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# The Psychology of Syndicalism (An Editorial).

by Gaylord Wilshire

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Syndicalism is essentially a theory of the inevitable development of a unified economic Labor organization, formed as a reflex to the more or less trustification of capital already in evidence.

Whether this economic organization begins as a federation of local groups of craft unions, as has occurred in France with the CGT, or whether it will take the shape of a direct federation of existing unions conjoined with further organization of the unskilled workers, as in Tom Mann's plan in England, or whether the IWW plan of Haywood, Ettor, and Giovannitti in America of practically ignoring the existing craft unions and forming new industrial unions, is a matter of no consequence as to the use of the word Syndicalism, for the word embraces all such forms of activity. The essence of Syndicalism is Revolution by means of the unions; the essence of Socialism is Revolution by voting. The Syndicalist looks on the vote as, at best, merely a means of reform, and the Socialist looks upon the strike as the Syndicalist looks on the vote.

This difference of attitude as

to the vote and the strike is what differentiates the Syndicalist from the Socialist in every country in the world where Revolutionary Unionism has made its appearance.

A man may be a Syndicalist and yet vote for a revolutionary Socialist for Parliament, but he will not vote for him because he believes in "using all the revolutionary weapons," but because he things the vote has merely a reform value. Moreover, a Syndicalist may vote for a capitalist candidate for exactly the same reasons and still remain a Syndicalist. Syndicalism takes no more note of how a man votes than how he prays. Let him be true to his revolutionary union; that is sufficient for the time being.

No doubt, as he grows older in the faith of Syndicalism, he will grow colder in his faith in praying and voting, but that is neither here nor there.

Voting is merely praying in a ballot-box.

The revolutionary union is the product of the automatic machine and the trustification of capital. It is the only form of organization which can meet

the present juncture, for the knell of craft unions was rung by the automatism of the machine.

The revolutionary industrial union is based upon the commodity produced without reference to the particular craft the workers engage in when they produce it. While this kind of a union is admittedly primarily formed to meet the present industrial situation and gain reforms for the workers — i.e., better wages and better hours — nevertheless, from its very form of organization, it will inevitably give the workers a consciousness of their own power to absolutely control the machinery of production without any help from the capitalist. This is something craft unions never do. The new union is psychologically imperatively a revolutionary union.

And because it gives the workers consciousness of their power, it also shows them the uselessness of using the vote to gain indirectly through electing politicians what it is now evident to them that they can take over for themselves directly.

Syndicalism is simply an up-to-date and scientific interpretation of working-class psychology. Socialism was a good prophecy of the inevitability of the form of combination to be developed by the capitalists, the Trust, but it failed to realize the form of combination to be developed by the workers in answer to the Trust. Syndicalism, in the light of present-day experience, has formulated a present-day program.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

*Portrait of Wilshire from the frontis of his 1907 book, Socialism Inevitable.*

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