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Liberalism and Socialism

WHERE is Liberalism today? How does it stand in the march of events? Of course, no one associates Liberalism as a body of political thought, and as a movement, with any political clique which, in the base sense of parliamentary politics in Canada, may be masquerading under the name of Liberal. The representative journals of liberal thought today can not be said to be party journals in any sense of the word. Nor are they to be confused with the fake "independents," many of which are the most contemptible and indefatigable sycophants of them all, and of which we have a plentiful crop in Canada. Indeed, we do not know of one journal in Canada which can not be observed to be plying itself in behalf of some special interest, while using the stock phrases of liberalism to blind its public. The outstanding expressions of Liberalism in the journalistic world which are above suspicion of ulterior motives, are such as the Manchester "Guardian," the London "Nation," and "Common Sense," in Great Britain; and the New York "Nation," the "New Republic," and, in spite of socialist tendencies, the New York "Dial."

Liberalism, led by these able exponents of its philosophy, has found itself at war with the inevitable drift of the capitalist world towards militaristic imperialism, but it has pitted its idealistic phrases against the economic necessities of expanding capitalism in vain. That is, in vain, insofar as in bringing capitalist forces back to the comparatively rational and peaceful paths of former days, because its war against imperialistic policies, insofar as Liberalism assisted in their partial defeat, in regards to Soviet Russia, for example, has not saved capitalism for rational and peaceful ways, but has weakened it before the forces which are finally destined to overthrow it.

What then is this Liberalism of the Manchester "Guardian" and the New York "Nation" et al.? "The freedom of the individual is the basic principle," we are told. But Socialism also aims at the freedom of the individual, and we assert that there is a fundamental difference between Liberalism and Socialism. What do Liberals then understand by their freedom of the individual? The answer is, that they mean by individual liberty, first and foremost, the liberty of private property as such. What is cared for is not so much liberty of the individual as the liberty of private property. The ideals of the past weigh upon them: a past of small production gone forever.

Economic development has placed the machinery of production into the ownership of a few and divorced the multitude from possession of the

means of existence. Progress has turned a corner, and security and tenure in private property are no longer synonymous with individual liberty, but just the opposite for the millions of propertyless proletarians who are in reality economic slaves of the capitalist property owners. Their economic liberty can never be recovered by a partition of the means of production or by going back to small production. Liberty for them can only come as a result of social ownership of the means of wealth production.

Liberals still cling to the fetish of private property in spite of all the calamitous consequences entailed in that institution which we see today. They are the real impracticable idealists.

Socialists oppose the liberal idea of formal political liberty, with the demand for economic liberty through the social ownership of the means and instruments necessary for the production and distribution of wealth.

THE TRIAL IN WINNIPEG

The following taken from the report of court proceedings in the Western Labor News of Dec. 5, will show the line of attack adopted by the crown prosecutor.

As to the meeting on December 22, Mr. Andrews is reported to have said: "He intended to show that this was a seditious meeting for the avowed purposes of having all orders-in-council repealed; the release of all political prisoners; of having no further reinforcements sent to Russia, and the immediate return of all troops in Russia."

As to the Calgary convention and the public character of its proceedings, Mr. Andrews is again reported as saying:

"It might be necessary to keep some seditious conspiracies secret but for others it is necessary to have the widest publicity if they are to be carried out."

Mr. Andrews is further quoted as saying, "The Crown will claim that every general strike is illegal and those who took part in it and carried it out are guilty." This referred to the general nuisance count in the indictment.

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ADVISED TO CREATE INDUSTRIAL DEPRESSION

THE "Bache Review," issued by the firm of J. S. Bache & Co., members of the New York Stock Exchange, is a collection of data of interest to the heads of financial and industrial organizations. It also contains a general review of business and social conditions for the information and guidance of its clients. The "Review" is not for public consumption, but is supplied to its exclusive list of subscribers as a confidential document, and is thus exceptionally frank in dealing with matters affecting the welfare of its clientele.

The B. C. Federationist of this week contains an extract from the Review, which advocates the drastic step of creating a country-wide serious industrial depression, by a voluntary closing down of industry in order to suppress the struggle of the working class against the forces which encroach on their welfare. It is calmly suggested that the lives of millions of people be placed in peril from starvation in order that capitalist interests be preserved. This calls to mind the alleged milk incident during the strike in Winnipeg, which has been made so much of and which has been admitted as evidence in the conspiracy charge. The business interests who are conspiring to stop the economic life of a country are however not on trial. No! That is, they are not on trial before a legal tribunal. How should they be? The industries are owned by the business interests. But, Messieurs les Profiteurs, there is another tribunal whose verdict overrides all others eventually!

Discussing measures to deal with labor, the "Review" publishes, with approbation for its views, a letter to the editors, of which the following is an extract:

"Then many large employers of Labor ought to promptly close down their plants. As long as Labor continues to win its demands, it will be as insatiable as the grave and the womb. Millions of involuntarily idle men and women would have a quick sobering effect on Labor as a whole; infinitely more so than all the moral precepts that have been uttered since the earliest times in ancient India.

"The best interests of all may soon demand a serious industrial depression. Courage and decision in the application of a desperate remedy are fast becoming imperative. Such a course may alone conserve or restore the proper interests of millions of investors. Of course, every person who owns a home, has a savings bank account, holds a life insurance policy, or a share in a building and loan association, is an investor; there are 113,384 investors in Pennsylvania railroad stock holdings alone! And many million investors in Liberty Bonds. The 'Reds' shall not prevail against them."

Note how the worker's small investments in Liberty Bonds, etc., are used against them as a weapon in their struggle against oppressive conditions.

If the State was a neutral body, standing between capital and labor, there would be a swarm of representatives of capitalist interests in the prisoner's dock for seditious conspiracy. But,—who do you see there, always?

THE WINNIPEG ELECTIONS

WRITING to us from Winnipeg, a correspondent says, "You no doubt by this time have heard the results of the Municipal Elections. It was as fine an exhibition of class conflict as you could desire, and that in the face of the determination of the Labor candidates to resist any attempt of the bourgeoisie to force a class issue. But the bourgeoisie had their way and forced the class issue, with the result that the largest vote ever polled in the city found the masses going to the baton class lines. The platform of the Labor Party was ignored by the workers in the fight and Farmer, who has constantly denied the class struggle, got a class vote of 12,000, with only about one-third of the workers entitled to vote, against a vote of 15,000 for Gray, who had votes from almost every province in Canada as well as from Michigan, Minnesota, California and England. Very striking was the interest aroused among the workers as soon as the class cleavage developed, a veritable slap in the face to those who would compromise their mother-in-law to get votes. However, it is doubtful if they have brains enough to see that it was the class issue that brought out the workers to vote as they never did before, thanks to our historic enemy and their blunders. It is to be hoped they (the enemy) will keep up the good work. In one ward, North Winnipeg, where many Germans and Swedes live, a returned soldier was elected by a big majority, while in ward One, (South Winnipeg,) where the patriotic bourgeois reside, a returned soldier was snowed under."

THE STEEL STRIKE

(From "The New Republic.")

SOME impartial commission ought to conduct an inquiry into the effectiveness of the Steel Corporation's plan of fighting a strike by keeping news of it out of the papers. Has the morale of the strikers suffered from the application of the rule of silence? Or have the strikers persisted in their way, unperturbed by the knowledge that most of the public supposes that the strike never amounted to anything? In the Pittsburgh district, according to the World, the losses in wages have been more than \$29,000,000, and the tonnage losses amount to \$250,000,000. These are "conservative estimates." They seem to imply a greater dislocation than has ever been admitted by the steel companies.

"Steel officials say the problem of insufficient labor is being met in various ways. Many negroes, Greeks and Mexicans have been brought in since the strike began." This too we quote from the World, November 24. It might have been supposed that after recent experience with the "unassimilated alien," the steel officials might have become suspicious of such an easy solution of their labor problem as the importation of the classes indicated, which are not likely to mix well with the working population on the ground. The Steel Corporation might have tried to enlist "one hundred per cent. Americans," from the industrial region itself. That, however, would have involved the payment of wages affording a one-hundred per cent. American standard of living and of liberty.