

tariat before Socialism can be established, the construction of a general industrial organization that may seize and operate industry. In terms of infinity, it may be conceivable that some day, some how, the majority of the proletariat, or an overwhelming minority, may become organized into industrial unions under Capitalism. In terms of actual practice, this is inconceivable. The proletariat of unskilled labor, which alone may accept industrial unionism, is a class difficult to organize; its conditions of labor discourage organization and make it move and act under the impulse of mass action. The conditions of Capitalism, its violent upheavals and stress of struggle, exclude the probability of an all-inclusive proletarian organization; moreover, should we hesitate to act until this general organization materializes, Capitalism may turn in on itself and establish a new form of slavery. In its dogmatic expression, industrial unionism has much in common with the parliamentary Socialist conception of the peaceful "growing into" Socialism; it evades the dynamic problems of the Revolution, substituting theory for reality and formula for action. It is fantastic as a general proposition; it is particularly fantastic considering the period of violent upheavals and struggle into which the world is now emerging, to consider that the proletariat under Capitalism can through industrialism organize the structure of the new society. The structure of industrialism, the form of the new Communist society, can be organized only during the transition period from Capitalism to Socialism acting through the dictatorship of the proletariat; all that can be done in the meanwhile is to develop a measure of industrial organization and its ideology of the industrial state, which may constitute the starting point for a proletarian dictatorship in its task of introducing the industrial "state" of Communist Socialism.

The supremacy of the proletariat is determined by its action, and not by its organization. The proletariat acts even where there is no organization, through mass action; organization is a means to action, and not a substitute for action. The function of an organization, in the revolutionary sense, is that it may serve as the centre for action of the unorganized proletarian masses, rally and integrate the general mass action of the proletariat, organizing and directing it for the conquest of power. Socialism hastens the overthrow of Capitalism through revolutionary action. In this sense, parliamentarism and industrial unionism become integral phases of mass action.

Mass action is not a form of action as much as it is a *process and synthesis* of action. It is the unity of all forms of proletarian action, a means of throwing the proletariat, organized and unorganized, in a general struggle against Capitalism and the capitalist state. It is the sharp, definite expression of the revolt of the workers under the impact of the antagonisms and repressions of Capitalism, of the recurring crises and revolutionary situations produced by the violent era of Imperialism. Mass action is the instinctive action of the proletariat, gradually developing more conscious and organized forms and definite purposes. It is extra-parliamentary in method, although political in purpose and result, may develop into and be itself developed by the parliamentary struggle.

Organizations, political and economic, have a tendency to become conservative; a tendency emphasized, moreover, by the fact that they largely represent the more favored groups of workers. These organizations must be swept out of their conservatism by the elemental impact of mass action, function-

ing through organized and unorganized workers acting instinctively under the pressure of events and in disregard of bureaucratic discipline. The great expressions of mass action in recent years, the New Zealand General Strike, the Lawrence strike, the great strike of the British miners under which capitalist society reeled on the verge of collapse,—all were mass actions organized and carried through in spite of the passive and active hostility of the dominant Socialist and labor organization. Under the impulse of mass action, the industrial proletariat senses its own power and acquires the force to act equally against Capitalism and the conservatism of organizations. Indeed, a vital feature of mass action is precisely that it places in the hands of the proletariat the power to overcome the fetters of these organizations, to act in spite of their conservatism, and through proletarian mass action emphasize antagonisms between workers and capitalists, and conquer power. A determining phase of the proletarian revolution in Russia was its acting against the dominant Socialist organization, sweeping these aside through its mass action before it could seize social supremacy. And the great strikes and demonstrations in Germany and Austria during February, 1918, potentially revolutionary in character, were a form of mass action that broke loose against the open opposition of the dominant Socialist and union organizations, and that were crushed by this opposition. *Mass action is the proletariat itself in action*, dispensing with bureaucrats and intellectuals acting through its own initiative; and it is precisely this circumstance that horrifies the soul of petty bourgeois Socialism. The masses are to act upon their own initiative and the impulse of their own struggles; it is the function of the revolutionary Socialist to provide the program and the course for this elemental action, to adapt himself to the new proletarian modes of struggle.

Mass action organizes and develops into the political strike and demonstration, in which a general political issue is the source of the action. Political mass action is determined not by the struggle for wages, but by general issues of prime political importance, in which the proletariat centralizes and integrates its forces, in which organized and unorganized workers may act together in a general struggle against Capitalism. This concentration of forces through mass action is indispensable to the revolutionary struggles to come.

Mass action may consist of a spontaneous strike of organized workers in revolt against the union bureaucracy; or, as is most usually the case, of the strikes and action of unorganized, unskilled workers. These are primitive forms of mass action, although they constitute the genesis of the general mass action which may include workers, organized and unorganized, in various industrial groupings, in a sweeping struggle against Capitalism on general class issues. An important fact, a fact that disposes of the cheap sneers of petty bourgeois Socialism stigmatizing these manifestations as "anarchistic" and "slum proletarian," is that these mass actions are an expression of the industrial proletariat against the centralized industry of dominant Capitalism. The mass that functions through mass action is the industrial proletarian mass, the cohesive action of which may attract other social groups to the general struggle.

As an historic process, mass action is an expression and recognition of the fact that the new era is an era of violent struggles, of an acute crisis of antagonisms, of the impact of the proletariat in a revolutionary situation against Capitalism for the definite revolutionary conquest of power.

Imperialistic State Capitalism, while trying

to and temporarily succeeding in softening antagonisms, actually and fundamentally multiplies the antagonisms and contradictions inherent in Capitalism. These antagonisms assume a violent form, equally between nations, and between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This crisis in antagonisms constitutes the social-revolutionary era, in which the proletariat is driven to violent struggles against Capitalism through mass action. The social-revolutionary era finds its expression and its tactic in mass action: this is the great fact of contemporary proletarian development.

The process of revolution consists in a weakening of the class power of the bourgeoisie as against a strengthening of the class power of the proletariat. The class power of the proletariat arises out of the intensity of its struggles and revolutionary energy. It consists, moreover, of undermining the bases of the power and morale of the capitalist state, a process that requires extra-parliamentary activity through mass action. Capitalism trembles when it meets the impact of a strike in a basic industry; Capitalism will more than tremble, it will actually verge on a collapse, when it meets the impact of a general mass action involving a number of correlated industries, and developing into revolutionary mass action against the whole capitalist regime. The value of this mass action is that it shows the proletariat its power, weakens Capitalism, and compels the state largely to depend upon the use of brutal force in the struggle, either the physical force of the military or the force of legal terrorism; this emphasizes antagonisms between proletarian and capitalist, widening the scope and deepening the intensity of the proletarian struggle against Capitalism. General mass action, moreover, a product of the industrial proletariat, will, by the impulse and psychology of events and the emphasizing of antagonisms, draw within the orbit of the struggle workers still under the control of the craft unions. Mass action, being the proletariat itself in action, loosens its energy, develops enthusiasm, and unifies the action of the workers to its utmost measure.

It is this concentration of proletarian forces that makes mass action the method of the proletarian revolution. It is this dynamic quality of mass action that makes it the expression of an era in which the proletariat throws itself in violent struggles against Capitalism. The proletarian revolution is a test of power, a process of forcible struggles, an epoch in which the proletariat requires a flexible method of action, a method of action that will not only concentrate all its available forces, but which will develop its initiative and consciousness, allowing it to seize and use any particular means of struggle in accord with a prevailing situation and necessary under the conditions.

Moreover, mass action means the repudiation of bourgeois democracy. Socialism will come not through the peaceful, democratic parliamentary conquest of the state, but through the determined and revolutionary mass action of a proletarian minority. The fetish of democracy is a fetter upon the proletarian revolution; mass action smashes the fetish, emphasizing that the proletariat recognizes no limits to its action except the limits of its own power. The proletariat will never conquer unless it proceeds to struggle after struggle; its power is developed and its energy let loose only through action. Parliamentarism, in and of itself, fetters proletarian action; organizations are often equally fetters upon action; the proletariat must act and always act: through action it conquers. The great merit and necessity of mass action is

(Continued on page 11)