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Why not defend the ongoing revolution?

Ōsugi Sakae

1922

The criticism of me, whether I live or die, seems to be based on why I attack the Bolshevik government in Russia.

The basis for this is that in order to reach an anarchic society one must go through Bolshevism, and on the other hand, one must work together against a common enemy, so for better or worse, supporting the Russian government that has been handed over to the proletariat is the present task and natural duty of those with a common goal.

I doubt whether you can go to heaven in one step. But I think that the idea that you must first go through socialism or Bolshevism in order to reach anarchism is a fallacy invented by the enemies of anarchism.

At the beginning of the Russian Revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks often said such things. I also heard such things in Japan during the first propaganda period of Communism. But what is their attitude towards the anarchists after seeing the effects of it all? It's as if they are going from capitalists to anarchists. I don't believe in such plausible economic arguments as "leapfrogging from the cur-

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rent insufficiency of total productive power”. But such arguments can’t be exhausted in a page or two of a magazine like this. I will discuss the details later, but I will make it clear that I believe in the immediate realization of anarchism.

Next, we must fight together against a common enemy. I agree with this for now. When fighting a common enemy, which is the capitalist system in a word, I will not hesitate to cooperate with anyone, from labor-management cooperation advocates to individualistic anarchists. However, what I want to reserve in the meantime is my freedom of criticism. My freedom of action, both inside and outside the front we have agreed upon. If it is permitted, I will tolerate standing on a common front with anyone, no matter how unpleasant.

Let’s get into practical matters and move forward with this discussion. In the Japanese labor movement today, almost completely independent of the so-called “united front” problem in Europe, a kind of united front problem, that is, the problem of a general labor union federation, has arisen. As a non-worker and therefore not belonging to any union, I cannot directly participate in this problem as a union member, but I am trying to promote it to some extent, taking a closer attitude than that of a third party.

However, as for me and other social activists, I have not recently been asked to cooperate with anyone other than those who share the same ideology. I have wished to cooperate with them on a few occasions, especially with the Japanese Bolsheviks, but I have always been rejected, either politely or harshly. And even on the rare occasions when we have joined forces, the result has been a terrible betrayal of both our camaraderie and our friendship.

However, I do not want to complain here now. However, at first I mistakenly believed in the possibility of cooperation with the Bolsheviks, advocated it, and then carried it out, only to be completely thrown over their shoulders by them. I want to expose my foolishness and serve as a warning to those who come after me.

I now believe that the Japanese Bolsheviks, whether they be Yamakawa, Sakai, or Arahata, are all like sesame-striped spies. I would never cooperate with sesame-striped spies. However, I would like to add that when they really fight the capitalist class, I will be on the same front as them and will not hesitate to fight against the common enemy.

Criticizing the Bolshevik government! I refrained from doing so for a long time. I was not the only one. Most anarchists in the world were like that. Also, at the beginning of the revolution, there were quite a few who willingly joined the communist front. It is fair to say that almost all Russian anarchists were like that.

Anarchists in countries other than Russia, for one thing, did not really understand the true situation in Russia. And for another, they actually disliked counter-revolution. And so they watched the progress of the Russian Revolution with a great deal of sympathy.

But gradually the truth became clear. It even became clear that the workers’ and peasants’ government, that is, the government of the workers and peasants, was itself the most powerful counter-revolutionary element impeding the progress of the revolution.

Anyone would support the Russian revolution. But who would support such a Bolshevik government?