

The Adventures of Joe Prole

or

Onward with the Revolution

by
Lazarus Long

A Revolutionary is Recruited

Joe Prole was thinking as he walked home to his tenement flat after the party meeting. Could the speaker be right? That all that was needed for oppressed people, like Joe, to gain their rightful place in society, was for the workers to seize the means of production and throw out the bosses? Could it be that simple? Joe, not quite sure of how this would happen, but the speaker, Ian Intellectual, had been adamant that "power was in the hands of the workers".

Now Joe wasn't the deepest of thinkers. He had only gone to the meeting at the urging of that new worker at the plant, Charlie Cappucino. Charlie had approached him and a few others after work one day, and asked them if they could imagine life without bosses. Macho Manuel had replied that he knew what life was like after getting rid of the boss...he had just gotten his divorce for Betty Battleaxe, and was now pulling 20 hours a week overtime to pay the bills.

Charlie pointed out that he was referring to people like Ebenezer Scrooge, the owner of the factory. Joe had been puzzled, never been accused of being a genius--he had left school in the eighth grade--he wondered who would pay him at the end of the week if Mr. Scrooge was not there. Charlie, who worked part-time while attending classes at the local university, explained that the workers would form a committee and run the plant and that all over the city and the country, workers would rise up and seize the means of production and then establish a worker's society.

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Later that night, Joe dreamt of revolution and egalitarianism. Waking up in the morning with sticky sheets and his hand on his means of production.

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Several weeks passed by and The Humane Union Guards of Solidarity had recruited many thousands of workers. Some had joined willingly, others

had needed convincing that the cause was just, but after a beating or two, they had come around. Joe wondered why most of the leadership committee was composed of people like Charlie Cappucino and Ian Intellectual and few working people were on the committee, but then figured that they must know best, after all, most of the committee didn't seem to need to hold down a job to make a living.

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Finally..the day had arrived. The Leadership Committee of T.H.U.G.S had decreed that the revolution would begin.

As the workers made their way to the plant, they passed the the coffee shop, Le Caf é de Revolutionaire and spotted the Committee members having their morning Espresso. Joe called out, "Hey, aren't you guys going to come with us?" The Committee members replied, "It wouldn't look right, this must be seen as a `Worker's Revolution', besides, we have classes at 10 O'clock."

When the workers arrived at the plant, they immediately formed into the assault teams that had been arranged in the previous months of meetings. Joe's team had the glorious task of seizing the offices of management. At the signal, he led his team upstairs to the offices and burst in on the startled Helen Hooters, the boss's secretary. Seizing his means of production, he attempted to to have her join him in revolution. A move doomed to failure, as Helen swiftly kicked him between the legs, causing a temporary loss of production. With a shout, the rest of the workers streamed over top of his huddled body and burst into the private office of Ebenezer Scrooge.

Meanwhile, plant security officers had phoned the local constabulary when they saw what the workers were up to. The police arrived and vicious hand-to-hand combat broke out. Gunfire was heard and the sound of nightsticks on skulls echoed about the plant.

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After several days of fighting the workers had won the day. All over the town and across the country, the workers were in control. As they milled about the plant, the Leadership Committee arrived. "Well done, comrades." said Ian Intellectual. "Now that the revolution has accomplished the seizing of the means of production, we will now assist you in organizing your lives."

The Shaping of Society

With the means of production in the hands of the workers, the People's Committee was instituted by direct democratic vote. That is... the workers were presented with a slate of candidates and directed to vote for those on the slate. To ensure that no improprieties ocured during the vote, a select group of The Humane Union Guards of Solidarity(T.H.U.G.S.) were appointed to oversee the voting stations. Miraculously the entire membership of the ad-hoc Leadership Committee that had organized the revolution was unanimously elected to form the First Workers Congress.

For several days, the Congress was busy proposing referenda to be voted on by the workers. Among the first resolutions to be made was the ending of dividends to the shareholders of the means of production. This caused some disgruntlement among Joe's fellow workers as they had for many years purchased stock with their end-of-year bonuses, and had planned on that as their retirement nest egg. When their complaints were heard, a special committee of T.H.U.G.S. were sent out to the Union Hall to address the workers. After the committee of T.H.U.G.S. had made their point, the surviving workers plastered over the bullet holes in the back wall of the union hall and went home...enlightened and with renewed fervour for the revolution.

After several months, life seemed back to normal... Joe and his fellow workers went to the plant each day, and worked as they always did. The only differences were the people appointed by the Worker's Congress to /guide/ the workers. These people would wander about the plant and give /guidance/ to any worker who mentioned that they seemed to be working just as hard as they always had, and yet were receiving credits that could only be redeemed for merchandise or services from stores approved by the Worker's Congress. Stores that seemed to lack the goods, that in pre-revolutionary times, had filled the stores. Some workers began to grumble and cut down on the amount of productive work they would perform in a day. Finally, one day, Joe and his fellow workers were mustered in the plant cafeteria where one of the `guides' mounted a platform and informed them that if production was not brought up to pre-revolution standards, that trouble-makers would be removed from the plant and re-assigned work in an educational facility. Joe wondered to himself, just how much of a punishment that could be...after all, didn't Miss Screech from down the street teach at a school, and didn't she get an entire summer off each year? How bad could it be at an educational facility?

As the production continued to fall, and goods remained scarce in the stores, Joe saw no reason to bust his butt working for the revolution...especially when his Tuesday night bowling was brought to an end by the Worker's Congress. The inevitable guide from the Congress had explained that it was non-productive and bourgeois for people to spend 3 hours a week drinking beer and playing a `simple' game. (Joe wondered if the guide had any idea how difficult it was to make that 7-10 split into a spare).

Joe found that his Tuesday nights were not left empty as a new directive from the Congress had the workers assemble nightly for films and lectures. The films showed "heroic workers valiantly defending the revolution" (Joe thought they looked like any other worker doing his job) and the lecturers told the workers of how their lives would be made better now that there were no bosses. Again, Joe thought that the only difference between having a boss and this new system of `no bosses' was that before he had a fat pay cheque, could buy beer every night and bowl on Tuesdays...while making payments on his VCR and new car. Now he got credits that he could exchange for groceries..and `useful goods', if any were in stock.

With absences mounting, and groups of disgruntled workers, who genuinely missed the days when they were exploited and could buy VCRs, BBQs and other items that were now considered non-essential to society's good, meeting in the taverns..the Worker's Congress began issuing internal passports. Workers had to show these passports to any of the increased numbers of *guides* who now were known as the People's Internal Security Section(P.I.S.S.). Workers who ran afoul of the new regulations for

absences or what was now known as sabotage were referred to as being *"PISSed"*...as in "Fred was found letting his punch press produce the wrong dimension fittings and was *PISSed*". People who were *PISSed* simply disappeared...presumably to be sent to school at one of the many new *education facilities* that were springing up all over the country. Joe thought that the new facility built just outside of town didn't look anything like the school he had attended..in fact, it looked more like the prison that was located downstate.

Joe Goes to School

It was inevitable. On reflection, Joe knew that he should not have been surprised at the knock on the door.

Joe knew that he had been naive in thinking that his absences from work and his sloppy habits would escape notice of the P.I.S.S.ers who monitored his job, but who could blame him. After all, when he had screwed up and done the dog in the old days, his union steward had always settled things with management. Now, the stewards had all been replaced by members of the party and seemed to be part of management - even though, in theory, the plant belonged to the workers - the party bosses made all the decisions.

Joe looked out through the window of the train that was carrying him and other fellow "enemies of the people" to the re-education camp 1500 miles away. At his hastily convened hearing before the People's Committee of Justice, Joe had been surprised to find out that his attorney had been already selected for him and that he had to do nothing more than to stand for the sentencing. Unlike the television shows that he had watched before the revolution, there was no impassioned defence or lengthy questioning by the prosecution. All that he saw happen was the prosecutor read the charges followed by the statement that Joe had signed the night before. Joe had signed the statement after the T.H.U.G.S. who had taken him from his apartment had taken him downtown to the P.I.S.S. headquarters. There, he had been presented with the statement, and after being told that he was to sign it or have his wife be investigated for anti-revolutionary activities, he had scrawled his name under the mostly unread text.

During the long train ride, Joe got to know several of his fellow travellers. He was quite surprised to find out that most of those headed for re-education were people he had always thought of as being well-educated. Doctors, engineers and other professionals seemed to make up the majority of the passengers on the train.

One gentleman, who said he was a doctor, explained that because all wages were equal under the "one wage, one class" society, many professionals felt that they were underpaid according to the salaries they had drawn in pre-revolutionary times. He went on to explain that most of the passengers on the train had been caught attempting to cross the border where they hoped to move to a country that would pay them their accustomed wages.

After several days of travel, the train of old cattle cars pulled onto a siding that led through a gate into the Glorious Day of Revolution Worker's Education Camp. There, several T.H.U.G.S. were on hand to escort the "trainees" to their quarters. Joe was surprised at the number of "trainees" and was astonished when a fellow trainee informed him that

over 150 of these camps had been built since the revolution. He hadn't realized that so many workers required education...after all, hadn't the pre-revolutionary government spent so much money on the school system?

After being "processed" at the administration offices, Joe was taken to his quarters for the night. Instructed, he was informed, would begin at 5:00am.

Morning arrived with a bang...or at least his bunk dropped to the floor with bang, as one of the T.H.U.G.S. assigned to the camp kicked the bed over, dumping Joe onto the floor. With several swift kicks to the kidneys, Joe was encouraged to get up and have a bracing cold shower before being quick-marched to the dining facilities. Breakfast was a disappointment to Joe who enjoyed a good meal. One slab of poorly risen bread with a smear of butter, watery tea and a bowl of thin gruel was hardly the breakfast he was accustomed to, even the mediocre food available in the markets since the revolution was far superior to this dreck.

He gloomily thought of having to face this slop for the next 15 years...15 years being his sentence for the crime of sabotage against the people. Joe thought that this was rather harsh for missing work and falling behind on his daily quota.

After breakfast, Joe and the hundreds of other new trainees were escorted to their re-education program. Before them lay an enormous quarry. The trainees were informed, by a nattily attired fellow that Joe was certain he had seen at the old student's hangout, La Caf é de Revolutionnaire, that their re-education into the proper mindset for the Worker's Revolution would commence with learning to meet quotas. They would be expected to break up stone for road repairs. Their quota for the day would be one ton. Joe looked around at the hundred fellow trainees in his group and thought, "gee, this won't be too bad at all." He was brought back to earth when the instructor stated that this quota was for each trainee and that they would each be issued one 10 pound sledgehammer and that the work would have to be completed by 3:00pm, so as to allow time for political education before supper.

As the days wore into weeks and weeks grew into months, Joe slowly got to know his fellow trainees. One worker, Giovanni, had been convicted of sabotage for selling the produce from his vegetable garden at below the Co-op prices. Aaron, a slight balding fellow, had been convicted of the same charge for hoarding gold from his jewelry store. It seemed that everyone had been convicted of the same charge. This was explained by Marcus, who had been sentenced for failing to declare the true size of his garden crop. Marcus explained that if they had been convicted of the more serious crime of conspiracy against the revolution, that they would have been volunteered into the Pioneers Corp of the People's Army and been used as experiments for the new chemical weapons development. His neighbour, Tom Jefferson, had met that fate after the P.I.S.S.ers had found him in distributing newspaper clippings from foreign papers.

Joe Leaves the Worker's Paradise

Joe quickly came to understand the value of practising the art of "sucking up", and that coupled with his eager compliance, earned himself an early graduation from the re-education school. On his return to his hometown, he was assigned to the Glorious Revolution Appliance factory

as a machine operator. Over the months, the surveillance by P.I.S.S. slowly lessened and he was able to live a close to normal life. There were some adjustments, to be sure, as during his re-education period, his wife had moved in with a commissar of the The Human Guards of Solidarity. It seemed that even though all members of society were equal and that no class differences existed, that members in good standing of T.H.U.G.S. and P.I.S.S. as well as the Worker's Congress seemed to be more equal than the rest. His wife's new partner was able to find foods and clothing that never seemed to be in stock at the local cooperative store and she certainly seemed to enjoy the frequent official trips that her partner would take her on...especially those 3 week conferences that always took place in semi-tropical island resorts.

Over the years, Joe became resigned to spending his working life as machine operator #2942113. Then, one day, an opportunity arose. Joe was asked to fill in for one of the drivers who had called in sick. The delivery was scheduled to go to a small village near the border. Joe could hardly contain himself as he drove along the highway towards the village. Near the village was a turnoff that led to the border. As Joe neared the turnoff, he spun the wheel and drove the truck through the first set of barricades. As startled members of the People's Border Patrol unslung their machine pistols, Joe ducked his head and gave the truck full throttle. The border was only a scant fifty yards distant when the first burst of gun-fire came through the truck doors. As Joe felt the impact of the rounds, he could see that he was almost there. As he began to black out, he saw that the momentum of the truck had carried him over the border. His final thought was..."Yes, I have been delivered from slavery by socialism. The gun was socialist made, the bullets were socialist made and the men firing the guns were socialists"