is undertaken for the benefit of the workers. It displaces the capitalist government which operated for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. It proves that the capitalist government is incapable of acting for the benefit of the working class; but what is more important, it shows up in glaring colors the class-character of capitalist government, which in time of labor troubles always acts as the agent of the bourgeoisie against the working class, and must be replaced by a working class government of a *peculiar working class character* whenever the working class becomes the ruling class, as it is today on a small scale in some Canadian cities.

And here another of Marx's predictions is proven correct. This government of the workers "cannot be anything else but the dictatorship of the proletariat." And still another, demonstrated to all who have eyes to see, that "the working class cannot simply laid hold of the capitalist state machinery and use it for its own ends."

An editorial in the *New York Times* of Monday, June 2d, sums up the situation from the capitalist point of view:

CANADA'S PROBLEM

"In form it is a strike that is on in Canada. In intent it is revolution. The Government is inactive and seems powerless. Let us not be too quick to condemn the Government for inaction. Under the laws, Governments are not empowered to act unless there is violence. There are no riots worthy of the name; the 'strikers' simply assume the government of a town, the police and firemen join them, and there is no overt act of which to take cognizance. Yet nothing is done in any of these cities except by permission of the local Strike Committee. In Winnipeg the milk and bread wagons run by such a permit. The Post Office employees join the strikers in one city after another, and the mails are delivered only as the Strike Committee permits. The police of Winnipeg joined the strikers at first, but when the Winnipeg authorities proposed to raise a new police force the regular one returned to work. This sounds encouraging until you hear the

reason. They returned to work so there should be nobody to interfere with the strikers, who as yet had committed no overt acts of disorder. In Calgary the mails are being distributed by volunteers, the regular postal force having quit. Volunteer fire departments are springing up through the West to take the places of the striking firemen. And all these strikes, even those of the Government employees, are sympathetic strikes.

"The banks of Winnipeg have closed their doors because they cannot do business with the mail and telegraph services disrupted. 'At the Fort Garry Hotel,' says a correspondent, 'meals are served only to women and children,' perhaps by gracious permission of the Strike Committee. In consequence of the desire of some strikers to get something to eat, the Strike Committee granted a permit to several restaurants in Winnipeg to keep open. It also permitted some bakeries to reopen on condition that they placed themselves under its jurisdiction.

"Our own laws may be different from those of Canada. Certainly the sanctity of the mails would not be interfered with without civil war. But as things stand, the Dominion is faced with a problem which its laws seem powerless to avert. The House of Commons will debate the question today. Surely some way must be found by which a menaced Government may find a weapon with which to strike back and save itself."

From this editorial may be gleaned a hint of what would happen to such strikers in the United States. If there are no laws to interfere with peaceable strikers, the American government would pass them. If there were no riots to provoke massacres, the American capitalist class, and its press, would create them—as it has in other strikes we know of.

At present the Canadian Government does not seem to know what to do. But depend upon it, the capitalist government will find a way. It will suspend its own constitutional guarantees, it will abolish its own democratic political machinery. It will either yield the (at present) moderate demands of Canadian labor—and then emasculate its concessions—or it will find a way of applying force which will break the strike.

Then the workers of Canada—and we hope, of the United States—will learn the final lesson which proletarian revolutions all teach, and which Marx formulated:

"If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class; if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and as such sweeps away by force the old conditions of production; then it will, along these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms, and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class."

It matters not that the Canadian General Strike, and the Seattle Strike before it, were declared for the most elementary immediate demands. The process of the strike, and the logic of its inevitable conflict with the government, cannot fail to drive home the lesson that *no lasting working class reforms are possible under capitalist government; only the overthrow of the capitalist system, and the establishment of Proletarian Dictatorship, can solve the workers' problems and at the same time forever put an end to the class struggle.*

Open Air
MASS MEETING
To Demand "Hands Off Russia!"
To be Held at Second Ave. and Tenth St.,
Friday Evening, June 6th.
The following speakers will address the Meeting: John Reed, Rose Pastor Stokes, Jim Larkin, Dr. Morris Zucker.
Joseph Brodsky, Chairman.
Auspices 8th A. D., Socialist Party.
COME IN MASSES!

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Sunday, August 24th, 1919,
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Road, Westchester, Bronx, N. Y.
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Troupe.
Other attractions to be announced later.
A Red Picnic—A Great Time—For a Red
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Picnic starts 10 A. M.
Arranged by the Left Wing Members of
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One Dollar each to help maintain this
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Tickets 15c in advance, 20c at the gate.
Take Myrtle Avenue "L" to Wyckoff
Avenue and transfer to Cypress Hills car.
Gate open at 10 A. M.

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Sunday, June 8th, 1919
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Uus Ilm
to be held at Eastern Boulevard Park,
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