

THE CLASS STRUGGLE

By Karl Kautsky

Translated and Adapted to American Conditions
by Daniel De Leon



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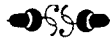
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THE CLASS STRUGGLE.

Adapted from THE NEW YORK PEOPLE from K. Kautsky

BY

DANIEL DE LEON.

I. Socialism and the Property-holding Classes.

Modern society cannot escape shipwreck unless it re-organize itself into a co-operative commonwealth. The establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth implies a social revolution; it implies the overthrow of the capitalist system of production, that has become a drag to all further development and an incubus upon the common weal; it means the placing of the machinery of production, now held and owned by landlords and capitalists, into the hands of the people; in other words, it implies the downfall of the system of private ownership in the implements of labor—land and capital, i. e., machines, tools, etc.—and its substitution with public, common, collective ownership, to be operated for use and not for private profit.

The substitution of the capitalist with the co-operative or socialist system of production is in the interest, not of the propertiless classes alone, but of all classes. The same as slavery was an injury to the slave-holders, and its abolition tended to promote their highest interests, so is the present system of private ownership in the implements of labor injurious, in the highest sense, even to

the landlords and capitalists themselves, and its abolition would redound to the benefit of these as well. They also suffer severely under the contradictions that typify the modern system of production: one set of them rots in idleness, another wears itself out in a neck-breaking hunt after profits, and over the heads of all hangs the Damocles sword of bankruptcy, of shipwreck, and of final downfall into the class of the proletariat, i. e., the class that has been stripped of all the things necessary for production, except its labor power, which, lest it perish outright, it is compelled to sell for starvation wages—happy if it succeed in doing that.

It would be thought from these premises that all classes of society, capitalists and landlords, no less than proletarians, would join in the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth. Yet the reverse is the case. Experience teaches, the fact glares us in the face, that, the same as the slave-holders of old, the property-holders of to-day, landlords and capitalists, are blind to their higher interests. The bulk of the property-holding and exploiting classes not only looks upon Socialism with suspicion, but stands up against it in an attitude of the most bitter antagonism.

Can this be due to ignorance simply? The spokesmen among the adversaries of Socialism are, however, the very people whose position in the Government, in society, and not infrequently in science itself should, presumably, fit them out best of all to understand the social mechanism, and to perceive the law of social evolution. Indeed, so shocking are the conditions in modern society that no one, who wishes to be taken seriously in politics or in science, dares any longer to deny the justice of the charges preferred by Socialism against the present social order; on the contrary, the clearest heads in all the various political parties of Capital admit that there is "some truth" in those charges; some even declare that the final triumph of Socialism is inevitable, UNLESS, however, society suddenly turn about and improve matters—a thing that these gentlemen imagine can be done offhand, provided this or that demand of this or that party be promptly granted and enforced; others, again, admit unconditionally the ultimate triumph of Socialism, BUT—having the "one thing at a time" notion in their heads, and that thing always the wrong one—they ride a hobby, and fly off at a tangent. In this way, even those members of the non-socialist political parties who have obtained the clearest insight into the teachings of Socialism, elude, by a somersault back or sideways, the most important consequences and conclusions of their own admissions.

Nor is the reason for this odd phenomenon hard to discover. Although certain important and not to be underrated interests of the property-holding classes plead against the system of private ownership in the means of production, other interests, that lie nearer to the surface and are more quickly felt by property-holders, pull in an opposite direction.

This is especially the case with the RICH. They have nothing to gain forthwith by the abolition of private property in the means of production; the beneficent results that would flow therefrom would be ultimately felt by them as well, but such results are comparatively too far off to carry much immediate weight. On the other hand, however, the disadvantages that they would suffer are self-evident and would be felt on the spot; the power and distinction they

enjoy to-day would be gone at once, and not a few might be deprived also of their present ease and comfort in idleness.

Matters stand otherwise with the lower ranks of the property-holding and yet exploited classes—the small producers, traders and farmers. These have nothing whatever to lose in point of power and distinction, and they can only gain in point of ease and comfort by the introduction and development of the socialist system of production. But, in order to be able to realize this fact, they must first rise above and look beyond the horizon of their own class. From the narrow field of observation occupied by the small producers, traders and farmers, the capitalist system of production cannot be understood, however much they may and do feel its harrowing effects; and, consequently, modern Socialism can be understood by them still less. The one thing of which they have a clear understanding is the absolute necessity of private ownership in their own implements of labor in order to preserve their system of production. It is a forced conclusion that, so long as the small industrialist stands up as small industrialist, the small farmer as small farmer, the small trader as small trader; so long as they are still possessed of a strong sense of their own class;—so long will they be bound to hold fast to the idea of private ownership in the means of production, and to resist Socialism, however ill they may fare under the existing order.

Private ownership in the implements of labor fetters the small producers, farmers and traders to the sinking ship of their respective pursuits, long after these have ceased to afford them a competence, and even when they might improve their condition by becoming wage-workers outright. Thus it happens that private ownership in the instruments of production is the secret force that binds all the property-holding classes to the present system of production, notwithstanding the ill effects of the system upon the large capitalists, and notwithstanding its subjection of the small holders themselves to exploitation, and the caricature into which it has turned "property" in the hands of the latter.

Only those individuals among the small producing classes who have despaired of the preservation of their class, who are no longer blind to the fact that the industrial or agricultural form of production, upon which they depend for a living, is doomed—only they are in a condition to understand the teachings of Socialism. But lack of information and a narrow horizon, both of which are the natural results of their condition, make it difficult for them to realize the utter hopelessness of their class. Their misery and their hysterical search for a means of salvation have hitherto only had the effect of making them the easy prey of any demagogue who was sufficiently self-asserting, and who did not stick at making promises.

Among the upper ranks of the property-holding class a higher degree of culture is found, commanding a broader horizon, and among them not a few are still affected by ideologic reminiscences from the days of the revolutionary struggles carried on by the then oncoming capitalist class against the feudal regime. But woe to that member of those upper ranks of the property-holding class who should be foolhardy enough to show an interest in Socialism, or to engage in its propaganda! The alternative promptly confronts him either to give up his ideas or to snap all social bonds that thitherto held and supported him. Few of these are equipped with the requisite vigor and independence of

character to approach the spot where the roads fork; very few among these few are brave enough to break with their own class when they have reached that spot; and finally, of these few among the few, the larger portion have hitherto soon grown tired, recognized the "indiscretions of their youth," and became "sensible."

The ideologists are the only ones, among the upper ranks of the property-holding classes, whose support it is at all possible to enlist in favor of Socialism. But even with these, the large majority of those among them who have gained a deeper insight into social conditions and into the problems that spring therefrom, the information they have acquired moves them mainly to wear themselves out in fruitless searchings after what they style a "peaceful" solution of the "Social Question," i. e., in searching after a solution that should reconcile their more or less developed knowledge of Socialism, and their conscience, with the class interests of the capitalist class. But this task is as impossible as to produce a wet fire or burning water.

Only those ideologists who have not only gained the requisite theoretical knowledge, but who are brave and strong enough to break with their class, are able to develop into genuine socialists.

Accordingly, the Cause of Socialism has little to hope for from the property-holding classes. A few of its members may be won over to Socialism, but these will be only such as no longer belong by their convictions and conduct to the class to which their economic position assigns them. These will ever be a very small minority, except during revolutionary periods, when the scales will seem to be inclining to the side of Socialism. Only at such times may socialists look forward to a stampede from the ranks of the property-holding classes.

So far, the only favorable recruiting ground for the socialist army has been, not the classes of those who still have something to lose, however little that may be, but the classes of those who have nothing to lose but their chains, and a whole world to gain—the proletariat, the working class.

II.

Servants and Menials.

The recruiting ground for Socialism is the class of the propertiless; but not all the ranks of this class are equally favorable.

The student of history knows that, although the sweeping phrase of the philistines is false, to the effect that there have always been poor people, it is nevertheless true that pauperism is as old as the system of production for sale. At first it appeared only as an exceptional phenomenon. In the days of our colonial life and even shortly after the commencement of our national existence, the number of those was but slight who did not own the implements of production necessary to satisfy their own wants. It was then an easy matter for

that small number of propertiless people to find situations with some property-holding family in the capacity of assistants, servants, journeymen, maids, etc. These were generally young people, who still entertained the prospect of establishing their own workshop or starting their own farm. In all cases they worked jointly with the head of the family or his wife, and enjoyed in common with them the fruits of their labor. As members of a property-holding family, they were not proletarians; they felt an interest in the family's property, whose prosperity and adversity alike they shared. Where servants are part of the family of the property-holder, they will be found ready to defend property, although they be propertiless themselves. In such a place Socialism cannot cast roots.

The status of the servant changed by degrees; it changed in the same measure as the capitalist system of exploitation unfolded, and as the capitalist exploiter took shape. In even step and tread with this evolution, and presently at a more rapid pace, the class of the propertiless became more numerous, and in increased numbers did its members look for service in the families of the capitalist exploiters. But the functions they were now to fill, and for which they applied, were not the same as of yore. They were not now expected to help the property-holder to work. Work ceased by degrees to be performed "at home." Those who applied for work went to the shops, the yards, the factories, and the mills. This differentiation of labor transformed the character of the serving class. It became a class that performed personal services; the servant of former days disappeared, and the lackey, the menial of to-day, sprang up, anxious to escape want, and greedy to partake of the crumbs that fell from Dives' table. The community of labor and of enjoyment, the patriarchal relations between master and servant of our colonial days, and of the first few decades of our independent national existence, dropped with the development of the capitalist system among us, and with it also went by the board the solidarity that had existed between the propertiless and the property-holders.

In lieu of the old, however, a new sort of solidarity sprang up between the master and his menial. Where a large number of these are retained, there are also many degrees among them. Each individual strives to rise, to increase his hire, and thereby his own importance over his fellows. Success in this direction depends upon the whim of the master. The more skillfully the menial accommodates and adapts himself to his master, i. e., the more completely he succeeds in wiping out his own individuality, and the greater his success in outstripping his fellows in this ignoble race, all the better are his prospects. Again, the larger the income of the master, and the greater his power and distinction, all the more plentiful are the pickings for his menials; this holds good especially with regard to those menials who are held for show, whose only task is to make a parade of the superfluities which their master enjoys, to assist him in squandering his wealth, and to stand "true" and "loyal" by him throughout his career of folly and of crime. Accordingly, the modern servant, the breed of menials we now meet wherever large capitalists settle down, is drawn into peculiar relations of intimacy with his master, and he has, as a matter of course, developed into a secret foe of the exploited and oppressed working people; not infrequently he excels even his master in the reckless treatment of these. The master, if he has any sense at all, will not kill the hen that lays him the golden eggs; he would preserve her, not for himself alone, but also for his

successors. The menial is not held back by any such considerations; like the eunuchs, he has no posterity.

The characteristics of the menial are, however, detected not alone among the propertiless people from the lower, but also among those of the upper, classes. The aristocratic and the plebeian lackey go hand in hand. No wonder there is nothing the people hate more heartily than the funkeys, the lackeys, the menial class, whatever their extraction, whose servility towards the upper and brutality to the lower ranks of society are fast becoming as proverbial among us as they are in older countries. The words "lackey" and "menial" already convey the meaning of the very essence of vileness.

The growing intensity of exploitation, the yearly swelling quantity of capitalists' surplus, together with the resulting extravagances of luxury, all favor a steady increase of the menial class—the class least favorable to the progress of Socialism.

But despite the power of these causes, other tendencies are fortunately working in an opposite direction: the steady going revolution in industry with its encroachments upon the family, its withdrawing from the sphere of household duties one occupation after another and turning them into special industries, and, above all, the infinite division and subdivision of labor, are building up the various trades of barbers, waiters, cabmen, etc. Long after these trades branched off from their original trunk of the menial class and became independent pursuits, they preserved the characteristics of their origin; nevertheless, as time passes, these ugly characteristics are wearing off and the members of these trades are acquiring the qualities and methods of thought of the industrial wage-working class.

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III.

The Slums.

However numerous the menial class may be in all its ramifications, it is not now, and was not even in the luxuriant days of the declining Roman Empire, capacious enough to absorb the whole propertiless class. The steady displacement of labor by the perfection of machinery, the concentration of capital, and a score of other causes, all of them the results of the development of capital, increase the number of the propertiless people immeasurably faster than they can be taken up by the class of the menials. To these masses, whether they consist of able-bodied men and women, or children, old people, the crippled and infirm, unable to work, there is nothing left but to beg, steal or prostitute themselves. The alternative forced upon these is either to perish or to throw overboard all sense of shame, honor, and self-respect. They could prolong their existence only by giving precedence to their own personal and immediate wants rather than to their regard for their own reputation. That such a condition cannot but exercise the most demoralizing and corrupting influence is self-evident.

Furthermore, the effect of this corrupting influence is all the more intensified

by the circumstance that the unemployed poor are utterly superfluous in the existing social order; that, not only does it not need them, but, on the contrary, it would be relieved of an undesirable burden by their extinction. Whatever class is superfluous, whatever class has no necessary functions to fulfill, must perish; this is a law that applies both to the high and the low.

Beggars cannot even indulge in the self-deception that they are necessary to the social system; they have no recollections of a time when their class rendered any services to society; they cannot brag about their power, and force their parasitic existence upon society. They are only tolerated. Humility is, consequently, the first duty of the beggar, and is the highest virtue of the poor. Like the menials, this class of the proletariat also is servile towards the powerful; it furnishes no opposition against the existing social order. On the contrary, it ekes out its existence from the bones thrown at it by the rich, how could it want to abolish them! Furthermore, beggars are not themselves exploited; the higher the degree of exploitation is carried against the workmen, and the larger the incomes of the rich, all the more have the beggars to expect. Like the menial class, they are partakers of the fruits of exploitation; what could move them to put an end to that system? When William M. Tweed, the shining star of Tammany twenty years ago, was unmasked and brought to justice for his wholesale plunder of the public treasury, it was this class among the population of New York City that stuck to him fastest; he had been a generous almoner to it; nor has the character of Tammany's "following" materially changed since then.

This division of the proletariat constitutes, strictly speaking, the slums; never yet has it shown the least spontaneity of spirit for resistance against the system of exploitation. But neither is it a bulwark of the present system. Cowardly and unprincipled, it readily leaves in the lurch those whose alms it has taken so soon as wealth and power have slipped from their hands. This class has never taken the lead in any revolutionary movement; but it has always been found on hand, during social disturbances, ready to fish in troubled waters. Occasionally it has given the last kick to a falling class; as a rule, however, it has satisfied itself with exploiting and corrupting every revolution that has broken out, and to be ready to betray it at the earliest opportunity.

The capitalist system of production has given strong increment to the slums; it steadily sends to them fresh recruits; in the large centers of industry it constitutes a considerable portion of the population.

IV. Early Days of the Wage-working Proletariat.

The capitalist system of production at first drew its wage workers from these several degraded ranks of the proletariat. It needed not so much ABLE as PATIENT, RESISTLESS workers, disposed to submit meekly to the requirements of a large mill or mine, which could run smoothly only in case each of its innumerable wheels, whether animate or inanimate, fulfilled punctually and well the movements to which it was assigned. Such being the character of the bulk of the labor upon which the large capitalists drew originally, it followed that the treatment to which these submitted established also the standard for the treatment which the capitalists meant to bestow upon their workmen in general. Labor, whose ennobling influence capitalist moralists and economists love to decant upon, became for the whole proletariat a source not of dignity, but of further degradation. The resistlessness of the working people made it possible for the capitalists to extend the hours of work indefinitely. Unless forced to it, capital will allow to the proletariat leisure neither for rest nor for culture. Where it is not checked, it will drive the worker to death. If between the hours of sleep and work there be a short respite, it is just long enough to satisfy the most transient pleasures, to dull the sense of misery in the fumes of alcohol or in the indulgences of sexual intercourse. The working in common of men and women, adults and children, which, if carried on by happy, free and conscientious beings, can be a source of the highest intellectual enjoyment and moral elevation for all concerned, became in the mines and mills of capital a fresh stimulant to the demoralizing and enervating influences which spread like pest among the proletariat.

To this circumstance is to be ascribed the fact that in the early days of large capitalist production the working proletariat was hardly to be distinguished from the slums. How low the former had sunk in crime, drunkenness, vulgarity and filth—both physical and moral—appears graphically from the strong, yet not overdrawn, picture presented by Frederick Engels in his classic work, "The Condition of the Working Classes in England"* during the first decades of this century. In the United States the working proletariat was saved the bitterness of this experience to the extent that it was forced upon its European brothers. Owing to the conditions of the country, owing to the absence in any large numbers of the slow accretions of generations of exploited classes previous to the time when capitalist large production began to unfold its wings among us, the proportion of the slums to the number of working proletarians was not here, as in Europe, large enough to degrade the latter quite to the level of the former. Nevertheless, the working proletariat, clad with the dignity of its class, is even here a historic figure of a comparatively recent date.

* This valuable work in the literature of the Social Question has been rendered accessible to the English reading public by the excellent translation of Florence Kelley; Labor News Company, 64 East 4th street, New York.

V.

The Uplifting of the Working Proletariat.

The word "proletariat" conveyed at one time in the history of capitalist production the idea of extreme degradation. Even to-day there are people who entertain this notion, and among them not a few who claim to be abreast of their times. This, however, arises from a woeful confusion of thought. However numerous the external marks may have been which, at one time, the working proletariat had in common with the slums, even then the two were separated by a deep chasm.

The slums have continued to be essentially the same, in whatever historic epoch and under whatever system they may have made their appearance. The slums of New York, Chicago, San Francisco, or any other large modern center of population are hard to distinguish from those of ancient Rome. On the other hand, the modern working proletariat is a peculiar phenomenon, never before noticed in the history of mankind.

Between the slums and the working proletariat of capitalist production there is above all the immense and fundamental difference that the former always were and still continue to be parasites, whereas the latter is one of the principal roots of modern society—a root that develops, not only into leading importance, but into the ONLY one from which society draws its strength and support. The working proletariat is a propertiless, but not almstaking, element. So far from its being supported by society, it supports society with its labor. True enough, during the early days of the capitalist system, the working proletariat looked upon itself as a pauper class, and upon the capitalist who exploited it as a benefactor, as the provider of work, and, consequently, as the bread-giver. Of course, this patriarchal relation is highly pleasing to the capitalists; they still demand from their workmen for the wages paid to them, not only the labor contracted for, but also humility and gratitude.

But the capitalist system can nowhere proceed very far without the patriarchal conditions that exist at its inception going wholly by the board. However enslaved and ignorant the workmen may at any time be, they realize, sooner or later, that they are the bread-givers of the capitalists and not vice versa. While they remain poor, or even become poorer, the capitalist becomes ever richer. And when they demand more bread from the capitalist, from this would-be patriarch, he gives them a stone.

The working proletarians differ from the slums and from the servant and menial classes in that they do not live upon the exploitation carried on by the exploiters; and they differ from the workers under former systems of production in that they do not live and labor together with their exploiters, and that all the personal bonds and relations that existed between these have wholly disappeared between the modern employer and employe. They live in miserable tenements or rickety frame-houses that are a libel upon the word "home," while they rear palaces for the exploier; they famish while they spread for him a luxurious feast; they go unclad, while they prepare for him costly raiment; they toil and maul

till they drop with exhaustion to furnish him and his the means whereby to kill time.

The contrast between these two elements is a very different one from that between the rich and the poor man of pre-capitalist days; and very different also between the capitalist and the "small man" of to-day. The latter envies the rich man, whom he looks up to with admiration, who is the example he would imitate, the ideal he holds up to himself; he wishes to be in that capitalist's place, and become an exploiter like him; he never for a moment thinks of abolishing the system of exploitation. The working proletariat, on the contrary, does not envy the modern rich man; it does not wish itself in his place; it HATES AND DESPISES him; it hates him as it' exploiter; it despises him as a drone. At first, the working proletarian hates only those capitalists with whom he is brought into direct contact, but soon he realizes the fact that all of them stand in the same posture towards him, and his hatred, that originally was personal, develops into a conscious hostility towards the whole capitalist class.

This hostility towards exploitation itself is one of the first distinguishing marks of the working proletariat. This class hatred is by no means a result of socialist propaganda; it was noticeable long before the influence of Socialism began to make itself felt among the working classes. Among the workers under former social systems, such a well developed class hatred as exists to-day was impossible; the intimate personal relations that existed between them and their "masters" excluded all thought of such class antipathies; hostilities might and did often break out between the master and his underlings personally, but these could never be carried beyond a certain point without forthwith stopping production itself; and, as a result, whatever lengths they went to, reconciliation always followed. Under the capitalist system, however, the workers may entertain the most bitter enmity against their employers without production being thereby interfered with, and even without the employer being at all aware of it.

This class hatred expresses itself at first only timidly and in isolated instances. If it takes some time for the working proletariat to realize that magnanimity is the last thing that moves the employer to furnish it work; it takes still longer for it to gather courage to enter into an open conflict with the "boss."

The slums are cowardly and humble; they feel themselves superfluous and know that they lack all material standing. Similarly are the early characteristics of the working proletariat. It resented the ill-treatment to which it was subjected, but protested only silently; clenched its fist in its pockets; and, as a result of this, its indignation was wont to vent itself—as it unfortunately still does, here and there, among the least informed—in deeds of thoughtless passion or secret crime.

The sense of conscious strength and the spirit of resistance develop themselves among the working proletariat only after it has awakened to the understanding of the community of interests that binds its members, and of the solidarity of its ranks. With the quickening of the feeling of solidarity begins the moral new birth of the working proletariat, and its uplifting from the swamp in which it, together with the slums, is immersed.

The conditions themselves under which labor is performed in the capitalist system point out to the proletariat the necessity of firmly holding together, of moving in a body, and of subordinating the individual to the whole. While, in the classic days of handicraft, each individual produced a whole article himself

capitalist industry is based upon co-operative labor. Here the individual worker can do nothing without his fellow-worker. If they start to work united and planfully, the capacity of each is doubled and trebled. Thus their labor itself brings home to them the power of union, and develops among them the sense of voluntary and gladsome discipline—both of which are the conditions precedent for socialist production, and are likewise the conditions precedent for the successful struggle of the proletariat against the system of exploitation that prevails under capitalist production. And thus it happens that capitalism itself trains the proletarians in the methods requisite for its own overthrow, and educates them in the system of labor that will be required of them in socialist society.

More powerfully, perhaps, than co-operation in labor does the equality in the present conditions of work tend to awaken among the proletarians the sense of solidarity among themselves. In a modern, well developed mill there is as good as no distinction of ranks, no hierarchy, among the workers. The higher posts are, as a rule, inaccessible to the proletarians; at all events they are so few that they do not affect the masses. Slight is the number of those who can be corrupted by these favorite posts. For the large majority the conditions of labor are identical; to the individual all possibility is shut off of lifting himself up alone; he can better his condition only if the condition of all his fellow-toilers is bettered. The capitalist realizes this fact and its effects upon his men, and in not a few cases he tries to counteract both by the introduction of artificial distinctions in his mills, to the end of throwing the apple of discord among the workers; but such is the leveling influence and power of modern large production that all such schemes are unable to undermine permanently the sense of solidarity which it evokes in the ranks of the working proletariat. The longer the capitalist system of production lasts, all the more powerfully does the solidarity of the proletariat manifest itself, all the stronger does it cast its roots, and all the more prominently does it stand out as one of the distinguishing characteristics of the working proletariat.

Among the slums, among the menials, there can be no thought of solidarity. It was among the journeymen under the old feudal and guild systems that the solidarity of the exploited class against the exploiters first cropped up; but the solidarity of the modern working proletariat has taken long strides beyond that of the exploited class under the previous system of production. Neither limited itself to the confines of one and the same industry; the same as the modern working proletariat, so did its prototype of the guild days arrive slowly at the perception of the fact that the worker knocks himself everywhere against the identical adversary, and has everywhere the same interests; the journeyman of old established national organizations; but these were necessarily limited, as the State or nation was then still a very imperfect conception; the modern working proletariat is not organized nationally only, it has widened its basis; despite all wars and hostilities between one nation and another, it has organized itself internationally; the working proletariat of all countries are united.

Already in the days of the journeymen mechanics the beginnings may be found of international organizations. The exploited classes of those days showed they were able to rise above national barriers; but there was one barrier above which they could not lift themselves—that of their own trade. The hatmaker, for instance, of one country felt one with those of others, but the shoemakers,

tailors and other workers of his own country remained strangers to him. At that time the various trades were separated by sharp lines; the applicant for admission to any of them was held to a long apprenticeship before he became a journeyman, and he remained loyal to his trade for life. The power and prosperity of his trade were his own; although, in a certain sense, the journeyman's interests were opposed to those of his guild master, yet were they opposed to those of both master and journeymen of all other trades. The spectacle was frequent during the most flourishing period of the guilds that the journeymen of the various trades were involved in fierce strifes with one another.

The capitalist system of production, on the contrary, throws the various trades together and mixes them up inextricably. In a capitalist establishment, people of different trades are seen generally working together, and jointly operating towards a common end. Furthermore, the capitalist system has the tendency to wipe out the very idea of a trade in production: the machine shortens the time of apprenticeship, that formerly extended over years, down to weeks and days; it makes it possible for the several workmen to pass from one occupation to another without great difficulty, and it often even compels them to the change by frequently rendering them superfluous in their former lines, throwing them out of work, and compelling them to look for another job. The freedom in the choice of a pursuit, which the philistines fear to lose in socialist society, is a thing that has lost all meaning to the working class under the present system.

Under such circumstances, it has become an easy matter for the workingman to lift himself above the barriers before which the journeyman of old halted. The sense of solidarity among the modern working proletariat is, accordingly, not only international, it now extends over the whole working class.

Already in the Middle Ages there was a variety of forms of wage labor; neither are the conflicts between wage workers and their exploiters something new; but it was not until the rule of the capitalist system came into force that the spectacle was presented of the rise of an embattled class of wage workers, conscious of the oneness of their interests, and ever more ready to subordinate to the interests of their class, as a whole, not only their personal, but also their local and, in so far as these still continue to exist, their separate trade interests. It is only in our own century that the struggles of the wage workers, the working proletariat, against exploitation assume the character of a class struggle. It is only by virtue thereof that these struggles are enabled to aim at a higher goal than that of simply removing this or that objectionable feature of the existing system, and that the Labor Movement has become a revolutionary movement.

Under these conditions, the horizon of the working class broadens steadily. This holds good, in the first place, with regard to the working proletariat employed in large production; but the same as the industrial form of capital becomes more and more the standard for all capital, and even for all economic undertakings within the reach of capitalist nations, so likewise do the thoughts and sentiments of that portion of the proletariat that is engaged in large production strike the keynote for the thoughts and sentiments of the whole wage-working class. The consciousness of the unity of the interests of all takes possession of one set of workers after another, just as fast as the all-pervading influence of large production forces itself into the various classes of industries.

Next follow the workers engaged in non-productive occupations—in trade,

communication and transportation, etc. Lastly, the agricultural wage proletariat will finally be drawn in by the recognition of the oneness of their interests with those of all other wage workers, a recognition that is being hastened by the introduction of capitalist methods into the old and until now, to a great extent, patriarchally conducted system of agriculture, and, consequently, by the inevitable transformation of the farm hands into out and out wage-working proletarians, wholly disconnected by any personal bonds from the family of the employer. Progress in this direction from this source is already perceptible.

Thus, by degrees, all the sections of the working class are being welded into one, animated by the spirit of the proletariat employed in large production, and which is steadily on the increase. Steadily the whole mass is being leavened by the spirit of comradeship, of discipline and of hostility to the capitalist class that is peculiar to the workers in large production; and above all, hand in hand, with this progress, the unquenchable thirst for knowledge, that is one of the leading features of the progressive proletarians, permeates all the ranks of their class.

Thus, by degrees, there rises out of the despised, maltreated, degraded proletariat a historic power before which the powers that be have begun to tremble. Thus a new class is in the process of formation that brings with it a new code of morals and new philosophy; a class that grows daily in numbers, in compactness, in consciousness of its mission, in intelligence, and into an economic necessity.

VI.

Counter Tendencies that Uplift and Abase the Proletariat.

The uplifting of the proletariat from its degradation is an inevitable and natural process; but the process is neither a peaceful nor a uniform one. The tendencies of the capitalist system of production are to debase the working population. The moral new birth of the proletariat is possible only by antagonizing these tendencies and their promoters, the capitalists; and this can be done only by imparting sufficient strength to the counter tendencies that are born of the new conditions in the camp of the proletariat itself, the conditions under which the working class toils and lives. The debasing tendencies of the capitalist system are, however, very different at different periods, in different localities, and in different industries; they depend upon the condition of the market, upon the degree of competition among the several establishments, upon the grade reached in the development of machinery in the respective branches of industry, upon the extent and measure of the clearness with which the capitalists understand their class interests, etc., etc. Likewise do the counter tendencies that develop in the several layers of the proletariat depend upon manifold circumstances: they

depend, in turn, upon the customs and wants of the population from whose ranks the class of the proletariat has been recruited; upon the degree of skill or strength required in the respective industries; upon the extent to which woman and child labor prevails; upon the size of the industrial reserve army, which is very different in several industries; upon the clearness with which the working people perceive their class interests; and lastly upon the nature of the work, whether it isolates or brings the workers together.

Each of these several sets of circumstances in the several industries and subdivisions of the proletariat vary not only greatly, but they are subject to constant changes owing to the uninterrupted course of the technical and economic revolution in production. Every day capital subjects some new section of the country and some new branch of industry to its process of exploitation and reduces the respective population to the level of proletarians; every day new branches of industry spring into life, and existing ones are revolutionized. The spectacle presented at the inception of the capitalist system of production is seen to-day. Even now, new layers of the population are thrown into the class of the working proletariat, others sink below into the slums, and others again rise above the lowest grades; among the working proletarians themselves there is a constant flux and reflux noticeable; some portions are seen to rise, others to decline, according as the uplifting or the depressing tendencies may temporarily have the upper hand.

Fortunately, however, for the cause of human rejuvenation, a time is reached, sooner or later, by most of the layers of the proletariat when the uplifting tendencies obtain a decided mastery, and when they are effective enough to awaken in some section or another of the proletariat a consciousness of self, a consciousness of its class distinction, a consciousness of the solidarity of all its members and of the whole working class, a consciousness of power that is born of their close union. So soon as any portion of the proletariat has reached the understanding of the fact that its class is an indispensable economic element in society; so soon as the sense of self-respect is kindled in its ranks; so soon as it arrives at the conviction that a brighter future is in store for its class and that its emancipation depends upon itself; so soon as any portion of the proletariat has risen high enough in the understanding of its situation and its mission, then is its influence bound to pervade its whole class and it becomes difficult to push it back into the level of those degraded beings, who are able to hate but not to hold out together in a prolonged struggle; who, despairing of their future, seek to forget their misery in debauch; and who have not the stamina for revolt, but are fit only for abject submission. It is next to impossible to eradicate the class consciousness out of that portion of the proletarians where it has once taken hold. However strongly the debasing influences of the capitalist system may make themselves felt, they may be able to push down such a portion of the proletariat ECONOMICALLY, but never MORALLY, provided always the pressure be not crushing. With this exception, the pressure brought to bear by capitalism upon the class conscious proletariat will have the effect of producing a counter pressure; it will not debase, but embitter; it will not degrade the proletariat to the ignominy of the slums, it will raise him to the dignity of martyrdom.

VII.

Philanthropy and Labor Legislation.

If every separate layer of the proletariat had been left to its own efforts, the uplifting process among them would have begun much later, and been much slower and painful than it was in fact. Without outside aid, many a layer of the proletariat, that now occupies an honorable position, may not have been at all able to overcome the difficulties, which are inherent in all beginnings, and, accordingly, also to the beginning of that process of uplifting the proletariat from the swamp into which it was cast by the development of capitalism. That aid came from many an upper social rank—from the upper ranks of the working proletariat as well as from the property-holding classes. The latter of these was of no slight value in the early days of capitalist large production.

During the Middle Ages, and during the early days of our own history, poverty was so slight that public (mainly religious) and private benevolence sufficed to deal with it. It presented no problem for the solution of society; in so far as it gave occasion for reflection, it was only the subject of pious contemplation; it was looked upon as a visitation from heaven, intended either to punish the wicked or try the godly; to the rich it was the opportunity to exercise their virtue.

As, however, with the increment of the capitalist system among us the unemployed increased, and poverty assumed stupendous proportions, the phenomenon of a large pauper class, that was as novel as it was dangerous, drew upon it the attention of all thoughtful and kindly disposed people. Our primitive means for the distribution of charity proved inadequate. To care for all the poor was soon felt to be a work that exceeded greatly the powers of the community. Then there arose in our midst a new problem: HOW TO ABOLISH POVERTY? A great variety of solutions were offered, according to the enlightenment and the humanity or inhumanity of the sources from which they proceeded. These proposals ran all the way from the Westchester, N. Y., plan of drowning the poor, up to the elaborate plans of our communistic colonies. The latter found great applause among people of elegant leisure; but their inadequacy revealed itself promptly. Poverty spread apace; the capitalist system ground the people down to proletarians by the thousands; and every proletarian swelled the volume of poverty.

By degrees, however, the question of poverty put on a new aspect. The capitalist system of production took rapid strides, until it became the ruling one in the country. In proportion as this evolution proceeded, the problem of poverty ceased to exist for the thinkers in the ranks of the capitalist class. Capitalist production rests upon the proletariat; to put an end to the latter were to render the former impossible. Colossal poverty is the foundation of colossal wealth; he who would eliminate the poverty of the masses assails the wealth of the few; whosoever attempts to remedy the poverty of the workers, the existing

rights of property, is pronounced a "destructionist," and is howled down as an enemy of "Law and Order."

True enough, neither fear nor compassion has ceased, under this changed aspect of things, to be felt among capitalist circles, and to tell in favor of the proletariat: poverty is by them felt to be a source of danger for the whole social fabric; it breeds famine, pestilence and crime. Accordingly, a few of the more clear headed and more humane among the ruling classes are willing to do something for the proletariat; but to the bulk of these, who neither dare nor can afford to break with their class, the problem can no longer be the ABOLITION, but only the ALLEVIATION, of poverty. To abolish poverty were to abolish the proletariat, and that is not their purpose. The proletariat is to continue, able to work and satisfied with its condition. This is the extent to which capitalist philanthropy goes.

Of course, within these bounds, philanthropy can manifest itself in manifold ways. Most of its methods are either wholly useless, or at best able only to afford passing aid to isolated cases. As, however, during the first decades of our century, capitalist large production made its entry in England, at first in the textile industries, and was there accompanied with all the horrors which it alone is able to bring on, the clearest heads among the philanthropists arrived at the conviction that there was but one thing able to check the complete destruction of the workers in these industries, to wit: State laws for the protection of the workers, at least for the protection of the most defenceless among them—children and women.

The capitalists engaged in large production did not yet, at that time, constitute the ruling portion of the capitalist class as they do to-day and as they do here. Many economic as well as political interests among the non-capitalist classes, especially the landlord class, took side in favor of limiting the powers of the large capitalists over their workmen. The movement in this direction was successful. It was supported by the consideration that, unless this power of the large capitalists was checked, the foundation of English industry, i. e., the working class, would perish, a consideration that could not fail to influence every member of the ruling class intelligent enough to see further than his own immediate interests; and furthermore, it was also supported by a few large capitalists who possessed sufficient means to adapt themselves to the proposed laws, and who realized that their less wealthy competitors would thereby be ruined. All this notwithstanding, and notwithstanding [the working class itself set in motion a powerful movement in favor of factory laws, it took a hard fight to obtain the first timid factory laws, and subsequently to extend them.

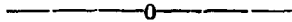
Nevertheless, slight though those first conquests were, they were enough to awaken out of their lethargy those ranks of the proletariat in whose behalf they were passed, and to set in motion the tendencies that were to improve their social standing. Indeed, even before the movement could yet record any victory whatever, the struggle to gain it was enough to reveal to the proletarians how important, how necessary, they were, and that they wielded a great power. Already these early struggles shook them up, imparted to them a sense of self-consciousness and self-respect, put an end to their despair, and set up before them a goal beyond the immediate future.

• Another and highly important means to improve the condition of the working

class are the public schools. Their importance cannot be overestimated. Nevertheless, their effect in the direction of abolishing the proletariat as a class is inferior to that of thorough-going factory laws.

The more fully the capitalist system develops, the more large production crowds out inferior forms of production or causes them to change their character, all the more important becomes the strengthening of factory and kindred laws, and their extension not only to all the branches of large industries, but also to those of small production and even of agriculture. But in the same measure as the importance of these laws grows, grows also the influence of the large capitalists in modern society; the non-capitalist but property-holding classes—landlords, small producers, etc.—become infected with capitalist modes of thought; and the thinkers and statesmen of capitalist rule who formerly were its luminaries soon sink to the level of “gougers” and “bruisers” of their class, ready to do its dirty work and to oppose tooth and nail everything that threatens its immediate interests.

The devastation of its own working people by capitalist production is so shocking that only the most shameless and greedy capitalists dare to refuse a certain degree of statutory protection to labor. But for some important labor law, the eight-hour day, for instance, which is to-day equivalent to the ten-hour day of forty years ago in England, and which would do something more than afford some slight relief, there will be found but very few supporters among the class of the property-holders. Capitalist philanthropy becomes ever more bashful; it leaves more and more to the workers themselves the conduct of the struggle for their protection. The modern universal struggle for the eight-hour day bears a very different aspect from the struggle that was carried on in England fifty years ago for the ten-hour day; the property-holding politicians who advocate it are not moved by philanthropy, but because they are pushed to it by their constituents, the workmen. The struggle for labor legislation is becoming more and more a class struggle between proletarians and capitalists. On the continent of Europe and here in the United States, where the struggle for labor laws commenced much later than in England, it bore this character from the start. The proletariat has nothing more to hope from the property-holding classes in its endeavors to uplift itself. It now depends wholly upon its own efforts.



VIII. The Political Struggle.

The proletariat modeled its original organizations for defence upon the pattern of those of the guild journeymen—the UNION; so, likewise, did it fashion its original offensive weapons, whenever it faced Capital in organized bodies, after those of the journeymen—the BOYCOTT and the STRIKE.

For reasons peculiar to the historic days when the guild journeymen waged their battles against their masters, their weapons remained the same until their class became extinct. The modern proletariat, however, cannot abide by those

original and primitive weapons. The more completely the several portions of which it is composed merge into a single working class, the more must its battles assume a political character. All class struggle is a political struggle.

Even the bare requirements of the economic or industrial struggle compel the workmen to set up political demands. Experience shows daily in multiplying instances that the capitalist State, or modern Government, considers it one of its principal duties, either to render impossible the organizations of workmen, or, in countries where, like in the United States, the spirit of the age is felt too strongly to bluntly deny the working class such civic rights as those of voluntary organization, to render the organizations of labor ineffective by falling upon them with the combined forces of police, militia and judiciary, whenever the workmen take the field against their employers in the economic struggles between the two.

The theoretical freedom of combination is, accordingly, insufficient if the proletariat is to build up its organizations with such fullness and completeness as to render them adequate for their purposes. Hence, whenever in the United States, the working class has stirred itself to improve its economic conditions, it has placed side by side with purely economic, a series of political demands calculated to free it from the class outrages perpetrated against it by Government, and to prevent the effectiveness of its economic organization from being thwarted. These political demands are to the American workmen of the highest importance; they belong under the category of essential prerequisites, without which their further development becomes impossible; they are to the Labor Movement what light and air are to the human body.

There are those who endeavor to contrast the political with the economic movement, and to draw hard and fast lines between them, and who declare that the workman should not "mix" the two. The fact is that the two—the political and the economic struggle—cannot be separated from each other. The economic struggle needs political rights and powers to be carried on successfully; and these political rights and powers will not drop into the lap of the proletariat from the moon; they will not be graciously conceded by the capitalist politicians in office; they have to be wrung from their hands; they have to be conquered; and their conquest requires the most energetic political activity possible—the independent political action of the working class, as independent from the favors, the aids, the promises of the bosses and capitalist class generally, as the economic action is, and necessarily must be, of the favors, aids and promises of that class. On the other hand, in the last analysis, the political struggle is also an economic one. If there is any difference between the two, it is that the political struggle is a more far-reaching and deeper cutting manifestation of the economic struggle.

Not those laws only that concern the working class directly, also the great majority of all the others affect it more or less. It is an inevitable conclusion that, just the same as all others, the working class must strive for political influence and political power, must endeavor to make the government subservient to its own interests.

The means to this end are universal, at least manhood, suffrage. In many a country the working class is deprived of this powerful means, and there strives with might and main to acquire it. Here in the United States, the ball

is in the hands of the citizen workingman. The attempts to strike it out of his hands, the direct and indirect schemes under all specious pretexts to disfranchise the American proletariat, are numerous, but hitherto have not only been unsuccessful, but have had a contrary effect to the desired one. The American proletariat starts equipped with the most powerful political weapon, with the aid of which it can conquer all others. The task of the proletariat when it first starts its political struggles is generally made easy through the political conflicts that rage among the property-holding classes themselves. The industrial capitalists, the merchants, the landlords are generally at war with one another, and special interests always divide each of these classes into hostile political camps. During these political struggles, each side looks for allies, and seeks to gain them through slight concessions. Sometimes after a victory the capitalist would break faith with his ally; but generally, during the first beginnings of the labor movement the victorious capitalist fulfilled his promises. It thus happened that the capitalists often appealed through their political parties to the proletariat for aid, and thus, themselves drew the workmen into political action. So long as the capitalist uses the proletariat in this way, so long as the working class does not conceive the idea of standing out independently in the political field, the capitalists look upon it as their voting cattle, intended to strengthen the hand of its own exploiters. In this way matters continue for a considerable time.

But the interests of the proletariat and those of the capitalist class are so hostile to each other that the political alliance between the two cannot be lasting. The capitalist system of production is bound, sooner or later, to cause the participation of the working class in politics to take such shape that it splits off from the capitalist parties, and that the workingman sets up his own, the Labor Party.

This process lies in the very nature of things. There is no class interest but expresses itself in a political party; just as soon as the working class realizes its class interests it is bound to do what the other classes do, i. e., express itself politically.

At what time the proletariat of a country will be so far matured as to take this decisive step, to cut, so to speak, the navel string that binds it, politically, to the capitalist system out of whose lap it has sprung, depends, above all, upon the economic stage of development that such a country has reached, in other words, upon the degree of exploitation to which the proletariat is subjected, and upon the compactness of its ranks. There are a number of other circumstances that affect considerably the time when the working class assumes political independence. Of these, two are the most important: first, the degree of enlightenment that the respective working class enjoys upon its political and economic situation; second, the attitude that the capitalist parties assume towards it. Both these circumstances have greatly promoted the movement of the working class in Germany, and hence it comes that the labor movement in Germany is further advanced than in any other country; and it is for just the reverse of these reasons, especially because of the hypocritical attitude of the political parties here, that with us the Labor Movement lags behind. But however the time may differ when, obedient to these different influences, the labor movement in a

capitalist country takes the shape of a labor party, that time is sure to arrive as an inevitable result of the economic development.

At the same time every political party must strive to obtain the political upper-hand. It is bound to endeavor to turn the power of the State to its own advantage, i. e., to use it in the interests of its class; in other words it is bound to endeavor to become the ruling party in the State. By the very fact of its organizing itself into an independent political party, the working class turns its face towards this ultimate goal—the conquest of the political powers of the State, a goal which the economic development itself aids the working class to reach. In this respect also, the same as in respect to the time when the workmen separate themselves from the capitalist parties, the time of their ultimate victory does not depend simply upon the degree of industrial development which the respective country may have reached, but upon a number of other circumstances both of national and of international character. Furthermore, the manner in which this triumph may be achieved may vary greatly in different countries. That, however, upon which there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who has followed the economic and political development of modern society, especially in the course of the last hundred years, is the CERTAINTY AND INEVITABLENESS OF THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE PROLETARIAT. While the proletariat is steadily extending itself, while it is growing ever stronger in moral and political power, while it is becoming ever more an economic necessity, while the class struggle is training it more and more into habits of solidarity and discipline, while its horizon is ever broadening, while its organizations become ever larger and more compact, while it becomes from day to day, the most important and finally the only working class upon whose industry the whole social body depends, while it undergoes all these important changes and thus progresses steadily, the classes that are hostile to it melt away with equal steadiness and rapidity; they steadily lose in moral and political strength; and they become not only superfluous, but a block to the progress of production, which, under their superintendence, falls into greater and greater confusion, conjuring up more and more unbearable conditions.

In view of this, it cannot be doubtful to which side victory will finally lean. The property-holding classes have already been seized with fear at their approaching end. They hate to admit to themselves the precariousness of their situation; they try to deceive themselves with false pretences, and to drown their apprehensions in hilarity and trivial jokes; they close their eyes to the abyss towards which they are rushing and they do not seem to realize that by such a conduct they not only hasten their own downfall, but render it all the more disastrous to themselves.

As the last of the exploited classes, the working proletariat cannot put the power which it will conquer to the uses to which it was put by the previous classes, i. e., to roll the burden of exploitation from its own upon the shoulders of some other exploited class. It is bound to use its power to put an end to its own and, along with that, to all forms of exploitation. The source of the exploitation to which it is now subject is the private ownership of the machinery of production. The proletariat can abolish its own exploitation only by abolishing private ownership in the machinery of production. The circumstance of the proletariat being stripped of all property in the means of production renders it

disposed to abolish private property in that; the exploitation to which the private ownership of the means of production subjects the proletariat, compels it to abolish the capitalist system of production and to substitute it with the Co-operative Commonwealth, in which the instruments of production cease to be private and become social property.

Under the rule of the capitalist system, i. e., of production for sale, co-operative production for use cannot become general. It is impossible to introduce the co-operative for the purpose of supplanting the capitalist system of production while at the same time keeping the latter in force. This self-evident proposition establishes the fact that the socialist system of production must be the inevitable result of the triumph of the proletariat. Even if it were not consciously to use its supremacy in the State to recover possession of the machinery of production and to replace the capitalist with the socialist system, it would be compelled to do so by the logic of events, although in that case, not without committing many mistakes, incurring much sacrifice and squandering much time and energy. The end of it all will, under all circumstances, be the socialist system of production. Its triumph is unavoidable just so soon as that of the proletariat itself has become unavoidable. The proletariat is bound to use its triumph for the abolition of its own exploitation, and that it can never accomplish without establishing the socialist order. The economic and political development itself, noticeable to-day in the large capitalist undertakings—the combinations, syndicates and trusts—point the proletariat the path to socialism and push it in that direction. This stage of economic development which we have reached is certain to render abortive all attempts to move in a different direction which the proletariat of any country may make, in case it should be disinclined to adopt the socialist system.

It is, however, by no means to be expected that the proletariat of any country, once it has come to power, will reveal any disinclination to adopt the socialist system. To imagine that, would be to imagine that the proletariat would be in its infancy at the same time that it had ripened politically, economically and morally into manhood, equipped with the power and ability to overcome its enemies and impose its will upon them. Such a disparity of growth is least imaginable with the proletariat. Thanks to machinery, so soon as the proletariat had risen above its original, degraded condition it revealed a thirst for the acquisition of knowledge and a taste for grappling with problems of social import. Side by side with this intellectual development on the part of some, the economic development of modern society moves on with such rapid strides that even those ranks of the proletariat that are least favored cannot fail to learn the lesson so strikingly taught by the large combinations of capital.

Everything combines to render the militant proletariat most accessible to the teachings of Socialism. To the proletariat, Socialism is no tidings of bad news, it is a veritable evangel. The ruling classes cannot accept Socialism without committing suicide; the proletariat, on the contrary, derives new life from Socialism, new vigor, new inspiration and renewed hope. As time passes, Socialism can only become more and more acceptable to the proletariat.

In whatever country the proletariat reaches the point of establishing an independent Labor Party, such a party is bound, sooner or later, to take on socialist tendencies, even if were not animated from the start by the socialist spirit. In the end such a party cannot choose but become a socialist labor party.

IX.

The Labor Movement and Socialism.

Socialists did not from the start understand the role, which the militant proletariat is called upon to fill in the socialist movement. As a matter of course it was impossible for them to understand it so long as there was no militant proletariat in existence. Socialism is older than the class struggle of the proletariat. It is a contemporaneous appearance with the proletariat itself. The proletariat, however, had existed a long time before giving any indications of its independent existence. The first, and at that time the only, spring from which Socialism flowed was the COMPASSION, which philanthropists of the upper classes felt for the poor and wretched. Among these philanthropists, the socialists were the boldest and those who saw furthest ahead; they perceived clearly that the sources of the proletariat lay in the private ownership of the means of production, and they did not stick at drawing the fullest conclusions from these premises. Socialism at that time was the most earnest, far-seeing and magnificent expression of capitalist philanthropy. At that time there was no class interest which the socialists could call upon in the battle for the realization of their aims; they could only appeal to the enthusiasm and pity of the idealists of their own and of the still higher classes; they sought to gain these over by captivating pictures of a socialist community, and by forcible presentations of the existing misery among the masses. Not through struggle, but by peaceful methods of suasion were the rich and the mighty to be moved to furnish the means for the radical cure of misery and the establishment of the ideal society. It is well known that the socialists of that time waited in vain upon the millionaires and princes from whose magnanimity the redemption of mankind was expected to come.

During the first decades of our century the proletariat began to give signs of life. Before the thirties, the first inceptions of a Labor Movement were noticed in the United States; in the thirties strong movements started in France and especially in England.

These manifestations were meaningless to the socialists of those days. They did not think it possible that the poor, ignorant, rude proletarians could ever attain the moral elevation and social power requisite to put through socialist aspirations. But it was not only lack of confidence that the Labor Movement inspired them with; it furthermore disturbed their calculations; it threatened to rob them of what they considered a most effective weapon in their arguments in favor of Socialism. These capitalist socialists could hope to convince the sensitive members of their own class of the necessity of Socialism only if it was shown to them that it was the only means whereby to alleviate misery; that every attempt to do so and to improve the condition of the propertiless classes under the existing social system was vain; and that it was impossible for the proletarians to raise themselves by their own efforts. The Labor Movement, however, proceeded from premises that stood in contradiction to this mode of reasoning. Nor was this all. The class struggle between proletarians and capitalists embittered, as a

matter of course, the latter against the former. In the eyes of the capitalist class the proletariat had been transformed from unhappy people, worthy of pity, who should be helped, into a pack of miscreants that should be beaten and kept down. Forthwith the principal source of Socialism, compassion for the poor and wretched, began to dry up. The tenets themselves of Socialism no longer looked to the frightened capitalist class as a harmless toy, but as a most dangerous weapon that might possibly fall into the hands of the people, and do no end of mischief. In short, the stronger the Labor Movement became, the more difficult also became the socialist propaganda among the ruling classes, and the more hostile grew the attitude of these against Socialism itself.

So long as the socialists were of the opinion that the means whereby to reach the aims of Socialism had to come from the upper classes, they could not choose but look upon the Labor Movement, not only with suspicion, but also with decided hostility, and they naturally inclined to the belief that nothing was so hurtful to the cause of Socialism as the class struggle.

The unsympathetic attitude of the early socialists towards the Labor Movement did, naturally, not fail to influence the attitude of the latter towards Socialism. If the uprising portion of the proletariat could find in those socialists no support in its struggles, but met only with opposition; if their tenets threatened to discourage it, instead of firing it on; nothing was, under such circumstances, more natural than that the working class should be possessed with a very general feeling of antipathy for all the teachings of Socialism, and not only for their application to the existing struggles. This antipathy was furthermore promoted by the lack of information and the thoughtlessness that marked the first beginnings of the uprising of the proletariat. On the one hand, the narrow horizon that bounded their vision made it difficult for them to comprehend the final aims of Socialism; on the other they still lacked a clear understanding of social conditions, and of the mission of their class; they acted responsive only to a vague CLASS INSTINCT, which taught them to look with suspicion upon everything that proceeded from the capitalist class, and, accordingly, also upon the Socialism of their time, as well as upon the whole philanthropy of capitalism. It is owing to this circumstance, that in many a labor organization a strong dislike was, at the time, conceived for Socialism; this was especially the case in England, and it is owing thereto, together with many other causes, that until recently the English workingman was almost inaccessible to the socialists, although the attitude of modern Socialism towards the Labor Movement was a very different one from that of the capitalist utopians who preceded them.

For all that, however wide the chasm may, at a time, have been between the militant proletariat and Socialism, the latter corresponds so much to the requirements of the more clearly thinking proletarians, that even in such places where the masses were hostile to Socialism, the clearest heads among the working class gladly turned to it as far as they had become acquainted with its principles. It was through the action of these more gifted workmen that the views of the capitalist socialists first experienced an important transformation. Differently from those utopians, these workmen were not restricted by any regard for the capitalist class, which they hated and fought bitterly. Accordingly that early and peaceful Socialism of the capitalist utopians, which expected to bring on the redemption of mankind through the instrumentality of the best

elements of the upper classes, was imperceptibly transformed into a violent revolutionary sort of Socialism, the success of which was to be the work of good strong proletarian fists.

But no more than that of the utopians, did this wild "Labor-Socialism" comprehend the Labor Movement: it also was hostile to the class struggle, that is to say, to its highest, its POLITICAL FORM, although both arrived at the same erroneous conclusions through very different paths. In point of scientific knowledge, this wild, early "Labor-Socialism" was inferior to that of the utopians. The proletarian is at best able to appropriate only a fraction of the knowledge that the upper classes have brought forth, and to digest and apply it to his own uses; so long as he remains a proletarian he lacks both leisure and means to carry science beyond the point which it reached under the guidance of the upper classes. Accordingly, the wild "Labor-Socialism" that succeeded that of the utopians, could not help carrying some of the essential marks of utopianism: it had not the remotest inkling of the economic development, which brings together the material elements for socialist production, and which trains and matures through the class struggle that class which is called upon to take possession of those elements, and with them to develop a new social system. The same as the capitalist utopians, these proletarians believed that a social system was an edifice that could be built at will according to a previously agreed plan, provided only the means and the place to do it in were forth coming. These utopian proletarians, who were as vigorous and daring as they were naive, did not doubt their power to raise and take care of their social edifice. Of course they expected no millionaire or prince to aid them; it was expected that a forcible revolution should furnish the requisite means for the enterprise, tear down the old edifice, annihilate the old powers and hand the dictatorship over to the inventor or group of inventors of the new plan; according to them, a new Messiah was to rear the edifice of socialist society.

In this system of reasoning the class struggle could have no place. The proletarian utopians suffered too much from the misery into which they were thrown not to be impatient for its immediate abolition. Even if they had considered it possible that the class struggle could gradually uplift the proletariat and enable it to carry on the further development of society, this process would have seemed to them too slow and round about. They stood at the threshold of the Labor Movement; the sections of the proletariat that were then taking a hand in it were insignificant; and, furthermore, among these few fighters, there were still fewer who had anything in view except the protection of their immediate interests. To educate the masses of the people into thinking socialists seemed hopeless. The only thing that these masses seemed fit for was an outbreak of despair in which they would destroy what was, and thereby clear the path for the socialists. The worse off the masses were, thus reasoned those early, and infertile "Labor-Socialists," the nearer would be the moment when their condition would become so unbearable to them that they would tear down the social upper structure that oppressed them. In the opinion of those socialists, a struggle that contemplated the gradual uplifting of the working class was not only futile but positively harmful, because the slight improvements which the workmen might eventually gain would render the life of the masses bearable, and thereby put off the day when the existing social system would be torn down

and misery abolished. Every form of the class struggle that did not aim at an immediate and complete overthrow of the existing order, that is to say, every earnest, gradually growing, effective form of the class struggle was looked upon by those men as nothing short of treason to the cause of humanity.

It is now more than half a century since this reasoning first made its appearance among the working class; Weitling, in Germany, was the most talented personification of this faith, a faith that has not yet died out. Its representatives are found among the ranks of every fresh battalion of workmen that joins the army of the militant proletariat; they are found in every country, whose proletarian population has begun to realize its degraded and unbearable condition, and to imbibe socialist ideas without as yet possessing a clear comprehension of the situation, and without faith in its own powers to carry on a prolonged class struggle. Seeing that ever new layers of the proletariat rise from the mire into which the economic development has pushed them; and seeing that ever new countries are subjected to the capitalist system of production and, consequently, also to the turning of its people into proletarians, it is easily explained how the opinions of the old utopian Labor-Socialists are constantly bobbing up anew. Such "Socialism" if it can at all be called "Socialism," is a sort of infant's disease that threatens every new socialist proletarian movement, that has not yet outgrown the utopian stage.

In modern times this sort of Socialism is frequently designated as ANARCHY, but it is by no means necessarily connected therewith. Seeing that it does not arise from thought, but that it is only an instinctive revolt against existing conditions, it is not reconcilable with any system of social theories. Nevertheless, the fact is undeniable that in our own days the raw and violent reformers of the old proletarian school are generally found hand-in-glove with the otherwise very coy, tender and flabby Anarchists from the "refined" middle classes. Nor is this surprising. However great, in fact or in appearance, may be the differences between the two, there is one point on which they are absolutely at one, to wit, antipathy for, and even hatred of the highest and most intelligent form of the class struggle—THE POLITICAL STRIFE.

No more than the utopian socialists of the upper classes were the early proletarian reformers able to overcome the antagonism that existed originally between Socialism and the Labor Movement. True enough, the proletarian utopians were, occasionally, compelled to take a hand in the class struggle, but being devoid of any theoretical knowledge, their occasional participation in the class struggle did not mature into a consolidation of Socialism with the Labor Movement, but in the suppression of the former by the latter. It is a notorious fact that wherever Anarchism, of whatever stamp, takes hold of the Labor Movement and does temporarily enter upon the class struggle, it sooner or later, despite all its seeming radicalism, winds up in trades unionism "pure and simple" with all the impurity, corruption and retrogression that the term implies.

X.

The Socialist Labor Party—Union of the Labor Movement and Socialism.

For the Socialist and the Labor Movement to be reconciled with each other, and to merge into one, it was necessary for Socialism to raise itself above the sphere of utopianism. The accomplishment of this feat is the historic work of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, who in 1847, laid, through the "Communist Manifesto," the scientific foundation of what is known as modern Socialism, or be it, the Socialist Labor Party. These illustrious men gave a backbone, so to speak, to Socialism; they converted that which thitherto had been a beautiful reverie, entertained by some well-meaning dreamers, into a subject worthy of earnest thought and struggle; they showed Socialism to be the inevitable result of the economic development through which man is traveling. The work of these men gave the militant proletariat a clear knowledge of its historic mission, and they enabled it to march upon its goal as swiftly as possible, and with the least possible sacrifice. Upon the rock bed of science, furnished by Marx and Engels, the task of modern socialists is no longer that of INVENTING a new social order, but of DISCOVERING the requisite material thereto that is furnished by modern society; it is no longer that of bringing salvation to the proletariat from above, but of assisting the proletariat in its class struggle by enlightening it, and by promoting its economic and political organizations to the end that it may move onward all the more quickly and painlessly towards the time when it will be able to emancipate itself. In short, THE TASK OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY IS TO MOLD THE CLASS STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT INTO THE MOST ADEQUATE SHAPE, AND TO INSTIL INTO IT THE CLEAREST POSSIBLE UNDERSTANDING OF ITS AIMS.

The class struggle of the proletariat acquires from that moment a different character. So long as it lacks the socialist system of production as its conscious aim, so long as the efforts of the militant proletariat fall within the framework of the present system of production, so long does the class struggle move in a circle, without gaining an inch, and the labors of the proletariat to improve its condition resemble those of Sisyphus, who eternally rolled a stone up a hill, ever to see it roll back again, and to find himself no further at the beginning of the next, than he was at the beginning of the previous day. The abasing tendencies of the capitalist system of production are not removed, at best they are only temporarily checked by the class struggle and its incidental victories. The process of turning the middle classes of society into proletarians goes on uninterruptedly; uninterruptedly, individual members and whole detachments of the working class are thrust into the slums; and permanently does the capitalist greed for profits threaten to annul all the victories that the better situated portions of the working class may have gained from time to time. Every shortening of the hours of work, whether such be obtained through the economic or the political struggle,

becomes a motive for the introduction of labor saving machines so as to enable the capitalist to dispense with some of his workmen; every improvement in the organizations of the proletariat is answered by a corresponding improvement in the organization of the capitalists. As a result of all of this, the number of the unemployed increases stupendously, the crises spread their area of devastation, the uncertainty of a livelihood is experienced at an ever greater and more painful extent. The emancipation of the working class, which is the object of the class struggle, is less of an economic than a moral question. The economic conditions of the proletariat as a whole are improved as a result of the class struggle only very slowly and slightly, if at all; the self-respect, however, which the proletarian gains thereby, and the respect with which it thereby inspires the other classes of society, grows perceptibly. Through the class struggle, the proletarian ceases to be the humble and despised being he once was; he feels himself the peer of the members of the higher classes; he contrasts his lot with theirs; he makes greater demands for the comforts of existence; he aspires to a share in the conquests of civilization; and above all, he becomes more and more sensitive to oppression.

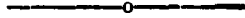
This moral uplifting of the proletariat goes hand in hand with its longings for better things. The latter grows much more rapidly than is reconcilable with the improvement of its economic condition under the present system of exploitation. All these improvements, which some hope and others fear will satisfy the workingman, are bound to lag far behind his aspirations, which are the result of his moral elevation. One of the inevitable results of the class struggle is, accordingly, the steady growth of the discontent of the proletariat with its lot; a discontent that is, of course, felt strongest in such places where the economic improvement of the proletariat lags furthest behind its moral elevation. The class struggle is, therefore, purposeless and fruitless if it does not aim at a system of production superior to the existing one. The higher the level to which the class struggle raises the proletarian, the further removed from himself does he see the aim of his endeavors—a happy and worthy existence, under the existing system of production.

Nothing short of the socialist system of production can put an end to this disparity between the aspirations of the working class and the means to satisfy them; it alone puts an end to exploitation and to all class distinctions; accordingly, it alone removes the powerful causes of the discontent of the workingman with his lot, a discontent which the example put before him, and the luxury indulged in by his employer stimulates. These causes being once put out of the way, the aspirations of the workingman must naturally limit themselves to his capacity to satisfy them. Only in socialist production lies the opportunity for increasing this capacity.

A gnawing state of dissatisfaction is something unknown in communist societies. On the other hand, it springs inevitably from class contrasts and exploitation, where the exploited classes feel themselves the equal, if not the superior, of their exploiters. Once an exploited class has reached that point, its longing for better things is not satisfied until it has put an end to all exploitation.

Accordingly, so long as the class struggle of the proletariat stood out in opposition to Socialism, so long as it aimed at nothing higher than to conquer for the proletariat a satisfactory station within the framework of the present social order, it was impossible for it to accomplish its object. The matter is wholly different from the moment the socialist and the Labor Movements are merged into one

From that moment the Labor Movement the world over, had an aim before it, which it steadily approaches ; from that moment, all incidents in the struggle become important, even those that did or do not show any immediate practical results ; from that moment many a battle, that seemed or seems lost to the working class, becomes virtually a victory ; from that moment every abandoned boycott, every lost strike, the rejection of every labor law, or every capitalist failure to enforce existing ones, is a step forward that brings the proletariat nearer to the hour of its final triumph. From that time on all economic and political measures bearing upon the proletariat rebound to its benefit, immaterial whether they proceed from friendly or from hostile sources, immaterial whether they succeed or fail—THEY ALL HAVE FOR THEIR EFFECT TO STIR UP THE PROLETARIAT AND TO UPLIFT IT MORALLY. That point being once reached, the militant proletariat is no longer an army rooted in the ground that is not able to maintain its once conquered position without great sacrifices. Even the dullest may perceive that it becomes an irresistible conqueror, whose triumphant career nothing can hinder.



XI.

Internationality of the Socialist Labor Party.

International intercourse is necessarily connected with the capitalist system of production. The development of the latter from the system of production for sale is intimately connected with the development of international commerce. International commerce, however, is impossible without friendly relations among the various states ; a prerequisite for its development is that the foreign merchant be protected in a foreign country the same as he is in his own. Through the development of international commerce the merchant himself is considerably raised in the scale of civilization, and vice versa, his bent of thought is impressed upon society itself. But merchants have always been a fluent element ; their motto from time immemorial has been : “ubi bene, ibi patria”—wherever we fare well, wherever there are profits to be made, there is our fatherland. Thus, in the same measure that the systems of capitalist production and international commerce expand, do international tendencies, i. e., a desire for permanent peace between nations and for their close union by brotherly bonds, develop in the capitalist class.

But the capitalist system of production brings forth the most wonderful contrasts, antagonisms and contradictions. The same as it tends to increase both equality and inequality, to push the proletariat down into ever deeper misery and yet to pave the way for its uplifting, to impart the greatest freedom to the individual while encompassing his absolute enslavement, so likewise, hand in hand with its tendency to cement the brotherhood of nations, it stimulates the tendency to increase national antagonisms. Commerce requires peace, yet competition promotes warfare. Within the boundaries of

every nation there is perpetual warfare among individual capitalists and among the several classes; likewise, is there a perpetual state of warfare among the capitalists of different nations. Each nation seeks to extend the market for its own products and to exclude all others from the same. The further international commerce is developed, the more important is international peace, yet at the same time the competitive struggle among the various nations becomes all the wilder, and all the greater grows the danger of collisions among them. The more intimately international commerce draws the several nations together, the louder also is the clamor of each for national exclusion. The stronger the necessity for peace is felt, the more threatening also grows the danger of war. These contradictions, that seem so insane, are absolutely in keeping with the character of the capitalist system of production. They lie latent in the earliest and simplest stages of production for sale; but not until the capitalist system of production has fully matured do they manifest themselves in the gigantic and unbearable proportions in which they are now experienced. The spectacle of increased tendencies that make for war, going hand in hand with increased tendencies that make for peace, but reveals one of the many contradictions against which the capitalist system of production will dash itself to pieces.

The proletariat does not share these contradictions. The more fully it develops and becomes an independent class, the clearer also is the evidence that, of each set of contradictory tendencies in capitalist society, it is affected by only ONE. For instance, the capitalist system of production brings forth simultaneously the tendency to draw together all producers into co-operative action, and at the same time to stimulate the bitterest hostilities of each against all; upon the proletariat the latter tendency has no effect: instead of the antagonism between MONOPOLY and COMPETITION which draw together and yet split up the capitalists, we find only the first of these tendencies making itself felt more and more strongly in the ranks of the proletariat, and drawing its members into ever stronger SOLIDARITY. As a natural result of this "one-sidedness," the tendency among the proletariat is perceptible towards ever closer international relations, while the tendency toward national exclusion and international warfare declines perceptibly and proportionally among them.

By stripping the workman of all property, the capitalist system of production has loosened him from his threshold. To-day he enjoys no fixed domicile, and cannot properly be said to have a home. With the merchant he has taken up the maxim "ubi bene ibi patria"—wherever the conditions for work are most favorable there is his home. At present the migrations of the working class, aided greatly by our modern facilities of transportation, constitute the most stupendous migration of nations mankind has ever witnessed. Of the modern proletarian it may be said with justice that he has become nomadic; and happy may he consider himself if in his peregrinations his wife and children can accompany him instead of being torn from his side.

The same as the proletariat, does the merchant seek to become independent from his own threshold and to let himself down wherever the interests of his business require it; but he never loses touch with his native place. His station abroad, his opportunity to ply his business there and to beat his foreign colleagues depend greatly upon the power of his own country to protect him. The merchant who is settled abroad preserves his nationality; as a rule, these gentry are the typical Jingos; they are the first to experience the connection between their country's power and their own purses.

It is otherwise with the proletariat. Nowhere at home has he been humored, either

by special protection or laws concerning his interests and truly enforced in his behalf. If he emigrates from one country to another he does not stand in need of the protection of his own fatherland. On the contrary. If he moves to a foreign country, or to a different State he does so usually in order to escape the hard laws his own country imposes upon him, and to look for some other home in which the conditions of life may be more favorable. Furthermore, his new fellow toilers have no interest in depriving him of whatever protection he may enjoy; on the contrary, their own interests direct them, to see to it that his power of resistance against their common exploiter be increased.

True enough, this cosmopolitan spirit among workingmen is accompanied at times with inconveniences and even dangers to those workingmen who are better conditioned, and among whom a worse conditioned set immigrates. The competition for work with the resulting lowering of wages brought on by such an immigration is a serious check to the class struggle. This sort of competition among workingmen may, at times, similarly with the competition among the capitalists of several nations, sharpen national antipathies and deepen the hatred of one set of workingmen for another. But this national quarrel, which among the capitalist classes is a permanent manifestation, can be only a transitory one among the proletariat. Sooner or later, the members of this class must come to the recognition of the fact that the immigration of cheaper labor from countries that are still backward in development, is as intimately connected with the capitalist system of production as the introduction of machinery itself and the appearance of woman in the factory; and that it is as futile to attempt to stop immigration as to stop machine or woman labor under the capitalist system of production.

On all sides the workingman is made to perceive more and more clearly how intimately connected is the progress of his own class struggle with that of the workingmen in all other countries. Although the workingmen of one may at times be annoyed by those of another country, they are all in the end bound to perceive that there is but one effective way of removing the ill effect of the conditions of the workingmen in countries that are economically backward upon workingmen located in countries that are economically advanced, and that is to remove the backward conditions that afflict the former. The American workingman has every reason to wish, and as far as in him lies to work for it, that the workingmen of European countries secure higher wages and shorter hours.

The intimate interdependence there is between the class struggle, carried on by the proletariat of one country, and that of the militant proletariat in all others, necessarily leads to the close union of the working and struggling proletariat of all lands. National exclusion, the national hatreds and antipathies with which the capitalist classes of different nations have imbued the proletariat, are visibly fading out among the latter; it gives ever stronger evidences of freeing itself from national prejudices; the workingmen, whatever language they may speak, are, day by day, learning the lesson that they must see in one another, not strangers or enemies, but comrades.

How indispensable the international connection of the proletarians is to their class struggle, the moment they rise above their primitive petty ambitions and aspire to broader and the nobler aims, was well understood by the writers of the "Communist Manifesto." This document addresses itself to the PROLETARIANS OF ALL COUNTRIES, and, in its closing words, calls upon them to unite. Accordingly, that organization that gained the proletariat over to the principles of the Manifesto and in whose name the

Manifesto itself was issued, was an INTERNATIONAL organization,—it was the FEDERATION OF COMMUNISTS.

The defeats which in 1848 and 1849 were suffered in Europe by the revolutionary movement put an end to this Federation ; but with the re-awakening of the Labor Movement during the sixties, the Federation re-appeared on a much larger scale in the INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WORKINGMEN, which was founded in 1864, and had its ramifications in America as well. Again Karl Marx was the soul of this new organization. Its object was not only to kindle the feeling of international solidarity among the proletarians of all countries, but also to give them a common aim, and cause them to strike a common path. The INTERNATIONAL fulfilled the first of these objects fully, but the second only partially. A unity of aims and of methods cannot be obtained except upon sound principles, the INTERNATIONAL sought to arm the militant proletariat of all countries with the tenets of Socialism ; it declared that the emancipation of the working class could be accomplished only by the working class itself ; that political action was a means to this end ; and that the emancipation of the proletariat was impossible so long as the working-class remained dependent upon monopolists for access to nature and to the instruments of production necessary for turning natural opportunities to use. The INTERNATIONAL consisted originally of heterogenous elements. Just as soon as its aims and principles became known to many of these elements, there arose opposition—an opposition that became stronger in proportion as these principles and aims were more clearly understood. By degrees, one after another of these hostile elements fell off. First to decamp were the ideological capitalists ; next, the small property holding capitalists ; then followed the primitive proletarian utopians, or physical force Anarchists together with the re-actionary trades unionists of the “pure and simple” school, as well as the labor aristocrats, i. e., the workers in some of the skilled trades, who imagined themselves superior to their fellows, and little dreamed that machinery would eventually bring them all down to the same level. Finally, the fall of the Paris Commune in 1871 marks the downfall of the INTERNATIONAL.

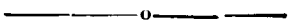
But the sense of international solidarity, which the INTERNATIONAL had conjured up, was not to be smothered. Since 1871, the principles contained in the “Communist Manifesto” have spread throughout the world ; everywhere we see the union of the class struggle and of modern Socialism, either accomplished or in process of accomplishment. The fundamental principles, the aim and methods of the proletarian class struggle become more and more identical in all sections of the capitalist world. As a result of this fact, it was natural that the socialist Labor Movement in all countries should come in ever closer touch with one another, and that the sense of international solidarity should cause itself to be felt ever more powerfully. Under such circumstances, only slight provocation was needed to cause this fact to express itself visibly.

It is well known that this happened at the centennial celebration of the downfall of the Bastille when the International Congress met at Paris in 1889. Two years later the International Congress at Brussels, and, in 1893, that at Zurich, gave further occasion to strengthen the international touch of the militant proletariat, a circumstance that is furthermore exemplified every year by the May Day celebrations. The men who meet at these International Congresses are not eccentric thinkers and dreamers out of touch with their fellows such as we see at the “Peace Congresses” of the capitalists, they are the representatives and spokesmen of hundreds of thousands, yea of millions of workingmen and workingwomen. These congresses, together with the May Day celebrations bring out clearly the fact that it is the masses of the working populations, congregated

in all the large industrial centers of all capitalist countries, who are conscious of the international solidarity of the proletariat, who protest against war, and who declare that the so-called national antagonisms are in fact not antagonisms of peoples but antagonisms of their exploiters.

Such a bridging over of the chasms that have so long divided nations from nations, such an international solidarity of the masses is a spectacle that the world's history has never until now presented. This spectacle is all the more imposing considering that it takes place under the heavy clouds of war which capitalist interests cause to thicken over the head of mankind.

In view of this fact, the Socialist Labor Party cannot fail to accentuate, with all requisite emphasis, the international character that animates it.



XII.

The Socialist Labor Party and the People.

The Socialist Labor Party is from its inception and from its very character an international party. But at the same time it has the tendency to take on more and more the shape of a national party, i. e., to become the party of the people, in the sense that it become more and more the representative, not of the wage-workers only, but of all the toiling and exploited stratas of society, in other words, of the bulk of the population. The industrial proletariat steadily tends to become the only working class in society ; the conditions under which the other working classes labor and live become more and more the same with those of the proletariat ; finally, the working proletariat is the only working class that steadily grows in power, in intelligence, and in the consciousness of its destiny. By reason of all this, the working proletariat is the center around which the steadily vanishing portions of all other working classes are gathering ; its thoughts and feelings become the standard of the thoughts and feelings of the "small man" himself.

In the measure as the leadership of the people thus goes over to the wage-working class, does its political party become the party of the people. Indeed, just so soon as the independent workers, engaged in small production, begin to feel as proletarians, just so soon as they recognize that they, or at least their children, are hopelessly doomed to drop into that class, and that there is no longer any hope for them except in the emancipation of the proletariat itself, just so soon are they bound to see in the Socialist Labor Party the natural representative of their own interests.

The small producer has nothing to fear from the triumph of the Socialist Labor Party ; on the contrary, it is to his interest to promote that triumph ; it betokens the introduction of such social conditions as will bring freedom from exploitation of oppression, together with the acquisition of well-being and, the certainty of a livelihood to all the toilers, not to the wage-workers among them only, but also to the independent toilers in the domain of small production.

But, furthermore, the Socialist Labor Party does not represent the interests of the small producers in the FUTURE only, it represents them in MODERN SOCIETY as well. As

the lowest layer of the exploited masses, the proletariat cannot free itself from exploitation and oppression. It, consequently, is the sworn enemy of all wrong, in whatever form such may manifest itself; it is the champion of all the exploited and oppressed. Numerous evidences can be adduced as proof of this fact. The occasion, for instance, for the establishment of the "International Organization of Workingmen" was a proclamation of the proletariat in favor of the uprising of the Poles to shake off the yoke of the Tsar; the first document which the "International" issued was a message of congratulation to Abraham Lincoln, expressive of its sympathy with the abolition of slavery; and, again, it was the organization of this very "International," located in England, and numbering Englishmen among its members, that took the part of the Irishmen, who were oppressed by the ruling class of England, and conducted most vigorously the agitation in their behalf. And yet, neither the Irish nor the Polish movement, not even the emancipation of the American slaves, affected directly the interests of the wage-working class. Instances of this sort, both of a national and international character, could be enumerated indefinitely.

The contention is occasionally heard that, seeing that Socialism builds upon the economic development, and that socialist production is predicated upon the substitution of large for small production, the interests of the Socialist Labor Party lie in the downfall of the small industrialist, farmers and merchants, that it must, accordingly, promote the ruin of these, and cannot have their interests at heart. This reasoning is defective. The Socialist Labor Party does not create the economic development; the overthrow of small by large production is carried on without its connivance, the capitalist class is doing that work and is doing it to perfection. True enough, the Socialist Labor Party has no occasion to brace itself against this evolution; but to strive to check the economic development is just the reverse of laboring in the interest of the small producers and farmers. All efforts in that direction are bound to fail; in so far as they can be at all effective, they can only do harm, they can accomplish no manner of good. To hold out to the small industrialists and farmer schemes whereby their small concerns can be kept alive, is, so far from promoting their interests, to do them positive injury; it is to hold the word of promise to their ears with impracticable plans, to mislead them from the path in which their true interests lie, and then expose them to the bitterness of the inevitable disappointment that must follow.

But, furthermore, although the downfall of small production is inevitable, it follows by no means that it must take place under all the horrible circumstances that to-day accompany that economic evolution. The process of the disappearance of small production is the last act of a long tragedy, the first acts of which are engaged with the slow and painful crushing down of the independent small producer. The Socialist Labor Party, on the contrary, not only has not the slightest interest in crushing down the small farmers and industrialists, but it has, on the contrary, the greatest interest in preventing such a consummation. The more crushed down and degraded those portions of the population are from which the proletariat must recruit its forces, all the harder will the work be of raising these recruits high enough to enable them to catch the inspiration of noble and manful efforts, and to feel prompted to join the ranks of the militant proletariat. It is upon the growth of this body, the militant proletariat, not upon the growth of the whole class of the proletariat, that both the growth and the strength of the Socialist Labor Party depend. The deeper the depth of misery into which the farmer and other small producers may be steeped, the more these have become habituated to endless toil, all the more helpless and unfit for resistance will they prove themselves, the

moment they have sunk into the class of the proletariat, they will be all the more submissive to exploitation, and all the more will they injure the higher layers of the proletariat through their competition for work. Reasons similar to those that lead to the international solidarity of the workmen, lead also to the solidarity of the proletariat with those classes from which its future recruits are to come; but this solidarity, has hitherto, as a rule been one sided; it has proceeded from the proletariat alone,

As a matter of course, however, every time the small farmer and industrialists try to keep their heads above water at the expense of the proletariat, by any of the many schemes which can redound only to the injury of the latter, they must expect to encounter the most vigorous opposition from the working class, and, accordingly, also from the Socialist Labor Party. For the rest, and for the reasons mentioned above, the working class and the highest manifestation of its aspirations—the Socialist Labor Party—not only does not begrudge, but positively favors all measures that would truly improve the condition of the small producer and lighten his burden. But such measures are not in the gift of the capitalist parties, they can, from the very nature of things, be in the gift of the working class only, of the ONLY anti-capitalist party—the Socialist Labor Party. All propositions offered by ANY of the other, i. e., by ANY capitalist party in the land, without exception, aim, some sincerely, others insincerely, at improving condition of the small producers, agricultural and industrial, AS PRODUCERS, while at the same time attempting to preserve their present and previous forms of industry. Such a course is hostile to the economic development; it is not only vain, but harmful. Equally vain is all hope or attempt, from whatever source it proceeds, to raise all these small producers, or even a perceptible portion of them, into the category of capitalists. The masses of the small producers could be helped only in their capacity of CONSUMERS.

To render aid in their direction, is directly in the interest of the Socialist Labor Party. The better the condition of the small producers is rendered as consumers, the better their standing, and the higher their physical and mental wants, the clearer will be their vision, all the sooner will they quit attempting to on the contest against large production by means of "competition in starving," all the sooner will they give up the hopeless struggle, and all the sooner will they join hands with and strengthen the ranks of the proletariat. They would not then slip into the ranks of the humble, resistless, and degraded stratas of the population; they would join forth with the militant body of the proletariat that is conscious of its aims and its mission, and promote its triumph.

This triumph cannot spring from degradation, as many have imagined; it can spring from degraded small producers as little as from degraded proletarians. The Socialist Labor Party has every interest in the world to prevent the degradation of the one as earnestly as that of the other. To strengthen its arm is, accordingly, in the interest, not of the wage-working class only, but of all those members of society who live on the sweat of their own brows and not on the exploitation of others.

The class of the small producers, farmers and industrialists, has never been able to defend its own interests against those of the large producing, or genuinely capitalist class. To-day it is still less able to hold its own. It cannot protect its interests without joining some other class. The instincts that large production raised within it, throw it steadily into the arms of some capitalist party or the other, that is to say, drive it into alliances with the various groups of the upper property-holding classes. The capitalist parties themselves seek to bring about such alliances, either out of political necessity and then they simply consider the "small men," the same as they do the proletarians, as "voting cattle"; or as the result of deeper thought. They are well aware

that the little private property in the instruments of labor, which the small producer still possesses, is the strongest bulwark of the whole system of private property in the machinery of production, and, consequently, of the system of exploitation, upon which they live. They care nothing, much as they may affect a contrary feeling, for the well-being of the "small man"; they care not how he may suffer, provided only his small industry, that fetters him in the bands of private property, is not wholly carried off. At the same time, all these parties are highly interested in the expansion, i. e., in the progress of the economic development. They are anxious, indeed to preserve both the agricultural and the industrial small producer; they PROMISE him their aid; but IN POINT of fact they do all that in them lies to increase the rule of large production and to oppress the small agricultural and industrial producer.

But matters are wholly different with regard to the relations between the independent small producers and the Socialist Labor Party. Unquestionably, the latter cannot set itself up as the defender of small producers; nevertheless small production has nothing to fear from the Socialist Labor Party. It is the capitalists and large landlords, not the proletarians, who are steadily expropriating the small farmers and small industrialists. The triumph of the proletariat is the only means of putting an end to this expropriation. As CONSUMERS, however, the interests of the independent workers in small production are identical with those of the proletarians. The small producers have, accordingly, every reason to join the Socialist Labor Party when they seek to protect their interests.

The recognition of this fact will not be rapid; yet numerous are the signs that portend a stampede to the Socialist camp, led by the best and most belligerent elements, who drop their former weapons, not for the purpose of escaping the conflict, but who tired of the petty strife for eking out a pitiable existence, determine to step boldly into that larger imposing arena where they will be able to struggle for the emancipation of our people, yea of mankind itself, from the incubus of the present social system that threatens the engulf society, and to help to usher in that new social order in which every member of society shall be able to share in the great conquests of modern civilization.

The more unbearable the present system of production becomes; the more visibly its bankruptcy draws near; the more incompetent the ruling parties prove themselves to cope with and remove the shocking social ills; the more completely these parties reveal their imbecility, and shrink into cliques of politicians bent upon the promotion of their own interests only;—the broader and stronger will also be the stream that will flow into the camp of the Socialist Labor Party from the non-proletarian classes, and, falling in line with the irresistible phalanx of the militant proletariat, help to carry its banner on to final victory.

Workingmen! Patronize Your Press!

BAD TIMES, THEIR CAUSE AND CURE.

Fellow Workers, Read, Think and Act!

Machinery sleeps or rests where it works. It needs no boarding house, no beer or cigars; it doesn't ride a bicycle or read a newspaper. It goes to no church, theatre or other place of amusement. It buys neither books, shoes, clothes, hats, furniture nor carpets, but it makes all of these. It has no use for the butcher, baker, grocer, barber, shoeblick or florist. It eats neither candy nor ice cream. Yet it throws millions of people out of employment, reduces the wages of those working, and thus deprives all wage-workers of the ability to obtain what they need and drives hundreds to commit suicide. Thousands are annually killed by it. It keeps the toiling millions in a state of chronic starvation and will continue to do so just so long as it is owned and used for private gain. The only remedy is the public ownership and use, for the benefit of all, of land, mines, forests and all available forces of nature, railroads, canals, telegraphs, telephones and all means of production, transportation and distribution, as advocated by the Socialist Labor Party. For this party every workingman should vote at the coming election and at once and for all time put an end to this present system of injustice and starvation.

Think of it! Men shooting themselves and exclaiming as they die, "No work! No work!" Men begging for work and their wives and children starving in this land of plenty. People starving because there is too much food! Naked, because there is too much clothing! Homeless, because there are too many houses! All this in a land where men have the power in their own hands to change this present system of plunder, injustice and starvation to one of peace, justice, plenty and happiness by establishing the CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH, not by gun, bayonet or bomb; but by the peaceful, powerful BALLOT.

To oppose SOCIALISM is to oppose justice, peace, prosperity and happiness, for SOCIALISM means all that is good, honorable and just.

Workingmen! Patronize Your Press!

What Socialists Want.

Every human being to be well housed, clothed, fed and educated.

The adoption of a social and industrial system that will put an end to profit, interest, rent and all forms of usury.

Land, water, machinery, all the means of production and distribution, and all the available forces of nature to be owned by and operated for the benefit of the whole people.

The gradual elimination, and finally the abolition, of all useless and unproductive toil.

The work day to be as short as the needs of the people will permit—about four hours a day, if possible.

Every person of suitable age, and physical and mental ability, must work or starve. "He that will not work shall not eat"

No Child Labor.

Every one to receive the full value of his or her labor.

A higher standard of living, and a higher plane of morals as a result, thus securing enjoyment for all.

These reforms to be achieved by agitation, education, organization and the intelligent exercise of the BALLOT!

The above is a brief summary of the measures to be accomplished to secure the establishment of the CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH.

The most important thing is to vote for the ticket of the Socialist Labor Party. If you do not, then cease to prate about hard times. They are the natural result of the iniquitous, miserable, social and industrial system under which you live. Do not whine, beg or threaten. VOTE! Vote it out of existence.

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