



VICTORIA
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FACTIONS IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY

Evidences of the Clash Between the Revolutionary Proletariat and Its Opportunist Saviours.

Some people take fright at factions. They are always crying for harmony. They think the Socialist Party is no place for divisions. In no, every Socialist a comrade, a brother, with whom we should have no controversy? Let us unite against the common enemy and not be wrangling among ourselves!

That sounds good and is good, unless it means that Socialists are never to have any discussions with one another, but must sit around like angels with harps all playing one tune.

Socialists are human beings, not angels. They are on the earth, yet not in heaven. They reach conclusions like other men, by means of free debate. Socialists claim to develop individuality and demand freedom of speech. Yet some Socialists would suppress discussion among Socialists and reduce us all to the dead level of the stupid on the impossible plane of the sanctified.

Instead of waiting factions in the Socialist Party, we should greet them as a sign of life and progress. There are no factions among the dead. They all lie on one level in a cemetery. But people who are alive always struggle with one another. It is the law of existence. So let us begin with the practical, Utopian talk about Socialist perfectionism.

But there are two kinds of factions; factions based on principle and factions based on persons. Personal factions, though they are bound to exist more or less, cannot last long unless the persons represent some principles that other persons are interested in.

Factions based on principle are inevitable in any free society. The Socialist Party comes the nearest of all political parties to being a free social organization.

Free discussion, differences of opinion welcomed, not suppressed; factions constantly forming because of our differing opinions; a great, open, free forum where individuals and factions clash, argue and vote concerning questions of vital interest to them all, are the characteristics of the Socialist Party.

Who would have it otherwise? Would anyone turn the Socialist Party into a domineering, ecclesiastical hierarchy? It is required to say, "Creed," and always say it in a dead language? Does any true Socialist want to make the Socialist Party into a Society of Friends? In the Party where everybody must agree with one man or get out of the organization? On the other hand, who would have under one man's tyrannical orthodoxy, spread out into a jelly-fish condition of factiousness and speechless "harmonies"? Every Socialist who is also a practical, reasonable man, will expect and welcome factions based on principles. There will be leaders in such factions, as there are always leaders in any debate, men who are clearer and state best the principles involved.

But only weak and unthinking people will follow such leaders as individuals. The only leadership which can last in a free society such as the Socialist Party must be if it is to continue, is that leadership which represents best those principles which are essential to the interests of the organization. If any individual aspires to be a leader in the Socialist Party, the man "make good" by proving to the majority that his principles are those which underlie the evolutionary movement and are therefore essential to party progress.

Therefore no one should be factions no leaders of factions. Both are inevitable.

What we should fear and fight is the unthinking and submissive mind. The man to be feared is the man who takes any other man's word for anything. We shall have no leaders who can mislead, as every Socialist demands to be "shown." Leaders are chosen only when free discussion is frowned upon.

No faction which is based upon fundamental principles can be founded by bowing to the majority in that function. The principle will find another spokesman and the faction another leader. Because no principle which represents the interests of a class can possibly be suppressed. Factions and their leaders are the mere instruments of class interests. Men may come and go, but class interests go on forever.

These considerations find direct application in the present conditions of the Socialist Party in the United States. Two great factors are contending in that party for supremacy. The same two factions exist in the Socialist Party of all countries, for the simple reason

that the same economic conditions exist in all civilized nations. These contending factions are the Revolutionary Socialists and the Reform Socialists, sometimes known as the "evolutionists" and the "Opportunists."

It is folly to conceal this internal conflict in the Socialist Parties, as it is always folly to conceal or ignore any essential fact. The fact of factions in the Socialist Party is the chief fact in that party as a party. We must face it and deal with it. If we do not, the party is doomed because of its own incapacity to handle its own affairs. One faction or the other must prevail. We cannot have a two-headed party, much less a two-bodied party.

For these two factions really stand for two different bodies in modern society, two classes in society with conflicting interests. That at any rate, is what the Revolutionary Socialists believe, namely, that the wage-workers, or proletarian class, have interests of their own, distinct from and opposed to all other classes in society, and that the Socialist Party must primarily be a proletarian organization. This does not mean that members of the other classes may not be Socialists, but that the Socialist Party must be a party of the proletarian class because the proletarian class is the main source of capitalist exploitation and accumulation.

The reform faction of Socialists, on the other hand, contend for the interests of the middle class in society, that is, the small business man and the small farmer. This is the fact of discussion of the trust class and is fighting fiercely to prevent such exploitation. The Reform Socialists stand for this class in society, emphasizing the appeal to this class and would conform to the needs of this class of small capitalists.

These are the two contending factions in the Socialist Party in every world over. They have various spokesmen and leaders. In Germany Bebel, Revolutionist and Bernstein Opportunist. In France the Socialists are led by Ferry and Turati. In England Hyndman and Blatchford. In America Malloy, Hanford and Debs, Revolutionists, and Berger, Hoehn and Mills, Opportunists.

This great conflict between two factions based on principle must go on. It is not a question of suppressing it or ignoring it invites disaster later. It is just as foolish as ever it was to cry, "peace, peace," when there is no peace. It is just as foolish as ever it was to cry, "peace, peace," when there is no peace. It is just as foolish as ever it was to cry, "peace, peace," when there is no peace.

On the great question, "Wage class or Middle Class?" "The Socialist stands unequivocally with the good proletarian class, namely, for a party of the proletarian class, destined to emancipate all slaves of capital—a party into whose ranks every person who comes to assist the wage class achieve its destiny."—Seattle Socialist.

A CHANCE TO RISE.

"Here, of all places in the world, young men have a chance to rise. Wage earners have a chance to rise."—Dr. Jacob Gould Schurman in debate with Morris Hillquit.

"There's a chance to rise for every honest worker!" Said the Doctor with a condescending smile.

And it's true, for every morning At the loud alarm clock's warning, There's "a chance to rise" and hustle off to work!

But the Doctor spoke more truly than he reckoned. And that's what the Socialist can read aright: "There's a chance to rise," ye workers! Rise and overthrow the shirkers. With your ballot and your economic might!

—Tom Selby, in The Worker.

To excuse the non-production of evidence, the capitalist conspirators in the Meyer-Haywood case have invented a whole new set of lies. They say that the voluntemous evidence against the prisoners which they had packed away in a safe in Cripple Creek. Powerful stuff, that "dope."

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

The repressive functions of the capitalist state will pretty soon be exercised in Canada in a manner never before witnessed, there is every reason to believe. In spite of the continued teaching of the sophistry, that the interests of capital and labor are identical, strikes against oppressive conditions of employment continue in the same old way.

The Compulsory Investigation Act now before the parliament of Canada is the entering of the thin end of the wedge. This act carries with it penalties of imprisonment and fines. No matter what act of oppression may be practised by a corporation, the men dare not strike without incurring the danger of contemplating a whole nation's jail. The composition of the investigating tribunal means in the final analysis two bourgeois against one workman.

We understand that a strike is more than probable in the Crow's Nest district next month, and the progress of this act through parliament is hastened in order to get its repressive machinery to cope with the threatened trouble.

Anyone who has been through the slave-pens of the Crow's Nest Coal Camp and witnessed the almost intolerable conditions of employment in that region will say there is cause for a strike. However, we have not yet seen any such thing in favor of a strike. There is only one that, in our opinion, can be thoroughly effective, and that is the major vote of the miners. The Crow's Nest has not as yet seen fit to adopt it. However, we have little sympathy with the dear public in the face of the infant of England be true. At Nelson, Stoneman and other parts, Socialist speakers have been arrested, fined and imprisoned. So long as workmen's demands are not met, the rule of Liberal and Tory capitalists, free speech was encouraged, but any change has come over the spirit of their dream.

"BYSTANDER" AND THE LAWS OF THE MARKET

In Spite of Himself Capitalist Apologist Occasionally Blunders Upon a Truth.

"It is a very plain economical truth that labor, whether of the hand or of the brain, is a commodity, the value of which, like that of other commodities, must be ruled by the market, and cannot by legislative interference of any other agency be made higher or lower than it really is. Not the immediate organizer and employer of labor, but the purchaser of the product, is the real master, and in fixing the price which will give for the article practically determines the wages of the producer. As long as we prefer the cheaper article, the wage of the workman is reduced. This, however, while it shows that interference with the rate of wages as a rule is unavailing, by no means shows that it is not both the duty and interest of the employer to be as liberal as possible in his dealings with those he employs, and allow them, as far as reasonably and prudently can, to feel that they are his partners in the trade. It is the commodity nature of the sense of partnership that this most thorny and perilous problem of the relations between wage-earner and capitalist is to be solved, and a way of delivery found from a state of war, in which the value of all labor is being reduced, while the most useful passions have been killed and the political as well as economical, is becoming seriously imperilled."

The able illustration from Bystander's column in Toronto Weekly Sun will be deemed a remarkable admission for an apologist for capitalism. He admits that the commodity nature of labor power, that intangible force which cannot be dissociated from the laborer, and virtually is not a commodity. His truth, Bystander uses the term labor when he evidently means labor power, and though the distinction is a vital one in the discussion of economic subjects, we will not cavil at it, but treat it in the sense that we understand it is meant. One grant that the energy the laborer sells to his employer is a commodity, it is then all a matter to uncover the process by which

they were quiet and kept working. The public to them in their own class, the bourgeois—and of them we say, in the words of the late Commodore Vanderbilt: "the public be damned." There is one good thing that is sure to result from the operation of this act when it is applied to a strike, and that is it will open the eyes of the working class as to the real nature of the present class state.

The state as the impartial protector of capital and labor alike is a superstition that dies hard. Maybe here the miners of the Crow's Nest get through this threatened trouble they will be satisfied sufficient on this point to induce them to a little more united in an effort to capture this state in their own interest than they were at the beginning of this month.

J. T. M.

At Sydney, N. S. W., 86 members of the crew of the Oceanic Steamship Company's steamer Comoro were arrested and given one month's imprisonment at hard labor for refusing to work with 4 non-union men who were shipped at Honolulu on the voyage out. They got their medicine for refusing to obey "lawful commands." An exchange thinks the rights of these sailors have been infringed upon. It is not of record that slaves ever had any rights that masters were bound to respect, no matter whether those slaves were on land or sea. The jailing of them when they become unruly is merely an exercise of the right of their masters. Workers' rights? They are but a dream. Something like that enjoyed by the fellow that "hits the pipe."

Free speech, the British workman's boasted prerogative, is about to be crippled if reports from the "right hand" of England be true. At Nelson, Stoneman and other parts, Socialist speakers have been arrested, fined and imprisoned. So long as workmen's demands are not met, the rule of Liberal and Tory capitalists, free speech was encouraged, but any change has come over the spirit of their dream.

CAPITALIST RULE IN PHILADELPHIA

Brings Forth the Same Luxurious Crop of Misery and Degradation As Elsewhere.

Comrade Charles Schell of Philadelphia has been nominated for mayor of that city by the Socialist Party committee. In the following extracts from his letter of acceptance, he points out the nomination it would appear that the nature and habits of the capitalist beast are the same in the city of Brotherly Love as in any other place on the foot-stool where this foul and disgusting creature has made its nest and spawned its infamies:

"It also seems that the Socialist method of throttling the foul beast is everywhere the same.

"Certainly Philadelphia is ripe for this awakening. The metropolis of the foremost industrial city of the union, with its textile, locomotive and ship building interests, with its enormous factory system, with its railway connections and its river front, there seems to be nothing lacking to make its million and a quarter of the people a 'ye' find that the Socialist method of throttling the foul beast is everywhere the same.

"We find it despised by a handful of capitalists and their political retainers, who by means of contracts and franchises, have a legislation in general, loot the city's treasury of millions of dollars at a time.

"We find the toil and sweat of the masses of wage workers sold to profits for the few capitalists who own the land and machinery necessary to the life of the whole people.

"We find that in the locomotive works, popularly known as the 'little hell on earth,' and upon the railroads and throughout other industrial establishments, thousands of wage workers are annually killed, maimed and crippled or fall a prey to consumption and other dread diseases.

"We find that Philadelphia is not a 'city of homes,' but a city of homeless; that only about one dwelling in nine is owned free by the user, that for the rest the poor—largely the working class—pay rent and are subject to the will of the landlord.

"We find that, because of poverty, in that part of the city known as the 'slums,' workmen and their families are compelled to live even worse than the beasts of the field, reeking in immorality.

"We find that there are insufficient hospitals and other institutions to take care of those either born or made helpless through the terrible pain at which the worker has to toil.

"We find that the introduction of machinery, and its private ownership by the capitalist, enable him to supplant male labor by that of women and children. That as a result, the worker's family is broken, and all are driven to compete for the subsistence wage. That the poor pay received by women, and the conditions under which they labor, especially in the factory and department store, has made of prostitution a social evil, so that several grand juries have admitted their inability to remove the cause of this evil without imprisonment.

"We find that insufficient school facilities are provided by the legislators, in order to direct the child to the factory door; that as a result, Philadelphia and Pennsylvania are among the darkest spots in child-slave America.

"We find that the employment of women and children has a terrible influence on the offspring of the worker; that there is 'race-degeneration' and racial degeneracy, when speakers of prostitution and these evils are threatening the city's very life, we find the legislators ignoring them, and devoting their time to squandering the public money on boulevards calculated merely to gratify the desire for pleasure of the rich class.

"We find the police force used to safeguard the property rights of the master class, and treating as criminals wage-workers who dare strike and do picket duty to improve their miserable condition.

"We find the magistrates a bulwark to the same necessity, willing to exercise their power to throw free speech, if necessary, to hinder the discussion of the Socialist Party, men and women, were torn from the public platform and sent to the penitentiary, and when the magistrates, in the discharge of their duty as lackeys of the upper class, were conveniently away from home, had been outraged and for whom bail was ready, were forced to pass the night in the lock-up.

"To redress these wrongs, the Socialist Party would appeal to the wage-working class, the only class that

performs useful work and is necessary to society's existence—to unite into their party, the Socialist Party, to take the powers of government into their own hands and use the government to secure their common welfare.

"The old parties, financed and controlled by the capitalist class, are interested in 'standing pat.' There is nothing but the promises of their candidates, even if lived up to, that will at all improve the material condition of the wage-worker.

"The Socialist Party alone is opposed to standing still. It declares that the wheels of time have not ceased turning, that the present conditions cannot remain forever, that Progress is the watchword of the human race.

"The Socialist Party declares that the present system of master and man must be replaced by a higher system wherein all will be workers and free men. This is the Social Revolution that it is the mission of the working class to accomplish.

"The production of the things we eat and wear and need for our existence is carried on by the workers together. Production is social. But the land and machinery used in production is owned as private property by another class, the capitalist class. While production is social, ownership is private. It is this great social wrong that is at the root of all our social ills. And this wrong must be righted if society is to endure.

The Socialist Party therefore proposes that the land and machinery used by society shall be owned and operated by society; that opportunities shall be equal, and that labor shall receive the full fruits of toil. As capitalism serves the capitalist class, so Socialism is for the direct benefit of the working class. As quickly as the working class cures political power through the Socialist Party, steps will be taken to remove the social evils of the working class which are indicated above, the end always kept in view being the complete emancipation of the working class from wage-slavery."

UNDER "OUR FLAG"

Wayland workhouse, Norfolk, England, is so crowded that some of the paupers have had to sleep in the board room, and some of them are to be boarded out to another union at 2s. per head per week.

A respectable woman at Lambeth was recently charged with begging in company with her twelve-year-old daughter. She told the magistrate she was being driven to the workhouse, but did not know what to do, get her rent! God save the landlord!

An old woman named Healy died at Notting Hill on Christmas Eve, according to her relatives. She had received heart disease pneumonia, accelerated by the cold and want of sufficient food, and was found a month later, with a charity ticket hung by the side of her decomposed body. The "charity ticket" was saved.

The rector of Corwen has refused to permit other parishes' paupers to be buried in his churchyard without extracting an exorbitant fee from the guardians, the council consequently are forced to have a public burial ground for the institution of a public burial ground. Paupers are a nuisance even when dead.

Fifty or 60 unemployed of Edmonton and Tottenham on Saturday last marched to White Hall to see the president of the local government board. Mr. Bursell said he had received them very kindly and sympathetically, and "promised to look into the matter," but gave no further pledge. He is still "looking."

The capitalist press some time ago complained that the unemployed in one York Bursell did not turn out to clear snow away. On Sunday last at Sheffield, it was the other way about, and here is still complaint. Many unemployed turned up at the corporation depot, and because they were not taken on for snow-clearing, smashed windows and assaulted the officials (and even one another in the confusion) with fists and sticks. As the snow did not belong to them it seems a piece of impudence on the part of the unemployed to use it to express a desire to shovel it—Justice.

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