

# Is it the Dictatorship of the Proletariat?

IN the last issue of the "Clarion," F. S. F. deals with, but does not explain, what Dictatorship of the Proletariat means. Shedding tears over Kautsky and the S. P. of G. B. does not tell us what is meant by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. What do we mean when we use this term anyway? Does it mean a dictatorship of a minority? If so, than Faulkner has cast overboard all the ideas he expressed in the August, 1919, issue of "The Proletarian." Dictatorship as a form of government in Russia means disarming the opposition, by taking away the franchise, liberty of the press and combination of opponents. Does the working class have to employ such measures?

A government that has the support of the masses has not the least occasion to interfere with democracy. Why fear the few who oppose working class rule? Let them rave on. The working class wants Socialism and the ravings of a few defenders of the institution of private property will not deter them from the right path. Or is it a dictatorship of a small section of the working class over the great mass of workers? Can a Socialist system of production be built on this foundation? State organization of production by society, a bureaucracy by the dictatorship of a small section of the people does eratic control of industry. Socialism pre-supposes a working class that is capable of running the wheels of industry more efficiently than under Capitalism. Again, a dictatorship may mean civil war. An ignorant working class can easily be induced to support reaction. Chronic civil war or its alternatives, apathy and opposition by the mass under a dictatorship, would render the organization of a Socialist system of production well nigh impossible. And yet we are asked to defend a dictatorship of a minority which helps to produce anarchy and chaos.

In the subsequent issue of the "Clarion," Frank Cassidy defends minority action. He quotes from Lenin as to the existence of a dictatorship of a minority in Russia. To prove this form of action to be correct, Cassidy uses such childish arguments: "Well, as to the fact, pointed out by Lenin himself, that some 500,000 to 600,000 Communists control the destinies of Russia. It is doubtful if any dictatorship has ever before been vested in so many. A handful of Grand Dukes formerly dictated affairs in Russia; likewise a few merchant princes and financiers dictate the affairs of the United States, of Great Britain, France or any other capitalist dictatorship." What a consolation it must be to the other 179,500,000 to know that the present dictatorship is more numerous than that during the Czarist regime.

Then again, F. S. F. is fearful of what might happen if a revolutionary Socialist ticket were to poll an overwhelming vote in November. He is quite sure that the capitalists will not surrender their power without a struggle. In the first place what has that to do with a dictatorship of the proletariat? And again we must realize that should a ruling class under the supposition here discussed, resort to force, it would do so precisely because it feared the consequences of democracy, and its violence would be nothing but the subversion of democracy. Therefore not the uselessness of democracy for the working class is demonstrated by anticipated attempts of the ruling classes to destroy democracy but rather the necessity of the working class to defend democracy with tooth and nail. It was only through heavy sacrifices that the working class did get the democratic privileges of today. The mass of people are everywhere too attached to their political privileges and will not abandon them without a struggle. The ruling classes realize that, and are therefore not attempting to antagonize the working class by taking from them their political instruments. A few ignorant public officials have done so, but their actions have been condemned by all

sections of the ruling class. We must not forget that the more democratic a State is, the more dependent are the forces exerted by the executive dependent on public opinion. It was necessary for the ruling class of America to enlist the support of the masses before it could wage war on Germany. Military experts hinge everything on the morale of an army. It is difficult to see why we should be fearful of what might happen if the working class is victorious at the polls.

Even Marx thought it possible and even probable that in England and America, the working class might peacefully conquer political power. At a meeting at the Hague Marx stated: "We know that the institutions, the manners and the customs of the various countries might be considered, and we do not deny that there are countries like England and America, and, if I understand your arrangements, I might even add Holland, where the worker may attain his object by peaceful means. But not in all countries is this the case." We know, however, that gradually the capitalists of all countries are compelled to grant the workers the franchise and other liberties. The workers of Japan are duplicating the heroic efforts of the British worker of fifty years ago.

In August, 1919, issue of "The Proletarian," F. S. F. points out that minority action is fraught with danger for the working class. Here are his exact words: "Do these mass actionists ever think of the tragic fate of Finland, or of the Liebknecht week in Berlin?" And we might add the tragedies that were enacted in Budapest and Munich. But in the "Clarion" he changes his ideas. "And the truth about the Russian situation was that the Bolsheviks were forced to seize power, or see reaction sweep them and the advanced workers away as the Finns were swept away, and the Hungarians also." On one hand he criticizes the mass actionists and on the other hand he raves about "opportunity." The only difference between the mass actionists and F. S. F. is that the mass actionists believe that the time is now ripe for a revolutionary change and all that is necessary is mass action, whereas F. S. F. does not believe the time is as yet ripe but, no doubt in the "sweet bye-and-bye" will ape our mass actionist friends.

No, F. S. F., you cannot get Socialism by Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Bela Kun, Levien, Liebknecht, and others tried your method, but the result was that thousands of workers are rotting in unknown graves. What then are the pre-requisites of Socialism? The will to Socialism is the first condition for its accomplishment. The will is created by the gigantic development of industry. Where small production is universal in a society, the masses are possessed of the means of industry. Small production creates the will to uphold the institution of private property. Again with the development of industry, great numbers of peasants are uprooted from the soil and are compelled to enter industry. To the ripening of the conditions for Socialism must be added the maturity of the working class. Capitalism itself organizes the workers, trains them and gradually makes them fit to assume control of industry. Whenever the working class desires Socialism, we will have Socialism. It is impossible to have Socialism in a country where small production is general as in the case of Russia. It is also impossible to have Socialism in a country where the huge mass of people do not desire it. In other words, Socialism without Democracy is unthinkable. These are the views not only of Kautsky and the S. P. of G. B. but of Pritchard as well. F. S. F. no doubt remembers that Pritchard pointed out to the jury trying him, that the S. P. of C. expected to get Socialism only through the support of a majority of the population of Canada.

It is not long since the "Clarion" reproduced the article, "What is Democracy," from the "Socialist

Standard," which clearly expressed the necessary democratic implication of Socialism. Surely the members of the S. P. of C. realize how dangerous minority rule would be in their party, and the actions of small groups in the S. P. of A. and other parties to dominate the membership should sufficiently show the dangers of minority rule.

JOHN TYLER.

## Experiments

SOME Socialist speakers and writers have the habit of referring to the Russian Soviet Government as an experiment.

Peoples and nations act when forces over which they have no control impel them to, and their actions are guided by the amount of knowledge they possess as to these forces. When slavery was introduced into communistic society, it was no scheme or experiment on the part of certain sections of that society then existing, notwithstanding the fact that it was a new departure, and this applies—as every student of economics must be aware—to all those changes that have taken place in the evolution of mankind.

The only feasible solution to the present chaos the world over, when capitalism, or the system of production for profit and the private ownership of the means of life is in its decay, is to replace it by a system of production for use and social ownership of the means of life, and it is that solution that is being applied in Russia today. The human race must periodically adjust itself to the constant economic changes taking place, and the existing turmoil is a natural outcome resulting from a dying system and the birth of a new system that will more satisfactorily meet the needs of society.

All new changes that have taken place in society during its long and arduous struggle have been forced upon it, and we do not hear that slavery, feudalism, capitalism, were experiments emanating from the giant brains of individuals, nor Christianity, or the many wars of the past, including the great war, rebellions, and finally the war we are now in the midst of—the war between capital and labor, being waged in every capitalist country—we do not hear that these are experiments. Then why claim that the first country to make a decisive attempt to throw off the chains of slavery of the workers—an attempt that so far as can reasonably be seen will be successfully followed by every other nation—is an experiment? Such a claim is entirely opposed to the materialist conception of history and the class struggle.

O. M.

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