

Tactical Problems

By E. STALINSKY

(Translated From the Russian for The Sunday Call by Dr. L. C.)

The rapid change of conditions and the growing complexity of social relations in the capitalist countries bring to the front with ever increasing insistence the basic problem of the principles and of the forms of Socialist tactics. Questions of tactics have always been the subject of heated and protracted discussions in the camp of Socialists, thus proving the passionate desire of the Socialists to identify themselves with the life and movement of the working class, to find stronger and truer points of vantage in their struggle for progress and civilization. But in the last two of three decades the divergence of opinion on tactics in the Socialist camp, a divergence that often seemed to be irreconcilable; related not so much to the question of the FORM in which the Socialist struggle should be carried on, as to the question of the immediate policies of the Socialist party.

Of this latter nature were the differences of the French Socialist factions with the advent, possibilism and later, of Jaurezism in France. Of the same character were the differences between orthodox Marxism and Bernsteinism in Germany and other European countries, where both of these tendencies found adherents.

Now revolutionary syndicalism, that appeared in France with the beginning of this century, has squarely put up the question of the FORM of the fight for immediate improvement as well as for the conquest of the "City of the Future." But revolutionary syndicalism has brought forward this question with great one-sidedness; it has narrowed and limited the sphere of Socialist activity, has withdrawn from the arena of political conflict, where the tragedy of human history is being mainly enacted.

In consequence of this one-sidedness and narrowness the revision of the basic principles of Socialist tactics which the revolutionary syndicalists have undertaken, could not meet with a sympathetic response among thinking Socialists, especially if we consider that the syndicalists' criticism is directed almost exclusively, against phenomena, which are almost entirely peculiar to French politico-social conditions, and for this reason alone loses its significance for other countries. Besides, the changes in the social life of capitalist Europe, which force upon us the problem of Socialist tactics, had not manifested themselves with such clearness at the time when syndicalism made its first appearance, as in our own times.

Things are different at present, and we now find in the Socialist press, especially of Germany and of France, a lively discussion of the tactical basis of Socialism, a revision of the old conception of tactics, a clamor for new FORMS of the fight.

What is the essence of this problem, what concrete reasons and conditions make it necessary and of vital burning interest to the thinking Socialist?

In order to answer this question it will be necessary first to describe the present tactics of Socialism, especially the FORM of Socialist activity and struggle and to give at least in its main outlines the origin of this FORM and its development.

Organized Socialism entered upon the political arena with the appearance of the first international. The international inherited from the unorganized labor movement of the previous epoch certain definite traditions of warfare and tactics. Those were the traditions of street fights of the working class masses and the armed power of the ruling classes, fights that filled with their noise and clamor the history of the first three-quarters of the last century.

The nations of western Europe were shaken out of their long sleep by the thunder of the French Revolution, and the gigantic revolutionary conflagration which broke out in France scattered all over the world burning cinders of revolt and of protest.

But while the larger and smaller revolutions which spread like wildfire over the European countries have opened to the bourgeoisie the road to

freedom and to wealth, the working class was left by stepmother history on the same bed of Procrustes, in spite of rivers of blood shed by it in the common cause. The bourgeoisie, having subdued more or less completely the forces of feudalism, commenced with feverish haste the erection of its capitalist edifice on the ruins of the old economic regime, and ruthlessly destroyed the old economic relationships.

The result was that the cost of living went up immensely. Hundreds of thousands of working men were separated from the instruments of production and became wage slaves. The exploitation of labor grew more rapid. Even the official investigations of the condition of labor and of the life of the city proletariat of western Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century are full of horrible facts which disclose a picture of unbelievable suffering and of a real martyrdom of the working classes. The proletariat, hemmed in by the meshes of capitalism as by an iron vise, began literally to decay. Neither the revolution of 1830 nor the revolution of 1848 gave it any legal means for the protection of its interests. The working class had no political rights, it could neither vote for representatives nor could it have any influence on legislation. The workers were even deprived of the right to organize and of the right to strike. The great masses of the working class, unorganized, representing only so much human material of production, has been literally delivered, bound hand and foot, into the hands of capitalism, the power of which was growing with immense rapidity. But whenever the misery and oppression reached the limit of human endurance, when the specter of unemployment and of hunger crept into the homes of the workers, the masses, seized by gloomy despair, would go out into the street, build barricades and enter into a bloody conflict with the military power of the bourgeoisie. Exploitation, misery, the absence of all legal means of protest, the unwillingness of the ruling class to consider the demands and interests of the working class—those were the fundamental causes of the uprisings of the working class in the epoch under consideration.

With the appearance of the international the economic condition of the working class in the more highly developed capitalist countries improved considerably but the proletariat was still deprived of political rights and of the right to organize. What tactics could the international recommend to the proletariat?

At first the international was dominated by the followers of Proudhon, who preached his theory of peaceable revolution by means of co-operation and of mutual exchange of service—truly a theory of despair. But at the time when the followers of Proudhon were crowded out by the followers of Marx, Europe was in the grip of uncompromising political reaction. The international could not but remain true to the traditions of the old tactics and its turn recommended an armed popular revolution as the only means for the emancipation of labor and of mankind.

But Marx, who was the inspiration and the guiding spirit of the international, knew too well that, with the unequal relative strength of the proletariat and bourgeoisie, all attempts at an armed social revolution, for the near future at least, were doomed to failure. Marx, the realist, could not share in the romantic illusions of the Blanquists and Bakounists. The tactics which the international, under the influence of Marx, adopted, were confined to restraining all immediate uprisings, to propaganda, to the organization of the masses, and to the accumulation of power for the future.

It is true, that the hope for an unhampered, through organization of the masses under the political conditions in Europe in the sixties, might have appeared in its turn as a dangerous illusion. But Marx, who foresaw the irresistible growth of capitalism in western Europe, also foresaw that an in-

evitable result of this same growth would be the democratization of political conditions of the capitalist states.

We know that the dissensions between Marx and Bakounin finally led to the dissolution of the first international.

In reality those dissensions were only the immediate cause. Other more weighty causes in their turn conditioned by tactical problems, put an end to the existence of that organization, whose short-lived activity has nevertheless exercised a powerful influence on the development of Socialism. The defeat of the Paris Commune was a staggering blow to the working class movement of Europe. The most active revolutionary element of the French proletariat perished in the fight with the soldiery of Versailles. The trade unions of England, alarmed by the struggle of the Paris Commune and displeased with the fact that the international aligned itself on the side of the Communists, seceded from that organization; and in almost all other European countries raged the blindest reaction. No wonder, then, that under such conditions, any attempt to organize an armed uprising of the working class would have been futile. On the other hand, the revolutionists, who after fleeing from Paris, invaded the Swiss sections of the international and who fighting ardor had not yet cooled off, persistently demanded such uprising. Marx and Engels therefore decided to remove the international temporarily from the stage. At the last congress of the International Workingmen's Union at The Hague, they carried through a resolution to transfer the seat of the General Council of the international from London to New York, by which their end was practically accomplished. Two years later Engels frankly wrote that "considering the impossibility, under the universal political reaction, to fulfill its mission in any other way than by an interminable bloody sacrifice, which would have desanguinated the working class movement, the international has temporarily stepped aside by transferring the General Council to America."

But at the same congress at The Hague the international, before going out of existence, adopted a very significant resolution on tactics, that proved, in fact, a valuable legacy for the working class movement. This resolution declared that the working class ought to unite into one political party for the conquest of political power, "that great instrument for the emancipation of the workers."

The resolution was drawn up by Marx. Its historical significance is obvious, as it clearly pointed out the road for the workers' movement, in which, with partial exception of Germany, the trade character of organization had hitherto predominated. This resolution determined the course which Socialism was from then on to take, the course of parliamentary activity, into which it was besides forced by the new political conditions and by historical necessity. In fact, although the reactionary tendencies were still strong in Europe, the working class conquered universal or limited suffrage in one state after another, and the parliaments progressively became centers of political activity. At the same time, as I have already shown, the defeat of the proletariat in France, its lack of consciousness and its weak organization in all the capitalist states of Europe, the increasing power of the ruling classes and the increasing growth of militarism, made the old tactics of armed uprisings and of street fights behind barricades impossible.

Even before the congresses at The Hague, the German Social Democrats of both factions, the Lassallists as well as the Eisenachists, had decided to take part in the elections for the North German Reichstag. It is true, that, at first, the German Social Democrats participated in the elections only for the purposes of propaganda and agitation. With the same purpose in view many other Socialist parties of western Europe entered the parliamentary field.

The Socialists never ceased to regard this political action as being only of secondary importance, and not only did they not reject the old tactics of uprisings by the workers, but on the contrary, they emphasized at every opportunity their loyalty to them. But the social and political development of events nevertheless was continually forcing them in the opposite direction.

Capitalism was no longer causing an increase of poverty and hunger among the working masses, as in its first stage of development. On the contrary, the growth of capitalist industry in those countries, where the new economic order had taken firm roots, caused a considerable improvement in the material condition of the city proletariat. In addition to this fact, the constant rise of the cost of living found in the '70s a sudden check in an extraordinary factor, viz., in the appearance on the market of great quantities of cheap breadstuffs from America and Russia. At the same time, having conquered for themselves the right of tared organization, the workers pushed vigorously the development of their unions, which carried on a successful struggle with their not yet organized masters. And lastly, the parliaments themselves began to pass some kind of labor legislation, which gradually led to the disappearance from the minds of the masses of their former distrust in parliamentarism.

And so we see that social conditions did not create any strong incentives to impel the proletariat to street fighting and mass uprisings. On the contrary, the new political conditions opened for it the way to a legal defeat of its immediate interests.

Under the influence of all the aforementioned causes, the labor and Socialist movement assumed a more and more outspoken legal character, having at the same time divided itself into two separate organizations—into economic trade unionism and into a parliamentary political party.

In 1890 the aged Engels emphasized with great joy the triumph of these legal tactics, seeing in them the promise of success for the social movement in the present, and of its final victory in the future.

In his preface to Marx's "Class Struggles in France," Engels wrote as follows:

"The growth of the Socialist vote is so spontaneous, so constant, so irresistible and at the same time so peaceable, that it can be compared to a natural process. All attempts of the governments to check it proved powerless. If this growth continues at the same ratio in the future, then at the end of the century we shall have with us a majority of the votes of the middle strata of society—the small farmers and the small trades people—and we shall become the predominating power of the land, before which all other powers will have to bow, whether they wish it or not. To safeguard this growth should be our prime task. Only one thing can stop the growth of our power, to permit ourselves to be provoked into a great armed conflict with the military, and to suffer a blood-letting like the one in Paris in '71. The irony of history turns all things upside down. We revolutionaries, we destroyers, are succeeding better with legal methods of battle than with extra legal action and destruction. And the so-called parties of law and order are drawn toward their ruin by the legalized social regime which they themselves have created. They are now crying out in despair like Odillon Barrot: 'La legalite nous tue' (legality is killing us), while we, with the help of this same legality, are developing strong muscles and ruddy cheeks and are the picture of life and health. And if only we will not turn so insane as to let ourselves, to the satisfaction of our enemies, be drawn into street fighting, there will be nothing left for them but to smash their own and for them so fatal legality!"

The Socialist movement until recent years followed in the main this plan outlined by Engels.

The activity of the Socialist parties of western Europe, whatever their differences, was for the most part con-

to the same thing—propaganda, organization, participation in elections and activity in the parliaments. However pronounced the differences between Marxists, interclassists and revisionists, the FORMS OF ACTIVITY are the same with all of them. They differ only in the scope of their programs, in their valuation of conflicting social forces, in questions of parliamentary tactics.

It is true that now and then we find exceptions, as, for instance, the general political strikes during the '90s in Belgium and at the beginning of this century in Austria-Hungary, but those were exceptions that had no effect on the direction of the international Socialist movement.

And so, from a categorical denial of any value whatever to parliamentary action, the majority of the Socialists came to recognize in it certain positive and useful forces. This evolution of Socialism and the causes underlying it I have treated in another article; but this evolution has not affected the FORM of the Socialist struggle.

In recent years the growth of the numerical and moral power of International Socialism, and the increasing danger of an armed conflict among the civilized nations of Europe, have given rise in certain Socialist camps to the development of a tendency in favor of active mass uprisings in order to avert an international war. In general, Socialism is beginning to manifest a marked tendency toward activism (direct action). But, as I have said in the beginning of this paper, the ever changing and ever more complex conditions of social life in western Europe have brought forward the necessity of a revision of the tactical conceptions of Socialism as a whole. The urgency of a revision of this conception in order to decide whether or not a change is necessary, is recognized by all thinking Socialists.

What, then, are the new facts, the new phenomena of social life of western Europe, that so insistently demand this revision?

To all thinking observers of contemporary social and economic relations, it is becoming ever clearer that the countries of capitalist production are moving with rapid strides toward a serious crisis, pregnant with ominous consequences. The symptoms of the impending crisis are becoming more frequent and better defined.

In one of his articles in the *Neu Zeit*, to which we shall presently return, Kautsky, not without foundation, says, that capitalist production creates in the capitalist class an irresistible tendency toward intensified exploitation of the working masses. On the other hand, there is growing in the proletariat with the same irresistible force a desire to resist the increase of exploitation and of misery. These two opposing tendencies, engendered by the development of capitalism, determine the inevitableness of the class struggle.

If, in reality, the wretchedness of the working class is not always on the increase, nevertheless its indignation against the existence of misery at all, its determination to do away with the yoke entirely, are constantly growing in the masses as their culture and consciousness are being developed.

But at times capitalist production creates with the inevitableness of a natural process such conditions that the actual misery of the masses becomes acute. After forty years of comparative improvement in the material well-being of the working class, capitalism has obviously entered upon a phase characterized by an accentuation of the misery of the masses, by a shaking of the economic and therefore of the whole social structure of our civilization.

First of all we observe a rapid rise of the cost of living from which not only the countries of capitalist production are now suffering but also countries of a lower culture, of a lower stage of economic development.

Is this phenomenon a temporary one, created by passing causes, or is it permanent? The answer to this question, one way or the other, is of incalculable importance for the politico-social prognosis of our times.

All earnest and unbiased economists, who have investigated this phenomenon, unanimously declare that it shows every indication of proving prolonged and then permanent. And we cannot but agree with them.

I said before that the appearance in the 70s on the European market of cheap Russian and especially American foodstuffs then checked the rising prices of articles of first necessity.

The cheapness of American breadstuffs was the result of cheapened transportation, which came with the rapid growth of American railroad systems and with the equally rapid development of transoceanic communication between the old and new worlds. But another and more direct cause of the cheapness of American breadstuffs was the fact that American capitalism, unchecked in its triumphant march, could grab for purposes of exploitation immense stretches of unusually fertile and unoccupied soil. Now all the arable land in America, or rather in the United States, has become the private property of large or small landlords. This circumstance was again followed by a rise in the price of bread, which affected the European worker the more heavily because of the high import tax that exists in most capitalist countries.

The rapidly increasing organization of commercial capital, which is assuming colossal dimensions and dominating more and more productive capital and the markets is, in turn, to a great extent contributing to the universal rise in the cost of living. The fall in the price of gold, caused by the discovery of new gold fields and by improved method of mining, also had a serious effect upon the increased cost of living. The constant increase of taxation, caused by the unchecked growth of militarism, has the same effect.

Militarism is the direct offspring of imperialism; the latter is the own beloved child of capitalism in its present stage of development.

Not alone does militarism cause a constant growth of the burden of taxation, which falls most heavily on the toilers—it is also becoming more and more a menace to the peace of all Europe, and at any moment, under the influence of some trivial, unforeseen circumstance, may provoke a terrible fratricidal war among the cultured nations of Europe.

The danger of such a war becoming more and more imminent cannot fail to produce a growing feeling of uneasiness and a nervous tension in the toiling masses and in a great measure accentuates their opposition to the present structure of society, forcing them more and more to adopt extreme measures in their struggle. First, because with the present organization of European armies, which in wartime absorbs almost the entire population of able-bodied citizens, and with the strongly developed international character of commercial and industrial relations, a great war would inevitably create a frightful economic crisis, the like of which mankind has never before experienced. In the second place such a war would result in the mutual extermination of hundreds of thousands of toilers, and the European working class is too deeply permeated with a consciousness of the international solidarity of labor to remain indifferent before such a prospect.

The increase of taxation, the high cost of living and the growing danger of war are the three main new factors peculiar to the present stage of capitalism.

Along with these stands another factor of great prominence and influence, viz. the ever-growing organizations of the capitalists for defensive and offensive purposes. Gigantic trusts, manufacturers' associations and industrial alliances make it ever harder for trade organizations to maintain themselves even in countries where they possess strong and rich unions.

Capital which at first yielded to the sudden onrush of a growing working class movement, now opposes to the solidarity of labor the solidarity of the money bag, and has succeeded in forging a strong weapon not only for defense, but also for offense. Besides, the reduced cost of production, which grew out of universal competition in the world markets is the main source of the capitalists' success. No wonder, therefore, that they so savagely resist the demands of labor for higher wages.

And so the changed politico-social conditions in the capitalist countries force upon the workers the necessity of adopting more energetic means in

the struggle with their oppressors. At the same time trade unionism is meeting with ever greater obstacles in the shape of strongly fortified citadels of capital.

Can the struggle of the workers then, a struggle which is growing fiercer through the appearance of new and mighty stimuli, remain within the same confines in which the working class movement has been developing up to the present?

Even Kautsky, who, as we shall see, is opposed to a change in the old tactics, answers this question negatively.

He advances the following reasons: The organized proletariat represents only a minority of the working classes. The unorganized majority, at times when the social conflict becomes especially embittered, will undoubtedly go out on the street, moved by that mighty, irrepresible sentiment of collective indignation and revolt which is created by solidarity of suffering and by the idealism of a passionate desire kindled in the hearts of thousands. This was illustrated, in Kautsky's opinion, by the bread riots of last year in France, Germany and Austria. The suffrage rights, which the toilers possess to a greater or smaller extent in the European countries, cannot, in the present state of affairs, which constantly grow worse, serve as a lightning rod for popular discontent.

Although the organization of the workers has not yet reached its limits, it is impossible to suppose that there will ever come a time within the capitalist regime, when all the toilers will be organized.

Capitalism is always striving to oppose to organized workers the mob of the unorganized. If the population of a given country cannot supply the capitalists with the necessary contingent of such workers, they procure them from abroad. Besides, there are occupations in which organization is almost impossible, as, for instance, among the hundreds of thousands of government employes.

However great the percentage of organized workers in relation to the rest of the population, however great the influence of the former upon the latter, elemental general mass uprisings, in which organization plays no part whatever, are not impossible, even though organized workers may take part in the movement.

Universal suffrage is no better calculated to enhance the confidence of the masses in legal means of redress. In the first place, the intervals between elections are long. In the second place, the dissolution of parliament is entirely in the hands of the executives, and the latter surely will not appeal, if they can help it, to the electors in times of great popular agitation. Finally, not all the mass of the population participates in elections. Far from it. Women, with rare exceptions, have no suffrage. A considerable percentage of male workers are deprived of suffrage even in countries where the electoral system has a democratic character. In England, for instance, at the election of 1906, 7,300,000 could vote; while had the principle of universal suffrage been in actual force, 9,600,000 would have had the vote. In Germany only male citizens who have reached their 25th year can participate in elections; and in 1900 there were in Germany more than 2,000,000 citizens between the ages of 21 and 25. Foreign workers are excluded from voting; and in addition not all the workers are free to register their vote according to their convictions. Finally, in a number of countries the workers are altogether deprived of the right to vote, and the desire to conquer that right may be the cause of a general uprising.

"And so," argues Kautsky, "the suffrage right does not remove the possibility of mass uprisings. It may only limit its field of action and narrow its immediate causes, but no more."

The social conflict is reaching a stage where mass uprisings of the toilers become inevitable. As the working class movement grows, it naturally assumes more and more of a mass character. But this is the organized movement; and the future is pregnant with possible political or economic elemental uprisings of the street.

What, then, shall be the attitude of the Socialist party with reference to this new factor? How should the Socialists reckon with it? Can they persist in the same lines of action, which they have followed so far, without endangering their influence and without delaying the hour of victory? Both in the German and French Socialist press we find insistent demands for a radical change in the matter of tactics. Naturally those are the demands of the minority; nevertheless they introduce much of interest in the discussion of the fundamental practical problems of Socialism.

A work by Charles Albert and Jean Duchesne devoted to the question of Socialist tactics and entitled "Le Socialisme Révolutionnaire," appeared in Paris last year. The authors of this work state the symptoms of the approaching social storm. They are convinced of the inevitableness in the near future of revolutionary mass outbursts. But they have no assurance whatever that the results of these outbursts will be the formation of a new society on the basis of emancipated and organized labor.

The cause for doubt as to the victory of Socialism the authors find only in the fact that Socialist tactics are now out of touch with the general trend of the social struggle. According to them these tactics have been barren of results even in the past. Neither on the political nor on the economic field have they contributed to the development in the masses of the true Socialist consciousness.

In order to add to the weight of their criticism, the authors devote a portion of their work to the formulation of the aims of revolutionary Socialism as a factor preparatory to the social revolution. They make an excursion into the field of social philosophy, subjecting to a severe criticism the Marxist conception of Socialism, which they regard as the principal cause of the tactical blunders of the Socialists. Marxian Socialism, they say, is based exclusively on data of economics, and the material conception of history serves, so to speak, only to reinforce this thesis. Marxism is still predominant in the Socialist parties, and in a somewhat modified form it permeates even revolutionary syndicalism. Marxism has formulated several so-called laws of social evolution, which purport to explain the absolute necessity and the comparative ease of the expropriation of the capitalists by the workers. But, according to the authors, a closer and broader study of social evolution has conclusively shown that the alleged Marxian laws possess neither the inevitableness nor the absoluteness which are claimed for them. To substantiate their contentions the authors advance an array of proofs that have already been brought forward by all critics of Marxism.

As a matter of fact economic revolution does not inevitably lead to Socialism, is the assertion of Albert and Duchesne. With the praiseworthy intention of reinforcing the struggle for the emancipation of labor with the unconquerable power of an iron law, Marxism has divested Socialism and its purely human elements, which are regarded as all too frail, all too changeable. And therein, according to the authors, lies the fundamental error of Marxism.

In reality, they say, if we take Socialism in its true essence, leaving aside its numerous schools and teachings, if we survey the aggregate of the aspects and phenomena of Socialism in everyday life, we shall have to admit that it is in the first place a new and more concrete form of an age-long striving of humanity for liberty, justice and equality. On the day when it first became clear that the realization of liberty, justice and equality is impossible without a radical change of the economic foundation of society—on that day Socialism was born.

(Continued next Sunday.)

"Won't you be very, very happy when your sentence is over?" cheerfully asked a woman of a convict prisoner.

"I dunno, ma'am, I dunno," gloomily answered the man.

"You don't know?" exclaimed the woman, amazed. "Why not?"

"I'm in for life."—New Orleans Picayune.

Tactical Problems

By E. STALIN

Translated From the Russian for the Sunday Call by Dr. L. C.

(Continued from last Sunday.)

The historic necessity of Socialism from this point of view appears with striking clearness, assert the authors.

While the bourgeoisie can in a large measure satisfy this growing desire for individual liberty, because it has conquered for itself the material basis for this liberty, the proprietors, crushed in the vise of economic want, are painfully conscious of the sharp contrast between their ideals, feelings and strivings and the sordidness of their daily life. The dispossessed, therefore, are yearning for the realization of an economic order in which they too may at last enjoy liberty and equality. This is the origin of Socialism, the true religion of democracy.

It is to be noted that Albert and Duchesne, notwithstanding their revolutionary syndicalist leanings, are not afraid of the word democracy, which in the mouth of the syndicalists signifies a great variety of things. Only by opposing the spurious democracy of the bourgeoisie the true democracy of Socialism, i. e., a regime based on economic justice, can the last remnants of prejudice in this sphere be destroyed in the minds of the masses.

The authors do not deny that Socialism is also an economic problem because the realization of the Socialist ideal is impossible without a radical change in the system of production and distribution. The conflict that divides contemporary society is an economic conflict; but the causes that force men to seek a solution of this conflict by means of Socialism lie in the sphere of morals.

Here the reasoning of the authors is obviously becoming strained. That moral elements greatly determine the Socialist ideal goes without saying; that yearning for social justice is the mainspring in the Socialist struggle, is also undisputed. Nevertheless, Socialism, as a definite ideal of an economic order of society, erected on the principle of collective labor and common ownership, is firmly grounded on actual economic data. Were this data of a different order, then other means than those of Socialism would have become necessary for the realization of social justice, equality and liberty. If economic revolution had not created contradictions that can be solved only through collectivism; if it had not prepared the ground for Socialist organization in the future, then Socialism would be a Utopia, a noble humanitarian dream, devoid of a firm historical foundation.

But to return to our authors. After stating that the evolution of capitalist society does not inevitably lead toward Socialism and that in the formation of the Socialist ideal the moral element is the predominating factor, they come to the following practical conclusions:

"Following closely the developments on the economic field and adapting to them our tactics and our propaganda, without again being carried away by Utopias, we must nevertheless make use of the traditional motive power of conscious will. It is time to call into service the great powers of idealism, faith and enthusiasm which from the first formation of society have moved and sustained mankind. Only in this way can we extricate ourselves from the thralldom into which we have fallen."

In other words, it is necessary, according to the authors, to add a deeper moral hue to the Socialist movement and to direct all efforts toward destroying in the minds of the masses their reliance on a mere mechanical development of a natural process. Such were the only true, the only Socialist tactics even in the past, they say. And now, when the bourgeois society, weakened by its own contradictions, is beginning to totter, these tactics become especially urgent and necessary; for only in this way can there be formed living creative power capable not only of giving the final push to the tumbling order, but also of erecting on its ruins the temple of a liberated and regenerated humanity.

Let us, they say, imagine the mission the working class has before it. This mission is tremendously great and complex. The difficulties which the bourgeoisie had to overcome in

its struggle will appear truly insignificant when compared with the obstacles in our path. The bourgeoisie was a real economic power. It dictated its terms to the political powers. It furnished great statesmen and great administrators to the monarchy. It possessed also great intellectual power, the result of its riches and economic independence. Before it had commenced its actual revolution, it had completed a thorough moral revolution. In addition, it was the creator of public opinion. What, on the other hand, does the proletariat represent now? Nothing but an appendix to the machine. The part of the proletariat in economic life is reduced to unconditional obedience. No initiative comes from it. If here and there a few proletarians succeed in finding an outlet to light, to real education, they almost invariably leave their class and are absorbed by the bourgeoisie. The great organs of the press, the makers of public opinion, are in the possession of the capitalists, and the proletarians are disarmed in this field also. What then is left to them? By what means can they attain their liberty? There is left to them only the power of the masses, their numerical superiority. These advantages may give them victory. But only on the condition that they be deeply inspired with an irresistible revolutionary spirit and a clarified Socialist vision. The activities of the Socialist parties, the authors assert, have resulted in just the opposite. And here we arrive at that portion of their work which contains their indictment of the present Socialist tactics.

The Socialist party is not fulfilling its fundamental revolutionary mission, the authors say, because its original fighting spirit and revolutionary enthusiasm have gradually died away under the influence of parliamentarism, whose methods it has adopted. At first parliamentarism was only one of the many tactical means employed by the Socialists. Later it became the center of the party's activity, became the soul of the party. Parliamentary tactics developed more and more and brought to life such situations as completely transformed the party.

The Socialists have set up as their task the conquest of political power, and their participation in parliamentary activity and life has naturally fostered and confirmed in them the hope of attaining their goal in a legal way, by means of a majority of the electoral vote. As the working class is numerically the strongest, it is the natural heir to parliamentary power. One faction of Socialists, however, like the Guesdists in France, considered the question of political power from a theoretically different point of view. They declared that political power can be captured only by means of a revolution. In reality there is no difference between them and the other Socialist groups. They also send their representatives to parliament, where they do the same parliamentary work as the others; for parliamentary activity is everywhere the same.

By concentrating the attention of the masses on parliamentary activity and parliamentary successes, while not arousing them to other forms of activity, the party is destroying in them the active spirit and keeping them in a passive state.

But the parliamentarianism of the party works injuries in other ways also. The main movers of Socialist consciousness, the leaven that keeps the revolutionary spirit in the masses alive, are the Socialist intellectuals (l'élite Socialiste), who are the ablest propagandists, the sincerest Socialists. The constant contact of the elite with the masses is the best means for upholding Socialist ideals on the altar of the social revolution. If this elite is separated from the masses, the latter become soulless and sink into inertia. The chief duty of the revolutionaries lies, therefore, in the preservation of uninterrupted contact between the masses and the courageous torch bearers of Socialism. But parliamentary tactics lead to just the opposite result. They separate the in-

tellectuals from the struggling masses; they rob the army of the toilers of members who are their soul, and drive the leaders into the world of the bourgeoisie. Not only are the best standard bearers of Socialist ideals being removed from the struggling masses, but, through the nature of their new work, they are also being removed from true Socialism. A Deputy has now to deal no more with workmen's organizations exclusively; he must devote his time to the affairs of his electoral district, which is a mixture of heterogeneous social elements. The electoral district enslaves the Deputy and burdens him with a mass of petty obligations and considerations, so that the retention of his seat in parliament becomes the dominating object of his activity. And this is not all. His election to parliament gives to the Socialist propagandist a secure social standing that is entirely bourgeois.

The Socialist intellectuals are composed, according to the authors, of men who have received from the bourgeoisie all the refinements of culture, but who are tormented by hunger for social justice. To these rebels, who should have been welded into one with the fighting proletariat, parliamentarism opens a way back to the bourgeoisie.

The authors paint in darkest colors the baneful influence of parliamentarism on the moral evolution of the party. Campaign interests are paramount; people are finding their way into the fold of the party who have no business there, who have their own interests to serve; the spirit of opportunism and of compromise is getting the upperhand, and the energy of the organization is directed toward aims that are anything but revolutionary.

Here, then, are the three main arguments of the authors against parliamentarism: 1. It displaces the central point of attack by transferring it into the sphere of a purely legal battle and fostering in this way a hope of introducing Socialism by peaceable means. 2. It severs the Socialist intellectuals from the proletarian masses. 3. It lowers the moral standard of the party and obscures the real object of the Socialist struggle.

Albert and Duchesne, it is to be observed, declare themselves against parliamentarism not on general principles as the anarchists do, but from purely tactical considerations. In the place of the discredited parliamentarian tactics, they propose the formation of a revolutionary party whose main object shall be the promotion among the masses of the Socialist ideal in its exalted purity and inviolability. "Our aim before all," they say, "should be to create in the land a passionate desire for a new popular state, based on economic justice, a state in which there shall not remain a single vestige of exploitation of man by man."

Such a party would present a clear cut ideal of future society and would work out a plan of Socialist organization. So far the Socialists have refrained from presenting such a plan. For this reason their propaganda has not brought the desired results and Socialism itself has become obscured in the minds of the masses.

The new party would take no part in elections and would be represented in none of the bourgeois institutions. Only by means of direct action would it exert its influence on political life. "If," they say, "we are told that the possibilities for direct action in the sphere of politics are limited, then we shall widen those limits."

Unlike parliamentarism, direct action is not limited to one particular form of expression. Its forms are determined by life and are therefore as manifold, as rich and as unforeseen as life itself.

Only such tactics, according to the authors, can give the best results. By rejecting parliamentarism, Socialism will remove the main obstacle that retarded the growth of its moral influence, that distorted its character, that obscured its real ways and aims. By planting itself unequivocally on the

basis of direct action the party would accelerate the growth of a truly revolutionary Socialist consciousness in the masses, would develop and strengthen their fighting spirit and power, and would join again the general march of social evolution. In other words, only the tactics recommended by them would create all the elements which alone can give victory to the working class.

The authors do not deny the benefits of some reforms promulgated by the present bourgeois governments. Such reforms may at times be very useful, especially if they are of such a character as to facilitate the revolutionary struggle by creating more favorable conditions. But such reforms can also be enforced by means of direct action, by external pressure on governments and parliaments, and there would be no necessity for Socialists to be seated in parliament. The authors assert that, in fact, reforms are granted only when popular disaffection and discontent reach a point where further delay becomes dangerous.

But should the adherents of the new tactics declare war upon Socialist parliamentarism, upon the present Socialist party? No, say the authors; the new party is not anti-parliamentary, it is aparlimentary. And besides, the destruction of parliamentary Socialism would be undesirable as well as impossible.

Finally, after declaring themselves against parliamentarism in France, the authors admit its justification and necessity in Russia and even in Germany. They go further and say that even in France, under certain specific circumstances, an election contest may be of great social importance. But though not all parliamentary action is utterly useless, it has nevertheless nothing in common with the specific revolutionary Socialist movement. Only when this truth is clearly understood and accepted by all will there be no objection to our joining forces with the parliamentary Socialists on certain occasions.

The main objection to the above criticism of the Socialist party is that the authors built their argument on facts taken exclusively from French political life. Even granting the accuracy of the facts, the question arises whether the negative effects pointed out by the authors are not due to specific peculiarities of French conditions rather than to parliamentarism as such. If the first conjecture is true, then the remedy would be not the rejection of parliamentarism, but the finding of ways to overcome the influence of those peculiar conditions. The authors have not even touched this question, and their whole argument is thereby weakened.

Such phenomena as the subordination of everything else to campaign interests, as the intrusion of self-seekers into the ranks of the party, as the frequent treachery of prominent party leaders, are unfortunately among the ills of French Socialism. Happily such sad incidents occur now with less frequency among the French Socialists, and the reason for this lies in the higher organizing efficiency of the party. The lack of organization in all French political parties created conditions favorable to the appearance of self-seekers and was mainly responsible for the negative side of French political life in general and of the Socialist party in particular. After the consolidation of all factions of French Socialism, the party took up with renewed vigor the serious work of organization, eliminating all the foreign elements that crept into it during the time of disruption and disorganization. That lack of organization is the main cause of all the negative results of Socialism is proved by the fact that wherever there is a strongly organized Socialist party, those phenomena are reduced to a minimum.

Equally groundless is the authors' argument that parliamentarism estranges the Socialist intellectuals from the masses. Far be it from us to minimize the importance of these intellectuals; these "porteurs des torches" in the social struggle. But

Tactical Problems

to assert that parliamentarism seduces them from the path of righteousness is a cruel insult to those of whom they spoke with such respect and even reverence. Why must a man, who has sincerely devoted himself to the service of Socialism, who has no aims of personal advantage, inevitably lose his contact with the struggling masses and even cease to be a true Socialist as soon as he receives a seat in parliament? The authors give two reasons:

1. In becoming a Deputy, a Socialist must devote himself to the interests of his entire electoral district and has no time, therefore, for Socialist propaganda. 2. As Deputy he is placed in a position financially secure.

These arguments are, to say the least, untenable. The truth of the matter is that even in France the Socialist Deputies happen to be the most active propagandists. The position of Deputy usually gives to a man a certain prestige; the utterances of a Deputy usually carry more weight with an audience than the words of a private citizen; and it goes without saying that every sincere Socialist Deputy will make the utmost use of these advantages in the interests of party propaganda. Again this same material security of a Deputy relieves him of the necessity of devoting the greater part of his time to working for a living; it gives him leisure which he can use for active propaganda. It is

true that a Deputy must look after the interests of his electoral district as a whole. But if he is a sincere Socialist this duty toward the local interests of his constituency (and a Socialist constituency at that) can very well be combined with the general fight for Socialism.

But assuming that parliamentarism is indeed the cause of many negative manifestations in the Socialist camp, is this sufficient ground for its rejection? In life there is nothing absolute; all tactics have their bad and their good features. In order to arrive at a true estimate of parliamentarism it is not enough to exhibit its objectionable sides; it is necessary also to point out the advantages that it offers.

Can the working class and the Socialist party that represents it discard the weapon of parliamentarism in present democratic countries, without injury to general politico-social progress and to the successful spread of Socialism? Why, the authors themselves admit that there may arise moments in the life of a nation, when the outcome of an election may be of supreme social importance. But participation in election in democratic countries presupposes preparation and organization adapted for such activity. How can such organization coexist with an anti-parliamentary crusade that preaches absenteeism to the masses? It may so happen that in a deciding campaign, when upon the outcome of an election may depend the fate of a regime or the general trend of a country's politics, the workers imbued with the anti-parliamentarism of our "revolutionary Socialists" will stay away from the

booths and by so doing make certain the victory of reaction. The authors say that in such a case the masses would go out into the street. But eruption into the streets to fight, against an unfavorable verdict approved by a majority of the voters, may not always give positive results. The same may happen in the struggle for reforms. Reforms, assert the authors, are promulgated only when the indignation of the masses is a warning to the powers that be that further delay might prove dangerous. This assertion contains a good deal of truth. On the other hand we must not forget that the number of advocates of a certain reform in parliament may also serve as an indication of danger in case of delay. Besides, external pressure may not always bring the desired results, if it is not supported by simultaneous action within the walls of parliament. In such a case the numerical strength of Socialist Deputies may be of decisive importance. If, for instance, the coalition of Socialists and Liberals in the Belgian Parliament had at its disposal a dozen more votes, universal suffrage in Belgium would have been an accomplished fact by this time. The advantage of a few votes made it possible for the Belgian Clerical party successfully to resist the advocates of electoral reform, in spite of violent expressions of disaffection and indignation among the masses. The example of Belgium disproves best the assertion that there is no correlation between the promulgation of progressive reforms and the numerical strength of their advocates in parliament.

The premises of the authors in their discussion of Socialist tactics are in

general correct. They state that Socialist activity runs mainly within the confines of a parliamentarism and that this circumstance is responsible for the decrease of Socialist energy in the masses. They have also shown that this circumstance may lead to consequences dangerous to Socialism, especially at the present time, with the growing social antagonisms, the increasing danger of war and the general instability of all social foundations. But having started from the right premises, they followed the wrong road and came therefore to wrong conclusions.

Their conclusions would have been logically correct if they had discounted the importance of contemporary democratic institutions; if they, like the anarchists or even like the Guesdists, had denied the possibility of any political or social progress within the capitalist states. But in one chapter of their book the authors plainly prove that the working class must not rely entirely on its economic organization, and that political events often exert a great influence on economic and social relations. Having admitted the necessity and possibility of fighting for immediate improvements under the present system, they have come into collision with logic, for it is just in this struggle for immediate improvements that parliamentarism becomes one of the strongest of weapons.

In order to carry their point at all the authors should have proved that under no circumstances can direct action and political action exist side by side, that they are mutually exclusive forms of procedure; but they have done nothing of the kind.

(Continued next Sunday.)

Tactical Problems

Translated From the Russian for The Sunday Call by Dr. L. C.

(Continued from last Sunday.)

Pannekoek, the well-known Socialist writer, has subjected the question of Socialist tactics to a thorough analysis in a series of articles in the *Neue Zeit*. First of all, he states the fact that social antagonisms are becoming more acute. The rising cost of living, the increase of taxation, imperialism, the growing danger of an international war, keep the masses in a state of constant excitement, and force them to strain every effort in defense of their interests against the encroachments of the capitalist octopus which crushes them in its deadly tentacles.

In order to clarify the essence of the tactical problems of Socialism in view of the changed politico-social conditions, Pannekoek, at first attempts to find an answer to the question, why has not the proletariat conquered political power long since, notwithstanding its numerical superiority and its economic function? Why, all through history, could an insignificant minority rule over an overwhelming majority?

The principal causes underlying these phenomena are, according to Pannekoek, the following:

First, the intellectual superiority of the ruling minority. Living as a class on surplus value created by labor, and having absolute control of the machinery of production and exchange, the ruling minority monopolizes science, which fact alone gives it a tremendous advantage over the uneducated masses. Whenever the exploited majority, driven by despair, rose against its oppressors, the latter, thanks to the aforementioned advantage, have always found the means for the suppression of the uprisings; and the chains which the masses, in an elemental outburst of hatred, and anger have attempted to break, have been riveted more firmly. The uprisings of the slaves and the peasant wars are instances of this kind.

With the advent of the bourgeoisie, education ceased to be the monopoly of the ruling minority. Universal education was and is still being gradually introduced everywhere, the thick mists of ignorance which clouded the toiling masses are scattered, science is being democratized.

But there remain other means at the disposal of the bourgeoisie for the maintenance of their rule. Foremost among them is the moral influence on the masses. To this end the bourgeoisie makes use of the school, the church and the press, all three important factors in keeping the proletariat in spiritual subjection to the possessing classes.

Another means for maintaining its rule over the toilers which the bourgeoisie has is its strong organization. A well organized minority is always stronger than a great unorganized mob. Such an organization the ruling class possesses in the form of the state. The single-mindedness of a will which directs this organization, a will which starts from the center and exacts automatically obedience even at the remotest points of the periphery, is the main cause of the mighty power of the bourgeoisie. However great the population, each citizen in his relation to the state is only a helpless atom, which, at the first sign of insubordination, is automatically and ruthlessly crushed by a shrewdly devised mechanism. This power of the state has always been used against the masses, and they have learned to hate and to fear it. When the spirit of revolt is aroused in the toilers, when the isolated atoms begin to cohere, then the state employs the police and the army.

In so far as the economic function of the bourgeoisie becomes superfluous it deteriorates into a parasitic class. The economic reason for its dominance disappears, and with this disappears also its moral influence on the proletariat. There remains to the bourgeoisie only one means by which it can maintain its rule, and this is the organization of the state with all its instruments of coercion.

But, says Pannekoek, the con-

quest of the state's power should not be the object of the proletarian struggle; on the contrary, this struggle should be directed against the power of the state with the view of its ultimate complete annihilation.

Pannekoek is far from anarchism. When he says that the proletariat must aim at the annihilation of the bourgeois state, it does not mean that he is opposed on general principles to the idea of the state. But, at any rate, on this question the author occupies a peculiar position, which brings him very close to the revolutionary syndicalists. In what way can the proletarian army destroy the bourgeois state?

The power of the proletariat, says Pannekoek, lies in its numerical superiority and its economic function. This function, thanks to economic developments, is daily becoming more decisive and all-important. Besides, the proletariat possesses two other weapons—organization and knowledge.

The first stage of proletarian knowledge is class consciousness, which is gradually developed into the consciousness of political and class struggle. Through class consciousness the proletariat frees itself from dependence on the bourgeoisie, and the growth of its political consciousness destroys the spiritual dominance of the ruling class.

Organization brings the disassociated units into cohesion. As long as the atoms are not united, as long as they move in opposite directions, the sum total of their efforts is nil. But when they combine, their mass power is materialized, and a single collective will is created. Organization develops also the idea of discipline, which means that the activities of the individual are determined not by his own judgment, not by his personal interest, but by the will and interest of the organized collectively. The experiences of the class struggle have broadened and strengthened this principle of discipline. And so to the organization of the ruling minority is opposed the organization of the toiling majority. When the latter shall become stronger than the former it will destroy it and supplant it.

Only in this way, declares Pannekoek, can the social revolution be successfully accomplished. The idea of a forcible conquest of political power by a minority with the object of using this power to establish the Socialist regime is a vain illusion. The social revolution can come only as a result of a deep process of transformation in the consciousness and character of the masses. They must evolve into an active power, into a united humanity, capable of consciously deciding upon their own fate and entering openly and courageously into the fight against the ruling power. To make the success of the revolution certain it is necessary that the masses become a separate and active organism, with a life of its own, with members and organs of its own—in a word it is necessary that there should grow up a working class Socialist state within the capitalist state. The struggle between these two organizations will be a struggle of two antagonistic forces, each of which will aim at the complete annihilation of the other.

The Socialist parties openly declare that their aim is the conquest of political power as a preliminary to the reorganization of society on Socialist principles. Pannekoek, on the other hand, declares that the aim of the proletarian army should be the destruction of this power, and the creation of a power of their own and of weapons of their own. According to Pannekoek, then, the policies which have dominated international Socialism are radically wrong, being no more in accord with the general trend of the social struggle. The conquest of power by means of parliamentarism is, in his opinion, a most dangerous illusion. If true democracy were a reality in capitalist countries, if parliaments were the real centers of all political power and if the masses could exert a direct and complete con-

trol over the parliaments, then, says Pannekoek, parliamentary tactics, electoral contests and enlightenment of the voters would be the best means for obtaining the end in view. But in reality there is nothing of the kind. In order to create such favorable conditions the masses have to fight first for constitutional reforms, and there they meet their principal stumbling block. With the social relations becoming more and more antagonistic, political power is the only weapon left in the hands of the ruling classes. To promulgate reforms which would facilitate the acquisition of political power by the toiling masses would be suicidal for the bourgeoisie. It will therefore have to put up a desperate resistance, and the struggle will become increasingly embittered. As yet neither of the contending forces have made use of their most powerful weapons. The bourgeoisie has not taken recourse to its military power to crush the parliamentary ascendancy of Socialism; the proletariat, on the other hand, had thrown on the scales only its numerical strength and its political pressure. As yet it has not tested its economic pre-eminence nor its organizing power. In this conflict the proletariat will become victorious only when its organization will be able to crush the latter. Consequently the mere attempt of conquering state power through parliamentarism inevitably leads also to the necessity of destroying this same state power.

There remains, then, only one way for the revolution to succeed, the way indicated by Pannekoek. But the tactics of the party, says Pannekoek, lead in a diametrically opposite direction. Socialist activity, according to Pannekoek, is reduced to elections, industrial strikes, parliamentary business and political enlightenment of the workers. There is no difference in this regard between the right and the left wings of Socialism. The only difference between them is that the right believes that in this way Socialism will be introduced without any violent upheaval, while the left pins its hopes on mass uprising, which will break out at a given moment with elemental force and which will sweep away the capitalist regime. We have here the old style revolution resuscitated, with this difference, however, that now the party organization stands ready to take over the power and to claim the fruits of the victory brought about by the elemental uprising of the masses. The latter will have pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for the party organization which, meanwhile, will have changed into a new ruling minority. Such a theory of evolution Pannekoek calls the theory of inactive waiting (Theorie des activen abwartens). The adherents of this theory are passively waiting for the great mass uprising instead of actively preparing for it.

The tactics which Pannekoek urges the Socialist parties to adopt are the tactics of active mass uprisings, the broadest application in all its forms of the theory of "direct action." He does not concern himself with the elemental uprisings of the unorganized, he thinks only of "a definite new form of activity of the organized workers." These tactics are dictated by life itself and are therefore the only true tactics.

Through the practice of active mass struggle the organization of the workers will be perfected and strengthened. Hundreds of thousands of workers who are now far from Socialism, whether from fear, from indifference or from lack of faith, would be drawn into the movement and would take part in the struggle. Up to the present, ideologic discussions have played a great part in the working class movement and have split the proletarian army. These discussions will lose their importance, thanks to the practice of mass struggle, which sharply exposes the class antagonism of society and clearly illumines the class solidarity of the toilers. At the same time the inner strength of the organization will develop. Under the pressure of the requirements of the struggle, a struggle full of sacrifice

and intense exertion, discipline will be strengthened and perfected.

Mass uprisings, according to Pannekoek, will have for their immediate object pressure on government and on the bourgeoisie. "What we have in view," says Pannekoek, "is an extra-parliamentary political activity of the working class, which exerts its influence on the politics of the country directly, and not through representatives."

Such action must not be confounded with street uprisings. Even though street demonstrations may sometimes be expedient, the most characteristic manifestation of this action is the general strike and deserted streets.

Pressure on administrations and on the bourgeoisie from without by means of direct mass action is, according to Pannekoek, becoming the more necessary, as the influence of parliamentarism in politico-social life is noticeably weakening in all capitalist countries, while the working class at the same time is forced to submit more and more to such insufferable conditions as are beyond the jurisdiction and the power of parliaments to remove.

The larger trades organizations as well as the political party organizations hesitate to enter openly upon the road of mass uprisings, fearing to jeopardize their existence. Such hesitation was excusable and even justifiable in the early stages of organization of the forces of the working class; but at present, when the solidarity and the organization of the proletariat have reached a high state of development, further hesitation is groundless.

In developing his ideas on this question, Pannekoek arrives at some very bold and original, if not quite convincing, conclusions.

The essence of organization, he says, is something spiritual, which cannot be killed by annihilating its material form. Under the influence of long training during the organizing period the very character of the proletarians has undergone a remarkable change. Dissolve the organization—the workers will not, because of this, change again into individualists, who cared only for their personal interests, for their personal wage. The principle of discipline, the sentiment of class solidarity, the habit of collective organized action will survive in them. This spirit of discipline, of organization, innate in the present proletariat, creates new form for its manifestation. Generally, when one speaks of mass uprisings, of active mass struggles, the popular movements of the first half of the last century are taken as examples. But there can be no analogy, according to Pannekoek. In those times the aim of mass uprisings was merely the overthrow of a hated regime or the conquest of power by means of a single revolutionary act. Having achieved the aim the masses submitted to the dominion of another organized group of another organized minority.

The mass movement of our times, says Pannekoek, also has for its aim the conquest of power, with this difference, that we know it is possible of achievement only by means of a broad Socialist organization of the workers. Our immediate aim is a definite reform or a definite concession, i. e., a step forward in the weakening of the enemy and a step forward in the strengthening of our own forces.

But this is not all. The masses of our day, in a class sense, are different from the masses which took part in the revolutionary uprising of former days. In the historic mass uprisings, according to the author, the bourgeois elements were mainly prominent. In those days the fighting mass consisted of mechanics, peasants and small producers, who psychologically stood very close to the petty bourgeois class. It was therefore quite natural that those masses, reared in individualism, could not for any length of time remain in a compact state, and that they should disperse immediately after a successful or unsuccessful uprising—individuals, who, for an instant com-

Tactical Problems

bined, again turned into amorphous, impotent atoms. But now things are different. Now the masses which are capable of direct uprising consist of city proletarians, of workers employed in the large industries. They are of a different class character, they are swayed by other ideas, by other sentiments and methods of fight than their petty bourgeois predecessors.

Pannekoek is convinced that the new forms of proletarian action are inevitable, that they are forcibly brought to the front by the iron logic of life. He therefore asserts that, should the party declare itself against the tactics recommended by him, the mass struggle, active mass uprisings will nevertheless proceed to assume ever larger proportions. But, he says, if there should arise a conflict between the demands of party discipline and the proletarian fighting spirit, the harmony and unity of the workers' movement would be destroyed and the attack of the workers' forces on the position of the enemy would be weakened.

It must be admitted that there is much in the tactical plans outlined by Pannekoek which is ambiguous and not complete. What is to be understood under "annihilation of the state's power"? Can this annihilation proceed gradually? Of what character must the workers' organization be

which is to replace the bourgeois state? What status will associations and parties have in this organization? To all these most important questions the author does not give a clear and direct answer. Besides, Pannekoek asserts that the importance of parliaments is declining, that the best means for obtaining reforms is external pressure on the ruling classes; nevertheless, he does not demand categorically the rejection of parliamentary action. And so the principal question of tactics, the question of the relation of Socialists to parliamentarism and of the relationship between parliamentary action and other forms of Socialist struggle remains unanswered by Pannekoek.

Besides being ambiguous and obscure, the reasoning of Pannekoek appears to us too metaphysical. In outlining his tactical plan the author ignores the real conditions of social life, and concentrates all his efforts on the logical development of his central idea.

The struggle of the working class takes place not in an empty space, but within the confines of the state. The gains of the working class movement in the sphere of politics do not in the least destroy the mechanism of the state; they only lead toward its democratization, toward increased influence of the working classes upon the legislative apparatus of the state and toward a corresponding decrease of the influence of capital. And it could not be otherwise. Therein actually lies the essence of direct political action of the proletariat and of

the other working masses as far as this struggle has any concrete aim at all. Can we find in the political program of the Socialist parties a single demand, the realization of which would undermine the foundations of state organization? Can we find such a demand in the minimum programs of the workingmen's association, programs covering the immediate necessities and interests of the laboring masses?

Kautsky, in his controversy with Pannekoek, has, among others, the following correct argument in refutation of the latter's viewpoint:

We demand, he says, extension of public schools and the increase of the teachers' staff—would this demand lead to the abolition of the department of public education? We demand the broadest social legislation for the carrying out of which immense appropriations are necessary—trading organization, i. e., department of finance? We demand the displacement of the standing army by a national militia—but this nevertheless presupposes the existence of a central organization, i. e., department of military affairs, etc.

The struggle of the working class, then, not only does not lead to the destruction of the organized state, but, on the contrary, the more the demands of the workers are realized, the closer becomes the union of the working class with the state. This union is, of course, based not on moral or ideal principles, but merely on practical expediency, as the working class is intent on the destruction of

the bourgeois ideal and on substituting its own labor ideal of the state. Whoever regards such results as injurious to Socialism must also reject direct political action. But to admit the necessity of such a struggle and at the same time to seek the destruction of the state is sheer nonsense.

Pannekoek's assertion that the importance of Socialist groups in the parliaments is on the decline is also not correct. The power of the proletariat within Parliament is in direct relation to its power outside of Parliament. A strongly organized working class in a country strengthens the influence and importance of its parliamentary representatives, and the strength of the latter enhances the defensive and offensive powers of the working class. Only in those countries are the Socialist parliamentary groups weak in which the labor movement is weak. When the latter assumes considerable proportions, the parliamentary group can, in its turn, be of great assistance to the working class. From this point of view the numerical strength of the group is of great importance. The coal miners' strike in England, as Kautsky rightly remarks, is an illustration of this truth. Under the pressure of the strike, Parliament was forced to pass the bill of a minimum wage. This bill was not entirely satisfactory to the workers. But if the representations of the English proletariat in Parliament were more numerous, the results, no doubt, would have been far better.

(Continued next Sunday.)

Tactical Problems

By E. STALINSKY

Translated From the Russian for The Sunday Call by Dr. L. C.

(Concluded from last Sunday.)

Charles Albert, Duchesne and Pannekoek are the champions of direct mass action. The opposite view on this question is expressed by Kautsky in his articles "Die Action der Masse" and "Die Neue Tactik." Kautsky wishes to prove that direct action of the masses can be only destructive, and not creative. He says that when unbearable oppression or the menace of a great danger drives the masses into the street, they can attain for the time being a singleness of will for destructive purposes, for the overthrow of an individual or of an institution, which in the eyes of the people is the immediate cause of that oppression. But when it comes to the question of building up a new institution, of reorganizing the whole social structure, then things become more complicated. Preliminary deliberation of plans of reorganization, deliberation and discussion of numerous complicated details is necessary for such a purpose. Can any one imagine a Parliament, in which tens or even hundreds of thousands are sitting? Beside, creative, positive work requires considerable length of time. But the mass cannot for any length of time remain in a compact condition. The individuals, of which the mass consists, must work for a living, must eat and sleep, must attend to their personal affairs, etc.

These arguments of Kautsky are not well founded. History furnishes exactly opposite instances. It is true, that the idea of a new state, of a new political organization cannot spring up suddenly in the heads of the toilers in the very moment of conflict. But the direct uprising is preceded by propaganda and agitation of the revolutionary and opposition parties, who have been preaching definite plans of political or social reorganization.

When in the spring of 1871 the people of Paris found out the true intentions of Versailles, they gathered in great numbers before the City Hall, proclaimed the Commune and then and there elected a committee to arrange for elections to the Commune Council. Could it be asserted that the idea of the Commune sprang up suddenly in the minds of the workers? Long before the uprising of March was this idea preached among the people. It met with popular approval, and, when the masses took to

arms to drive out the supporters of Versailles, they did not content themselves with this destructive act, but immediately followed it up with a creative act in carrying out a plan of social reorganization, for which they were prepared by previous propaganda. Of course, the deliberation of the details of the new constitution, of the new social charter, was left to the representatives of the people. But it cannot be said that the action of the masses was confined to the destructive act.

Kautsky further asserts that the result of mass action may prove reactionary. No doubt it may, if we reason in the abstract. But if we keep in mind the concrete conditions of contemporary reality in the foremost European countries (and only they are to be considered), then such a result is hard to conceive.

The main point in Kautsky's argument is the heterogeneous composition of the mass, which may go out into the streets. Kautsky disagrees with Pannekoek, who asserts that the social composition of the mass, and therefore its collective psychology, has undergone a radical change as compared with the past. According to Kautsky, it is incorrect to designate the contemporary fighting mass as exclusively proletarian or the mass which participated in the French Revolution as bourgeois. It is true, says Kautsky, that wage laborers were very little represented in the Parisian revolutionary mass, which was fighting the monarchy and feudalism. But the number of sans-culottes was great, and the mechanics in their social position stood very near to the wage laborers. The class composition of the mass was then as well as now very diverse, with this difference, that at present the employes of great capitalism predominate.

Kautsky has figured out that of the whole population of Germany, if we exclude the agricultural class and children, about 30,000,000 could take part in a national movement. The organized workers, counting even the Christian and Hirsch-Dunker societies, represent not more than one-tenth of this mass. Therefore, says Kautsky, the uprisings of great masses at the present time can be only a movement of the unorganized elements.

But were there no changes at all in this respect for the last 100 years? Kautsky himself wrote on this subject as follows: "Forty years of political

struggle of the people and of the proletarian organization did not pass without effect. The number of the organized and conscious elements among the people is now too great for their influence not to be felt in a mass conflict, however elemental and sudden such a mass uprising may be.

The influence of the organized mass will undoubtedly be felt not only in the aims of the movement but also in the choice of the methods of the struggle. It will restrain the masses from aimless action and useless initiatives; in certain cases it will keep them from yielding to provocation and will also be able to put an end to the movement at the proper time. In this way we may hope that the direct uprisings of the masses in the future will not degenerate into such negative forms as was often the case in the past."

And yet Kautsky openly contradicts himself in basing his argument on analogy.

Mass movements, he says, are a factor in the politico-social struggle, on which the revolutionary and opposition parties cannot count in their deliberations on tactics. One reason for this is that it is not always possible to set in motion direct action of the people just at the moment when it would be most opportune, even though there may be the best reason for such an uprising.

In times of great popular agitation the opposition and revolutionary parties may prepare the masses for such an uprising; they may even make use of the possible active uprising of the masses. But in nine cases out of ten they will suffer defeat should they build their politics on the hope that the uprising of the revolutionary people will take place at the desired moment.

It is true that the masses do not always revolt when it is most urgent, when the political parties are eagerly and impatiently wishing such an uprising. But even so, is Kautsky's valuation of mass movements right?

The well-known scientist, A. Bauer, who is far from being a Socialist, in his work, "Essai sur la Revolution," expresses a different opinion even on the historical mass actions.

"Collective action," says Bauer, speaking of mass uprisings, "is not always the expression of blind anger, the result of badly organized movements, the accidental unification of energy, without a distinct aim in view. On the contrary, it may be organized,

regulated, it may have a distinct object in view. It may also possess all the necessary means and resources for obtaining the same." This definition is, in our opinion, historically nearer the truth than Kautsky's estimate of mass uprisings. The latter, holding fast to his point of view, is opposed to any changes in the tactical conception of the Socialist parties. He only admits the necessity for the Socialist parties to utilize street demonstrations as a means of the struggle, by organizing and directing them. In everything else the parties must pursue the old tactical lines. Socialists, according to Kautsky, ought to join elemental popular movements by seeking to direct them toward Socialist aims. But they should not preach direct mass action, nor prepare them, nor count on them.

In the foregoing chapters we have enumerated the three different views on the tactical problems of Socialism in western Europe.

Charles Albert and Duchesne have rightly indicated the necessity for emphasizing more strongly the moral element in the Socialist propaganda and struggle. Pannekoek, within certain limits, gave a correct estimate of the conflicting social forces and of the changed conditions of the politico-social struggle. But the tactics which they propose, tactics of a complete break with the modern state institution, are contrary to the general trend of social evolution, as I have tried to prove in the detailed analysis of their views.

Kautsky has fallen into the other extreme; therefore his tactics suffer from the same defects as the tactical plans of the aforementioned authors.

The question, in its concrete form, is this: Is direct mass action a historical necessity; has it any chance of success under contemporary conditions? And even Kautsky answers this question affirmatively.

But if mass uprisings are likely to become inevitable, if in the future the politico-social life may bring such situations that the toilers will have no other means left for the defense of their interests but mass uprising, and if such means offer some measure of success, then the Socialist party cannot afford to disregard such a factor. Otherwise it stands in danger of being sidetracked by life, of weakening its organic connection with life, which alone constitutes the main strength and power of Socialism.