

BOLSHEVISM AND APPLIED ANTI-BOLSHEVISM

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

AT this moment the Bolsheviki are the most dangerous enemies of Russia and of democracy and the most servicable tools of the militaristic and capitalistic German autocracy. Their American representatives, who range from the Germanized Socialists, the leaders of the Non-Partisan League, the professional pacifists and so-called internationalists, to the I. W. W. and Anarchists and bomb-throwers and dynamiters and "direct action" men generally, lack only the power, but not the will, to play a similar part.

This seems an incongruous assembly. But every Bolshevist movement always contains crack-brained fanatics and foolish, simple people cheek by jowl with the sinister advocates of "direct action." It is folly to show these "direct action" people any consideration. Their purpose is to inspire terror by murder. They use the term "direct action," but they mean murder. Blatant Anarchists of this type are miscreants and criminals. We ought to stamp them out by exerting the full power of the law in the sternest and most vigorous fashion against them and their sympathizers before, and not merely after, murder is committed. All radical democrats whose democracy is genuine must join in relentless opposition to these men, who are at this moment rather more dangerous foes to liberty and democracy in the United States than the worst Bourbon reactionaries themselves.

In Russia we see before our eyes how professed anti-militarists and peace-at-any-price men may become the especial apostles of murder. The Russian Bolshevists are the paid or unpaid allies of Prussian autocracy. Similarly, there is often an underhanded agreement in this country between the corrupt capitalist and the lawless demagogue or agitator; the kind of agreement or common action that existed at one time in San Francisco between corrupt politicians and capitalists and violent labor leaders, as shown by Francis Heney in the famous graft prosecutions.

Most certainly we must not forget our indignation against the profiteers or the exploiting capitalists in our indignation against the "direct action" men. Sometimes it is a profiteering corporation which was most to blame. Elsewhere it is the lawless leaders of misled workmen. We should act with as stern and prompt efficiency against one type of wrong-doer as against the other, and then we should remedy the conditions which cause the wrong-doing. The worst possible course is to refuse to punish the lawlessness of the I. W. W. and yet to leave unremedied the wrongs done by exploiting and profiteering capitalism. Put down the lawlessness and remedy the wrongs.

Every wise movement for progress in our country must be as free from taint of subserviency to the red flag gentry as from taint of subserviency to predatory and labor-exploiting or farm-exploiting capitalism.

Nothing is easier than to make rhetorical addresses on behalf of humanity and to write little uplift and social reform books and pamphlets and articles; but what counts is reducing the principles to practice by the service test, the test of trial and error, the test which has to take into account actual conditions and the unpleasant, no less than the pleasant, facts of human nature; and this is very hard.

Each of us can probably furnish some illuminating illustrations of these truths out of his own experience. Here is one such. The country region in which I live during the last forty years has changed from an almost purely farming, fishing, and oystering neighborhood into one where city families of moderate means and some families of wealth spend their summers. When I was a boy, there were so few places with a shore front that they were negligible. The owners of these few places built docks as a matter of course. Clam-diggers went along the shores as they pleased. Farmers occasionally came down to the shore in summer for clam-bakes and bathing picnics. Oystermen and seiners or duckers kept their boats near their own docks or those of their friends. The shore was but little used by all of these persons taken together; and nobody looked far enough ahead to provide against trouble in the future.

A railway came in. City people bought places with a shore front. Gradually almost all the shore front was taken up by adjacent owners, who naturally and properly wished access to

the water, and built docks. They used the shore continually whereas the clambers and picnickers used it very little. Many of them in no way interfered with the clambers. A few did showing a disregard or ignorance of what they were doing. The picnickers were inevitably hampered, largely because some of them behaved—as Professor Hornaday, of the New York Zoo, is marked of certain slovenly and selfish holiday-makers—"like many little pigs," leaving a filthy litter behind them; and without some kind of overseer or police arrangement it was impossible to discriminate between the well-behaved and the ill-behaved.

For years the townspeople declined to take any action to secure the just rights which a few of them had occasionally enjoyed. Then the selfish misconduct of one or two property-owners who sought to deny all proper access to their beaches roused a feeling which manifested itself in a foolish and vicious effort—a one time a mob effort—to destroy the docks and thereby prevent the property-owners themselves from having any means of access to their sailboats. The motive seemed to be less to secure their own rights than to interfere with those of whom they were jealous. Recourse to the law finally settled the right of the property-owners to these docks and their duty to keep opening in the docks so that the clambers and the rare wayfarers also, the beach would not be interfered with.

But this did not help the picnickers and those farmers or villagers who occasionally wished to come to the beach for bathing or boating. A few public-spirited persons, therefore, started a movement for a park, with a long stretch of beach, on which public and private boat-houses and bath-houses could be erected. Various rich and well-to-do persons, none of whom would ever have used the park, agreed to furnish half the money if the town would furnish the other half. It was voted on at the next election.

I rode down to the polls with a friend, a hired man—a good upright, hard-working citizen, who lives some miles away from the water, who owns a small property, and is therefore a small taxpayer. After voting I found that our two votes had neutralized each other: he voted against the park; and the park proposition was beaten by the votes of the smaller taxpayers who lived inland and from among whom the chief beneficiaries of the park would have come. These men had felt vaguely jealous of the richer property-owners near the water, and had sympathized with the movement to interfere with them; but they were not willing to incur the small expense necessary in order to establish such collective ownership of a portion of the waterfront as would enable them to enjoy their rights along it.

Now the people who thus voted were my friends and neighbors; good people in all the ordinary relations of life. The trouble was that they had not developed the look-ahead power—very few of us have developed it to the degree that assured will be necessary in this country. Therefore they unconsciously played into the hands, first, of those few property-owners who selfishly and arrogantly ignored the rights of others, and afterwards of the few persons of Bolsheviki type whose actions were dictated primarily by a kind of malevolent jealousy, who care far less to benefit those who were not well off than to do something that would be distasteful and injurious to those who were better off.

The exact antithesis to this type of shortsightedness is found in such a development as the wonderful Palisades Park, adjoining New York City. In 1900, in order to save the beauty of the Palisades and prevent their being exploited by private greed the New York Legislature created an unpaid commission, which George W. Perkins was made head and of which he has been the guiding spirit ever since. They started with an appropriation of ten thousand dollars. They secured the co-operation of New Jersey with New York State. They secured public appropriations of about three millions and public contributions of about four millions. They have worked incessantly for years without a dollar's reward for themselves. They gradually developed the most extraordinary park of the kind in the world. It occupies a space of over twenty square miles. All the natural beauties have been preserved. There are fine automobile driv-

ut the main effort has been to make the park of use to persons small or moderate means who would pay merely what their privileges actually cost. There are tents and shanties by beautiful lakes in which families can spend a fortnight and enjoy wonderful scenery and excellent fishing. There is a working-girls' summer home in which working-girls can get a fortnight's holiday with all kinds of enjoyment for fourteen dollars—the ordinary amount for a vacation with pay. On the narrow beach at the foot of the Palisades there are in summer camped any thousands of people, in tents, who cross the river to the city by jitney boats, so that the breadwinner can go back and

forth. The picturesque Bear Mountain Inn, where excellent food is given at cost prices, is visited by thousands of people every Sunday during the season; all of the privileges, such as boating on the little lake near by, are run by the public authorities, without a profit for any one.

There could be no better illustration of efficient collective action of immense benefit to the people as a whole; collective action by the representatives of the public under the lead of public-spirited private citizens keenly alive to their duties, privileges, and opportunities as members of the American commonwealth. Such action represents applied Anti-Bolshevism.