

It is not impossible, on the other hand, for a government to tend away from political functions. When the Brazilian government supervises the storing and marketing of coffee, or when the U. S. government furnishes crop estimates and forecasts that have a trade value, etc., etc., it indicates a tendency away from political and toward industrial activity.

Industrial activity is considered non-political because it is a separate sphere or layer within the social system. In other words, the industrial spheres are parts which taken together constitute the political total in any given territory.

If the sum total of industrial spheres equals the political sphere, then combined industrial action is political action, whether it be governmental or not. And inter-industrial action, whether it be concentration of ownership on the part of big capital or a combination of unions, is a tendency toward political action.

Thus there are powerful political tendencies to be found outside of the government.

The concentration of capital represents not alone an industrial but also a political tendency. As in the case of Ford, who began by buying his motor and assembling the car, then manufactured his own motor, and is now building his own smelting plant, so in each and every case the association in one ownership of allied industries goes hand in hand with the concentration of capital; this concentration tends to control increasing portions of territory, not only through spreading industrial unification but also through control of the banking facilities, which affect industries territorially, whether they are allied or not. Besides in the last analysis all industries are interwoven. Finally this process is further strengthened by the department store system and by the stock market, with its interlocking ownership.

Labor undergoes political development also. Not, however, in the conventional sense that the working class does or does not believe in parliamentary representation, but because the industrial union tends to become wider in its membership and the unions themselves combine into always larger and larger organizations. Thus the organized activity which begins in isolated industrial spheres, widens until it becomes territorial in extent.

In proportion as this tendency is successful, the power of the unions is political.

Government, therefore, is one political manifestation of the system of production and is characterized by the following essentials:

Under the class system of industry the interests of the owning class determine the amount and character of necessary work; this involves not single acts at long intervals, as in the voting system, but is a continuous life-long process. This system in its normal operation takes up the full available time of the members of the working class and part only of the available time of the owning body. From this it follows that the owning class becomes the ruling class politically and governmentally because it has both the inherent interest and the necessary facilities for that purpose. The owning class can do work without pay not only for the government, but also in the form of voluntary political activity, including self-training for government work; it thereby has a monopoly of honorary unpaid offices which are often very important. Last and by no means least, it has the capacity to carry on continuous political activity, instead of at certain stated intervals, as in the case of the worker whose time is monopolized mostly for industrial requirements.

Thus the tendency to political rule by the working class is usually transient, though sometimes volcanic and radical, in contrast to the political rule of the owning body, which is a continuous steady stream of activity. The working class may, by an irruption of activity, assume the reins of government, but if, as has so often been the case, the property relations are not altered to correspond to the political upheaval, the ruling class in production reasserts itself politically as soon as the working class goes back to work.

III. THE AMERICAN INTERPRETATION

The American public seems to have arrived at the self-satisfied conclusion that these truths may be good enough for past history or even for the European nations, whose present condition is still burdened with the heritage of former customs and conditions;