

Social Movements

In order to secure certain results or conditions it is necessary for men to adopt some plan or policy by which they may attain the desired object. The object they set themselves to accomplish will be determined by their desires, which again will be conditioned on the surroundings or environment in which they find themselves. In order to satisfy certain desires they will find it necessary to enlist the assistance of others seeking to accomplish similar objects, and according to the objective being of a widespread or general desire on the part of a numerous body of individuals the attempt to secure the fulfillment of the demand will take on a social character and take the form of a social movement. If the securing of the conditions desired appear to interfere with the arrangements of the society in which the movement takes shape, it is at once apparent that a barrier exists, i.e., if the object in view is not generally accepted by all, it will necessarily develop a struggle between those who wish to attain the end in view and those who feel it will be a disaster to them if the contending party succeeds.

Throughout history, which is the record of struggle between individuals and groups of individuals for securing positions of advantage in living conditions, we find people grouping themselves behind first this and then that movement, which appeared to them to be likely to bring them the best conditions of existence. On the face of it then, it must be apparent that these struggles must revolve around some thing or power which appears desirable in order to secure better conditions for maintaining the livelihood or enjoyment of life desired, and this power must be held by someone from whom it has to be wrested. The struggle between man and nature, of course, is necessarily a different struggle than that waged in society between different groups. It is not our purpose to show this difference in detail. As a result of these various struggles, certain ideas become prevalent amongst the contending parties. The succession of events show the truth or error of the ideas and policies or plans pursued on the strength of these ideas, and are either modified or supplanted by others according to how they are grasped by the parties involved in the struggle. This process of struggles we find running through every epoch of history right down to the present day, when an intense struggle becomes apparent to even the most casual observer. The papers refer to this question as one of industrial unrest, social unrest and such like, and the attacking parties in the struggle are condemned as destructive and extreme and all sorts of invective are hurled against the "agitators" who voice the imperative desires that are being insisted upon as necessary for the improved conditions of living that a numerous body of people consider as desirable. The denunciations are no novelty and only express the dis-

like of a section of the community who feel their position in jeopardy, whether rightly or wrongly does not affect the question at issue. The denunciations are met with affirmations that they deny and they even resort to the professors to disentangle them in the contentious questions they can not handle offhand. Out of all this clatter of charge and counter-charge, issues the often heard disputes of policies being either constructive or destructive. The party on the offensive is always charged with destructive tendencies. The question therefore of interest is to determine what is destructive and constructive policy.

The first thing any party must do to further its aims, i.e., for any social purpose, is to make its aims intelligible to those to whom it appeals for support. In other words, they must have a propaganda based on certain ideas. If the ideas are generally understood, but only need publicity, the probabilities of any charge of destructive tendencies is small. If, however, the ideas are of such a nature as to appear contrary to what is generally accepted, the opposition is likely to bring into play charges of destructive or revolutionary tendencies. As a matter of fact, all revolutionary ideas are destructive of certain old ideas, but that is no proof that in the actual process of the realization of such ideas that destruction is the lot of those advancing the charges, though it may and does often happen that those who cling to the outworn ideas are the victims in the struggle. This explains why the advocates of revolutionary ideas are charged with destructive tendencies, but that is not the fault of the revolutionists any more than is would be if a man got run down by a car on the street in spite of the continual warning of the driver not to get in the way.

The Socialist propaganda, and the policies resulting therefrom are, and must of necessity be of a revolutionary nature, and therefore liable to the charge of "destructive tendencies." We find this is borne out by the attitude adopted by all their opponents. The field for Socialist propaganda is amongst those who have to work either by hand or brain. The question then is, do the ideas of these workers only need publicity or a critical analysis? We find that if simple publicity were to be resorted to as a method of education, a very vague result would follow, and in fact, a survey of some organs that use such a method only reveals that a surface knowledge circulates which finds a voice in petitions for this, that, and the other thing. On the other hand, those agencies of the workers that adopt a critical attitude succeed in bringing to light certain causes and tendencies which, when presented to the workers themselves take on the appearance of revolutionary ideas, i.e., compared with their ideas or explanations of what goes on around them, they appear strange. One has only to listen to

some of the interminable arguments over the virtue of "capital," "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work," and the "millenium" to discover how beclouded the workers' minds are even on their own pet questions. It can easily be seen therefore, that any ideas that may appear to destroy or overthrow some of these illusions must appear revolutionary to such thinkers, or at least talkers. That the hidden source of the wonderful power of capital should lie only in a simple collection of human activities, in which they are engaged, under the necessarily directed system now in effect, and have certain results under a certain succession of events, must seem strange to those who look upon all development as a sort of miracle. To explain away the mystery—that is destructive both in religious and political ideas. But to build, the ground must be cleared, and all sound revolutionary destructive criticism must show the clearing process necessary to construct the system in view. To this end the parties who have to function must know where they are and how to go ahead with the task. They must know the task and understand what they are doing. When, for instance, the ownership and control of the machinery of production by the people is advocated there must be some explanation of what is meant, and how this is to be obtained. To some people such an idea seems preposterous and absurd. If it should seem so to you who read this, try and analyse your thoughts or ideas as to why such should be the case. This is considered a destructive idea to those who are opposed to such a procedure. If you want to form a definite opinion on the question, read the arguments presented both by its champions and opponents. That is how you get to know where you stand and can find out what is "destructive" and "constructive" thinking. Ignorance amongst the workers strengthens the barrier that protects those against whom they struggle. To smooth over the facts, and fail to present the actual conditions that confront the workers, brings into existence the policy of compromise, which is only possible during that period in which the enlightenment of the rank and file is necessarily confused by all sorts of hopes and possibly fears. Once this confusion is dispelled by a critical insight, whether the destructive tendencies are in their own ranks or in those of their masters, will be concretely illustrated to them in the events that are already casting their shadows before.

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LABOR IN BRITAIN

LONDON, Dec. 26.—Seven of the largest trade unions in Great Britain have inaugurated a movement aimed at the prevention of unauthorized strikes. It is declared the movement is sponsored by the National Union of General Workers, representing an enormous membership.

NATIONALIZATION STRUGGLE IN BRITAIN

LONDON, Dec. 23.—Although the big topic today is Ireland, in a few days little else will be spoken of but nationalization. Opinion grows that the question will eventually be settled by the votes of the electorate, and into one month therefore will be concentrated the vigor of a political battle equalling that of the free trade and protection controversy of fourteen years ago. The campaign of the Miners' Federation has been in progress two weeks, and the anti-nationalizers are now about to take the field.

War To the Death.

Backed by a subscribed fund which is said to amount to a million pounds, the latter are prepared to carry the war against state ownership in every town and hamlet in the country.

The chief lesson of the railway strike was the value of street and newspaper advertisements, and these are to be utilized by both sides to an extent never experienced in propaganda work in Britain. No time is to be wasted preaching to the already converted.

The federation's heaviest oratorical guns, such as Smillie, Hodges and Chiozza Money, will seek their targets among business and professional men, while the best of the antis will be sent to working-class areas to warn workmen against the "dead hands of state."

Big Pros and Cons.

Miners will find their most telling points in the appalling coal wastage incidental to private ownership, and the certainty of increased output and cheaper coal when the miners realize they are no longer endangering their lives for personal profit of any class. The antis will concentrate on the paralyzing effect of bureaucracy, instancing the chaotic condition of the telephone service, while much will be made of the miners' syndicalistic intentions.

Smillie's utterance at Newcastle last Sunday: "We recognize that the nationalization of mines is only the first step, and we believe that all essentials to life of the people should be owned by the people," has already been seized upon as evidence of the tremendously serious character of the question at issue.

ALIEN RULE IN EGYPT

CAIRO, Dec. 26.—Strong cavalry detachments are patrolling the streets in demonstration against the strike, which has already started among the railway workers at Alexandria and Heliopolis.

The Mohammedan University has followed its recent declaration with a more strongly couched document signed by 100 officials of religious establishments in Egypt, demanding British evacuation and complete independence.

The first declaration said "The Egyptian National unanimously adhere to its legitimate rights for complete independence. The measures that have arisen in the public mind resulted from the continuance of unrest from British interference in our public and private affairs."