The Mechanics of Socialist Revolution

We have taken a brief glance at socialism as a system of society and analyzed some important reasons as to why such a system of society is so vitally needed in our times. The question to be answered at this point then would seem to be *how* a socialist system of society is to be brought into being.

There are of course, certain definite views on this subject. In fact the bulk of opinion seems to be pretty much centered on two general viewpoints. On the one hand, it is argued, socialism will be brought about by means of a series of political reforms introduced either directly by the Labor or Social Democratic type of political party or because of pressure by these "working-class" organizations upon the old line capitalist parties. On the other hand, the followers of the 3rd and 4th International viewpoint maintain that only by the institution of a "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" with the Communist or Trotzkyite type of political party in control can socialism be achieved.

The World Socialist Party and its Companion Parties categorically reject both these concepts along with attitudes such as those of the Socialist Labor Party which advocates control through what they term Socialist Industrial Unions. These are all based upon a misconception of what a socialist society must be to begin with.

Inasmuch as the capitalist class is enabled to maintain its ownership of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth only because of its control of the machinery of government — national and local, the first thing to be done is to strip these rulers of this power, to wrest from them their control of the political state. In these times there is no other way that the job can be done than through the open and legal action of a political party, organized for socialism and for no other reason.

In other and in very plain words, the party of socialism must contest elections and must win a clear majority — before it will be possible to introduce socialism. A majority of socialist, however, can only get away with introducing the new society if they have had a clear mandate for this from those who voted for them. Getting elected by workers who have voted for capitalist reforms will not help the situation and even though the socialist representatives may wish to abolish capitalism in short order, their hands will be tied. Socialism can by no means be forced upon a population, the majority of which are not in favor of it. It *can* definitely be introduced and *must be* introduced when a clear cut majority insist upon having it.

But, it is immediately brought to our attention, this is idle utopianism. The capitalist class will never sit by and watch as its privileged status is having the props knocked out from under it. They will not permit a socialist majority to elect itself into socialism, so goes the argument of the 20th century adherents of 19th century tactics. The question that must remain unanswered by these "revolutionists," however is just why if the capitalists are powerful enough to prevent a majority of socialists from taking over peacably, they would not be powerful enough to prevent any other type of revolutionary activity from succeeding.

On the other hand, if the socialist working class could become powerful enough in some other way than through legal, political action, why would they be unable to take over in this manner? Obviously if the capitalists are strong enough to prevent socialist revolution at a time when socialists are in a majority they would certainly have to be in possession of the means to forestall any other type of revolutionary activity.

The fact is that no capitalist class can be in a position to prevent a majority of socialists from abolishing capitalism. In the final analysis capitalism can only operate when it has the support of the majority of the population. Guns alone are incapable of maintaining a loyal and cooperative working class, which is why more money is spent on the fixing of heads than on the weapons of subjection. The armed might of any nation is of no consequence unless the people who operate the equipment have the "right" sort of thinking.

When the fact becomes apparent a majority of the population no longer is willing to support the continuation of capitalism and is openly in favor of abolishing it and introducing a new society, the capitalists can have no other recourse than to step down and step out.

But, our opponents insist, supposing while the socialists are growing in strength but still a minority, the capitalists introduce legislation outlawing socialist organization? What about Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Bolshevik Russia?

We have seen in our times that dictatorships have been established and all opposition political parties outlawed. But action of this sort also requires the support of the majority, or at least widespread apathy in order to succeed. The Nazi and Fascist regimes in Germany and Italy certainly were able to boast of support, even if largely apathetic support, on the part of the majority. Neither of these dictatorships could be established before the central organs of political power were firmly in the hands of the dictatorial political parties and this did not happen until widespread support became manifest. In the case of Germany, the Nazis and their political allies the Nationalist Party won a majority of seats in the last free Reichstag elections.

The Bolsheviks in 1917, despite a great deal of opposition were able to corral mass support where it was important, in the chief cities and because the old central power, the Duma, was virtually in its death throes the Leninists were able to take over with practically no opposition and consolidate against the counter-revolution which lay ahead. As was the case with the Hitler and Mussolini regimes, vast sums of money, time and energy have been expended over the years in bringing up a generation of workers with the "proper" ideas, which make the continuation of the Bolshevik distatorship possible.

All this aside, even if the capitalists of America, for example were to outlaw socialist organizations and get away with it, there is little if anything that could be done about it by the socialist minority to forestall this. If the "revolutionary experts" see no sense in advocating a socialist revolution by legal means wherein lies the sense in advocating that workers pit their puny physical might against the awesome power of the state?

The evolution of capitalism makes possible a revolution for socialism and in the words of Frederick Engels the capitalists will be drowned in their own legality. There is no reason for socialist revolutionists to hide in cellars. As Marx and Engels put it in their conclusion to The Communist Manifesto written over one hundred years ago:

> "The Communists (Socialists) disdain to conceal their view and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions..."

The means (the franchise) for this "forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions" exist in most of the highly developed capitalist world and there is little if anything the capitalists can do to prevent it. The workers must organize consciously and politically for the purpose of contesting elections of all types and ultimately in their overwhelming numbers wresting political control from the capitalists in order that they can immediately institute a socialist society.

HARMO