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The Principles of Revolutionary Syndicalism

International Congress of Revolutionary
Syndicalists

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1922

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8

REVOLUTIONARY Syndicalism stands on the platform of direct action, and supports all struggles which are not in contradiction with its aims, viz., the abolition of economic monopoly and of the domination of the State. The methods of fight are the strike, the boycott, sabotage, etc. Direct action finds its most pronounced expression in the general strike which, at the same time, from {he point of view of Revolutionary Syndicalism, ought to be the prelude to the social revolution.

9

ALTHOUGH enemies of all forms of organised violence in the hands of any Government, the Syndicalists do not forget that the decisive struggle between the Capitalism of to-day and the Free Communism of to-morrow, will not take place without serious collisions. They recognise violence, therefore, as a means of defence against the methods of violence of the ruling classes, in the struggle of the revolutionary people for the expropriation of the means of production and of the land. Just as this expropriation cannot be commenced and carried to a successful issue except by the revolutionary economic organisation of the workers, so also the defence of the revolution should be in the hands of these economic organisations, and not in those of the military or other organisations operating outside the economic organs.

10

IT IS ONLY in the revolutionary economic organisations of the working class that is to be found the power able to carry out its emancipation as well as the creative energy necessary for the reorganisation of society on the basis of Free Communism.

1

REVOLUTIONARY Syndicalism basing itself on the class-war, aims at the union of all manual and intellectual workers in economic fighting organisations struggling for their emancipation from the yoke of wage slavery and from the oppression of the State. Its goal consists in the re-organisation of social life on the basis of Free Communism, by means of the revolutionary action of the working-class itself. It considers that the economic organisations of the proletariat are alone capable of realising this aim, and, in consequence, its appeal is addressed to workers in their capacity of producers and creators of social riches, in opposition to the modern political labour parties which can never be considered at all from the points of view of economic re-organisation.

2

REVOLUTIONARY Syndicalism is the confirmed enemy of every form of economic and social monopoly, and aims at its abolition by means of economic communes and administrative organs of field and factory workers on the basis of a free system of councils, entirely liberated from subordination to any Government or political party. Against the politics of the State and of parties it erects the economic organisation of labour; against the Government of men, it sets up the management of things. Consequently, it has not for its object the conquest of political power, but the abolition of every State function in social life. It considers that, along with the monopoly of property, should disappear also the monopoly of domination, and that any form of the State, including the form of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" will always be the creator of new monopolies and new privileges: it could never be an instrument of liberation.

3

THE DOUBLE TASK of Revolutionary Syndicalism is as follows: on the one hand it pursues the daily revolutionary struggle for the economic, social and intellectual improvement of the working class within the framework of existing society. On the other hand, its ultimate goal is to raise the masses to the independent management of production and distribution, as well as to the transfer into their own hands of all the ramifications of social life. It is convinced that the organisation of an economic system, resting on the producer and built up from below upwards, can never be regulated by Governmental decrees, but only by the common action of all manual and intellectual workers in every branch of industry, by the running of factories by the producers themselves in such a way that each group, workshop or branch of industry, is an autonomous section of the general economic organisation, systematically developing production and distribution in the interests of the entire community in accordance with a well-determined plan and on the basis of mutual agreements.

4

REVOLUTIONARY Syndicalism is opposed to every centralist tendency and organisation, which is but borrowed from the State and the Church, and which stifles methodically every spirit of initiative and every independent thought. Centralism is an artificial organisation from top to bottom, which hands over en bloc to a handful of men, the regulation of the affairs of a whole community. The individual becomes, therefore, nothing but an automaton directed and moved from above. The interests of the community yield place to the privileges of a few, variety is replaced by uniformity: personal responsibility by a soulless discipline; real education by a veneer. It is for this reason that Revolutionary Syndicalism ad-

vocates federalist organisation; that is to say, an organisation, from below upwards, of a free union of all forces on the basis of common ideas and interests.

5

REVOLUTIONARY Syndicalism rejects all parliamentary activity and all cooperation with legislative bodies. Universal suffrage, on however wide a basis, cannot bring about the disappearance of the flagrant contradictions existing in the very bosom of modern society; the parliamentary system has but one object, viz., to lend the appearance of legal right to the reign of lies and social injustice, to persuade slaves to fix the seal of the law onto their own enslavement.

6

REVOLUTIONARY Syndicalism rejects all arbitrarily fixed political and national frontiers, and it sees in nationalism nothing else but the religion of the modern State, behind which are concealed the material interests of the possessing classes. It recognises only regional differences, and demands for every group the right of self-determination in harmonious solidarity with all other associations of an economic, territorial or national order.

7

IT IS FOR THESE same reasons that Revolutionary Syndicalism opposes militarism in all its forms, and considers anti-militarist propaganda as one of the most important tasks in the struggle against the present system. In the first instance, it urges individual refusal of military service, and especially, organised boycott against the manufacture of war material.