

Bridging the Gap of State Socialism

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There has been discussion without end on the question of State Socialism—or State Capitalism, which is a more accurate term for what the *modus operandi* implies—and its relation to the achievement of true democratic Socialism.

The subject has been handled from every side and angle, with all varieties and shades of opposition, and of sympathetic and almost eager anticipation. Some of the discussions have been interesting, others edifying, but most of them might better not have been written, based as they are on supposition, sentimentality, lack of understanding of the scientific Marxian theory, or outright ignorance.

For our part, State Socialism, in itself, can be in no ways desirable, as it presupposes a continuation of the class struggle; in fact, it intensifies it. To the very extent of its thoroughness, to that degree would it eliminate competition among the exploiting class, which must necessarily continue as the entrenched benefactors under its operation. Therefore, it will permit—yes, demand, that the master class—the group of profiteers who control the enormous bond-holdings of the state—devote all its energies to the subjugation of the workers. And it is not difficult to see that they would have some considerable success in this undertaking, through their trained satellites. In this class of mercenaries would be included the personnel of all the mediums and institutions that form and mould so-called “public opinion;” not to mention the armed servants of the state, a possibly well-paid army and police (organized on military lines) to back up with physical persuasion, when necessary, the “moral” lessons and teachings of the chosen mouthpieces.

On the other side, the workers, while being forced by such conditions into class conscious channels of thought, would be more or less divided in many ways. As long as a profit-taking

class controls the mediums of publicity, and the educational institutions,—which will be as long as a class society exists—just so long will the workers be divided. Misunderstandings would be created, suspicions engendered, and jealousies aroused and fostered. Judases would be found to take the dirty pieces of silver for selling out trusting comrades. These things are inevitable in a class conflict. And with almost complete harmony among the masters, due to the practical elimination of competition, their control would reach a maximum of efficiency that we possibly cannot now realize.

So much for the general condition which we believe must exist under a form of “State Socialism.”

But putting aside all personal prejudices and wishes, and looking at the matter from the cold, clear light of scientific reasoning, we must accept the conclusion as inevitable, that unless the workers accept the principles of democratic socialism in sufficient numbers to bring it about, they will be drawn into the vortex of State Socialism.

Industrial evolution drives on unmistakably, unswervingly, toward State Control. The possibility of bringing this condition to a comparatively rapid termination, we shall discuss presently. Meanwhile, evolution works toward the state form of collectivity. If in any given part of the world—Russia, for instance, or some other country or countries later—the workers are sufficiently class-conscious to assume direct control of the industrial processes, that is *Revolution*. It is a manifestation of the Social Revolution, the immediate forerunner of Socialism.

To escape the evolutionary approach of State Socialism to democratic Socialism, there must necessarily be a thoroughly class-conscious proletariat, an uncompromising working class. If Russia, after the death-throes of competitive capitalism have subsided and the chaos of Europe has been reduced to a point that will permit of upbuilding, shall enter an era of democratic Socialism, or as near to it as the industrial development of the country will allow, then it will be due to a revolutionary, class-conscious proletariat. And how we do hope this result will be achieved!