



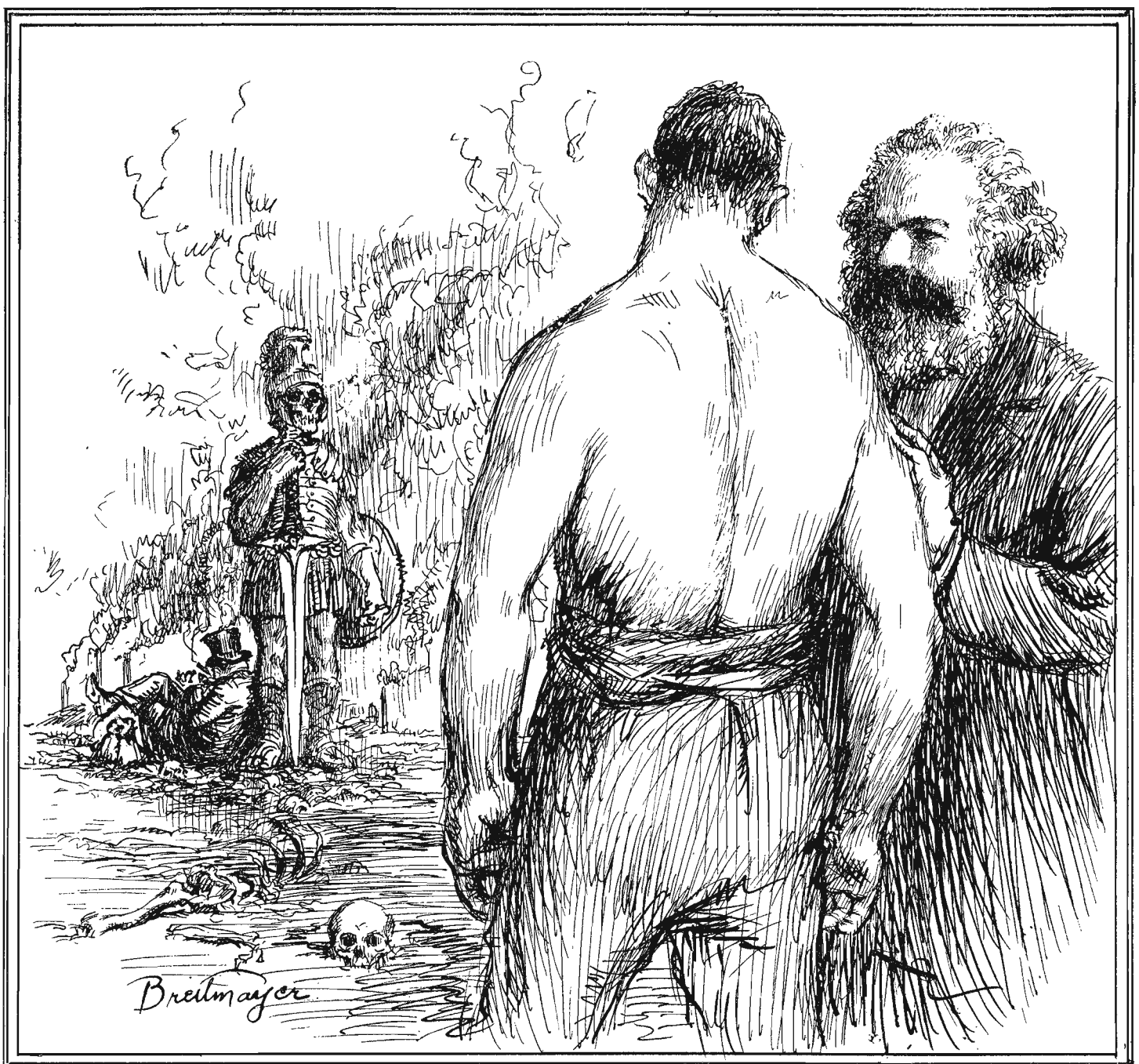
THE PROLETARIAN

A Journal of International Socialism.

Vol. II. No. 4

AUGUST, 1919

Price Ten Cents



“One Stroke of Thy Strong Arm, O Labor”

SPARTACAN SPARKS

Pop Heddon says: True patriotism is to love, honor and obey your master. If you don't some other man will, and you will be put in jail.

* * *

"Priests strike for more pay."

We still don't see the necessity for this. Couldn't this be obtained more easily by praying for it?

* * *

Sammy Gompers has now entered into competition with other organizations to obtain something by using "Bolshevism" as the bogeyman.

* * *

"Congress to crush Bolshevism. \$2,500,000 appropriated for that purpose."

Dirt cheap. If properly approached, undoubtedly Kolchak will donate a few kopecks to the fund. Maybe the Czar, too, if he were still with us, would contribute his share.

* * *

"More Packer tricks bared." Newspaper headline.

"If the packers want a fight, they will get it, says Senator Kenyon.

Be careful, Senator. These are perilous times. Remember what our old friend, Bill Shakespeare, said:

"The truth you speak, doth lack some gentleness, and time to speak it in;

You rub the sore, when you should bring the plaster."

* * *

Superintendent of Detroit Police Department says he relies upon the good sense of the patrolmen to break up their union.

You mean "lack of sense," don't you, Mr. Superintendent?

* * *

Sammy Gompers says that taking their booze away is making Bolsheviks out of the formerly contented wage slaves.

He means when they are sober they can think clearly enough to realize their economic condition.

"Mr. Kenyon said the packers are trying to debauch the press; that they are printing advertisements at enormous expense in an attempt to sway editorial opinion." "Thank God," he said, "there are some newspapers that cannot be bought."

Come now, Senator, don't be bashful, give us the names of these newspapers.

* * *

Reading the foolish press campaign now being waged against Socialism, makes us think that these gentlemen believe with Shakespeare, "For all the rest, they'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk." However, we would advise them in the words of the same author, "But fish not with this melancholy bait."

* * *

"Czecho-Slovak priests want right to marry."

What are they trying to do? Lower the profession by becoming human?

THE PROLETARIAN

Published Monthly at

174 Michigan Avenue

The Proletarian is the official paper of the Proletarian University of America and has the endorsement of Local Wayne County (Detroit) and of the Socialist Party of Michigan.

Subscription one dollar a year; single copies ten cents. Rates to dealers on application.

No advertising matter accepted.

Make checks and money orders payable to The Proletarian Publishing Company.



"Negro is lynched in public square."

Such is democracy in Texas.

* * *

"Lenine regime again totters."

Some day he will fall and hit somebody, if the newspapers are not careful.

* * *

"Britain under revolt cloud."

Next!

We respectfully submit to the two dominant political parties for their presidential candidate that sterling patriot, that loyal and distinguished American, "Hardboiled" Smith.

At any rate, he should get his D. S. O.

* * *

"King George seeks honor to bestow on Premier."

Nero fiddled while Rome burned, but it is stated on good authority that Nero at that particular moment had really nothing else to do, but at that, music is more soothing than having a few parasites pin medals on each other.

* * *

"Labor actions are suicidal." Dr. E. J. Dillon.

Yes, Doctor, sometimes even suicide is preferable to slavery.

* * *

Washington Inquiry Hints Mexican Intervention—News Item.

What's this? Is there some Democracy down there that needs saving?

O, bless your heart, no, it's oil wells this time.

* * *

We hear (from Paris) that the Hungarian Communist Government is crumbling, the Red Guards are deserting to the bankers, and for the 48th time Bela Kun has fled the frontier.

THE PROLETARIAN

Vol. II

AUGUST, 1919

No. 4

Confusionists and Confusionism

Oakley C. Johnson

A Confusionist may be defined as "a good Socialist who isn't yet quite clear as to what Socialism is." That is to say, he has excellent possibilities of becoming a thoroughly class-conscious and scientific Socialist,—but, until he learns certain fundamentals, he is a menace to his fellow proletarians, for it is the muddled section of the proletariat that throws its support to the Scheidemanns and Germers when a crisis comes. A "yellow" Socialist is not necessarily a coward; it is understanding, rather than courage, that he lacks.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Confusionists is an inability to distinguish between revolutionary and non-revolutionary organizations and programs, between class-conscious Socialism and compromise "radicalism." He throws his support, both financial and otherwise, to every pseudo-"revolutionary" movement that comes along. It would be interesting, and perhaps valuable, to compile a sort of "rogue's gallery" of proletarian mis-leaders that have arisen in the past, and have stormed and sawed their idiotic way through the social atmosphere. Among these are such purely capitalistic organizations as the "Committee of Forty-eight," which openly warns capitalism that reform is necessary to avert a revolution; the "Church Peace Federation," which always stands for peace except in case of a "war for democracy;" the "Alliance for World Democracy" (whatever that is); and the "Non-Partisan League," a mere petty-bourgeois organization fighting, NOT the capitalist system, but the BIG capitalists. Then there are the "People's Council" and the "American Union Against Militarism," which are bravely struggling to preserve our "constitutional liberties"! More recently there has appeared the "Political Amnesty League" to take its turn as beneficiary of the bounty of working-class confusionism. And now comes Barbusse, through an open letter in a "liberal" magazine, calling for an alliance of the "Fighting Intelligentsia of the World." Fighting Intelligentsia! Isn't that a challenge to the Proletariat of all countries?

The difficulty with all these organizations is that they are not revolutionary. Their avowed purpose in every case is something different from the overthrow of the capitalist system—and no organization can properly style itself "revolutionary" which has not this as its sole aim.

Another and somewhat different manifestation of Confusionism appears in a certain class of emotional "reds," who flare up at the mention of "mere" Political Action, declaring that only direct action, economic action, "action on the job," is effective in the class struggle. Now the confusion here lies in two facts: first, they do not distinguish between political action in the Marxian sense and that particular kind of political action known as parliamentary action; and, second, they are blind to the fact that the I. W. W., the organization ostensibly so much opposed to polit-

ical action, actually uses it. This organization uses political action in several indirect ways. Its members relied on Congresswoman Rankin and Senator La-Follette to defend them in Congress, to get all possible concessions in a legislative way. This is not only political, but actually parliamentary, action. Again, they engage lawyers to defend them in the courts; this is not "direct action" by any means; it is simply a recognition of the fact that the political power of capitalism is a very real power, and must be met. Still more, the I. W. W. are the foremost supporters of the Workmen's Defense Societies, the Political Amnesty League, etc., etc. Now this simply means that the I. W. W. are using these organizations as their mediums of political action, while they profess to dispise political action! And the worst of it is that such political action is purely opportunistic and reformistic, not in any sense revolutionary!

Not only have Socialists shown their Confusionist leanings in their attitude toward outside organizations such as those discussed above, but they have written the same muddled dope into their own platforms, and published them to the world as "Socialism"! Witness the following, taken from the long-winded "Congressional Platform" of 1918, a gem of Confusionism produced by those S. P. A. grandsires who expelled the only red state in the national organization. This historic (!) document demands that "the merit system of appointment to civil service be extended to every plant or industry as it is taken over by the government;" that the "initiative and referendum" be applied; that there be "self-government for the District of Columbia;" that there be collected "an excess profits tax of 100%;" that there be a "more adequate corporation tax;" etc., etc., ad infinitum, ad nauseam, is there anything revolutionary in such "demands"? Every single point could be put into operation by a far-sighted progressive capitalist party.

But this Confusionistic platform was drawn up almost a year ago. Is there still evidence of the same trouble? Note the following "resolutions" by a "left wing" local which, while it cheers the Bolsheviks, is still capable of saying—

"Resolved, That the working people of———join the workers of the world in making the following demands:

That the Espionage Law be declared unconstitutional—;

That the rights of free speech, free press, and free assemblage be restored to the people; etc."

Now, why shouldn't an Espionage Law be compatible with a capitalist constitution? The myth of "unconstitutionality" is a poor substitute for Socialist principles. Socialists must "resolve" on more than this. Marx dealt with this same Confusionistic perverseness, when he criticised the proposed Gotha

Platform of 1875. Here is what he said as to the coming of Socialism:

"Between the Capitalist and the Communist systems of society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. This corresponds to a political transition period, whose state can be nothing else but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

Having made this point, Marx goes on to point out the absurdities of the Gotha Platform:

"But the platform applies neither to the latter, nor to the future state organization of Communist society.

Its political demands contain nothing but the old democratic litany that the whole world knows: 'universal suffrage,' 'direct legislation,' 'administration of justice by the people,' 'arming of the nation,' etc. They are a mere echo of the middle class People's Party, of the League for Freedom and Peace; they are all demands that, so far as they are not of an exaggerated phantastic conception, are realized now. Only the state, in which they are found, is not situated within the boundary lines of the German Empire, but in Switzerland, the United States, etc."

Might not this be a direct expose of our national Confusionist Executive Committee? Indeed, a Socialist Party must take an entirely different position from that of reformism. But in so doing, they must still avoid Confusionism. Note, for example, the following from the Left Wing Manifesto (The Revolutionary Age, July 5, 1919):

"Revolutionary Socialism, accordingly, recognizes that the supreme form of proletarian political action is the political mass strike."

Ahem! The SUPREME form? Why not call armed insurrection the "supreme" form, so long as mass action occupies the center of attention? One kind of tactics may be the "supreme" kind at one stage of the game, and an entirely different kind at another stage. It is absurd to call strikes, even political strikes, the form of tactics upon which a Socialist Party, organized for political action, should concentrate its energies. Surely a time will come when the mere passive with-holding of labor power will be insufficient, when positive action on the part of the proletariat will be necessary in the seizure of political power.

Perhaps, after all, ordinary parliamentary action — at present so despised by our excited comrades of the "left" — may function for a considerable time as the "supreme" form of political action. Anyhow, Engels, who is endorsed by the Communist International in the opening pages of their Manifesto, held this position, for he said (Introduction to Marx's "Class Struggles in France," written in 1895) the German workingmen "had shown their comrades of all countries a new weapon, and one of the keenest, in showing them how to use the ballot."

To advocate mass action in the United States without qualification as to time or character is absurd. The Moscow Manifesto specifically states that it is the "revolutionary era" which calls for mass action of an armed sort, and the history of the Bolshevik accession to power proves that they, at least, recognized the futility of mass action BEFORE securing control of the Soviets. So long as mass action means nothing more than a vague notion of strikes and street fights, it cannot be seriously advocated by Socialists as a means of securing control of the political state. Engels himself says, speaking of proletarian emanci-

pation (Socialism, Utopian and Scientific), "To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific Socialism." Education of the proletariat, then, is the necessary preliminary to any sort of efficient action. Mass action, of course, is easier, for it doesn't require much thinking; but the revolution is not going to be easy.

This work of education can adequately be done only by a clear, scientific Socialist Party. High hopes center now on the proposed Communist Party soon to be organized. But even in their call we note one or two statements such as "The fundamental means of the struggle for power is the mass action of the proletariat, etc." This is a bit obscure if intended as a guide to practical tactics. Let us hope that intensive discussion will clarify matters to such a degree that the Communist Party platform, when finally adopted, will be free from too much of what Left Wing Confusionists style "supreme" proletarian tactics.

The best remedy for the whole situation is more intensive study of Marx, Engels, and the other classic writers on Socialism. As Pannekoek says, Marxism is a powerful weapon in the hands of the proletariat. We need not only emotional "reds," but scientific "reds;" not only courage to go ahead, but clear vision to see the way.

Tightening the Line of the Class Struggle

The keen student of present day affairs gets no little amusement from the frantic efforts of bourgeois apologists to "reconcile capital and labor." Never before have there been so many philanthropic enterprises, so many "workers' welfare" associations, so many profit-sharing plans, and so many schemes for allowing laborers to have "representation" on the boards of control of large industrial corporations. Never before have so many preachers talked of "identity of interests," so many writers appealed for "democratic toleration" of each by the other. And never before have so many politicians voiced in the legislatures loud demands for "fair dealing" to the working man, reduction of the high cost of living, investigation of unemployment, and a thousand and one other pet schemes of "progressive" legislation.

And all this while the high cost of living goes higher, unemployment grows apace, strikes multiply, court injunctions issue in a steady stream, and workers are haled to prison on every hand. So the class war goes merrily on.

In and through all this we find a rapid growth toward class consciousness, and a more and more definite alignment of class against class. The tense anxiety of those who beg for harmony between workers and capitalists proves in itself that they are crying "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.

What else can be the meaning of the increase in the number and size of labor unions, and their extension into fields hitherto considered hopelessly ex-

empt? The announcement of a washerwoman's union the other day may very likely have been greeted with laughter by the smug and oily bourgeoisie. But not so inconsequential are the efforts of the postal employes to unite in some sort of way for the protection of their interests. Public school teachers, too, show faint signs of a nascent class instinct; witness the case of the Chicago teachers, for example. Even such college professors as Veblen and Beard exhibit the same trend, however unconsciously, in their tirades against the "hire learning in America." The constant setting up of barricades means nothing if not the presence of enemies, and the multiplication of craft, industrial and professional unions indicates a mighty tightening of the lines of the class struggle.

In this connection the recent organization of a policeman's union in Detroit is very significant. Whether

this particular attempt is broken up or not is of comparatively small importance. The great point is that the thought of class interest has penetrated the skulls of a few among those whose position has been that of unconscious traitors to their class. Not that policemen are going to turn Socialists, or protect strikers against the courts, or anything like that! The point is that even the hirelings of Capitalism are becoming aware that "identity of interests" is a myth not only for industrial workers but in their own case also. Should they go a step further and become aware also of the fact of exploitation, there might be chance of success in pointing out to them their "identity of interests" with all those whom capitalism exploits,—the International Proletariat.

O. C.

Art and Revolution

Journalists, authors, professors, reformers, and a host of sincere people who are subject to varying degrees of sentimentality, quite frequently lay stress upon the status of art in our present social order. These well-meaning folk, as a rule, decline the laurels of emotionalism—they profess, in most cases, to be practical, nay, even scientific, in their analyses of modern social conditions. There are some who acclaim Art the ultimate hope for the world's salvation. Others look upon the artist with rebellious tendencies as a great factor in the construction of "Our New World." A half-score of current periodicals endeavor to mix Art into the magic potions they brew for the avowed purpose of remaking human society. But to one who views all things from the standpoint of the materialistic conception of history, the fundamental weakness of such theories is quite apparent on the surface.

In the first place, Art is not a revolutionary instrument. Its existence and its forms, like those of all other social institutions, are dependent upon the material factors by which mankind procures its livelihood. Art does not make social conditions; it grows out of and reflects them. In reviewing the history of Man, which is primarily the history of his economic progress from Savagery to our present state of Civilization, we find that the development of Art has followed the development of industry. This applies as well to modern society as to all other historical periods.

Heinrich Heine, the poet, while bitterly hostile towards the institutions of his time, looked with misgivings into the future: he thought he saw the proletariat swiftly rising to power in his own day; and he feared his idols and shrines of beauty were sure to suffer irreparably at the hardened hands of the uncultured workers. Had Heine been a scientist, like Karl Marx, for instance, he would not only have seen the inevitability of proletarian domination, but he would also have recognized the necessity for the further development of the bourgeois system, which had scarcely taken root at that time; and his fears for the future of Art would certainly have given place to worse fears. For while it is true that the proletariat must rear a new social structure, and in both the process

of tearing down the ruined shell of the old order and the building up of the new, the gods of artist and poet may suffer, yet to what degree of degeneration could Art be subjected that would prove worse than its fate has been under the development of Capitalism?

The very nature of the capitalist system during its more modern stages of development, precluded any opportunity for the production of Art. It cannot be said, however, that the capitalist class has ever consciously or purposely discouraged it. We must remember that it was during the early period of the bourgeois order that so many of the famous poets, novelists, painters, musicians, and dramatists flourished. But why did not this continue? Why have there been so few, if any, geniuses existing in the last decade? Surely not because Capitalism despised Art and prohibited its creation. No; for the capitalist class would encourage the production of anything as long as it meant profit.

The fact is, the capitalist class had nothing to do with the matter at all. The fundamental cause of the decline of Art in all its forms has been the process of capitalistic production itself. The materialistic conception applies here as it does to all other social phenomena. The methods by which people obtain their living determine their every activity, their ideas, tastes, culture, their mental development in general. And the machine process has wiped out all the gossamer dreams of the poets, painters, musicians, and the rest of the emotional fraternity. Capitalism creates neither artists nor a popular demand for them and their productions—and thus it is, Art suffers. The Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels well points this out: "The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations * * * has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous cash payment. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy waters of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value * * * The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe."

Artists, as a social group, are not revolutionists. They may be perfectly sincere rebels against the existing order. Such were Heine, Shelley, Burns, Hugo, and many others in their time. But rebels may be far removed from revolutionary potency. A rebel artist is anti-feudal, anti-capitalist, anti-something-or-other, whatever the case may be. He holds that anti-position because he sees the wretched state of affairs due to the particular system under which he exists. The revolutionist is not anti-this or anti-that. He is no "anti" at all. He merely understands the forces that are at work constantly bringing about social changes. He views human society as an organic body, subject to laws of mutability, the same as all other organisms. His function is to understand, his task to educate and lay the intellectual foundation for the inevitable new society, in order to ward off as far as possible the dangers of reaction and chaos that generally accompany such changes.

In short, the artist simply wastes his time when he endeavors to point out all the evils of a system, thinking that the dissemination of these hostile ideas will help destroy the monster. Were the "rebellious spirit" of an artist in any way effective towards hastening the time of revolutionary transformation, then indeed Shelley alone would have overturned the young Behemoth, Capitalism, while yet it was scarcely weaned from the breast of its feudal mother. A social order falls when it can no longer function—not sooner. The masses will not rise because the order is ugly, or even oppressive. History proves that. The most fruitful course of action that can be followed is undoubtedly

that which seeks to spread a knowledge of the fundamental laws that govern the universe. These laws apply to human society as well as to all other phenomena; and the social relations being of the highest importance to Man, it follows that he should understand them first of all.

It cannot be said that our foremost liberal and radical journals, such as the New Republic, the Dial, the Nation, the Liberator, and others, are revolutionary. They do not teach science—they offer no opportunity for an understanding of society and its laws of development. As current news publications they are perhaps in the front rank. Of course, it is certain that their editors aspire to something higher than this classification, and they undoubtedly would resent the inference that they simply head that long, gloomy procession of news-broilers and temporary-comment moulders. Nevertheless, it is true. The world today is undergoing rapid changes. Social revolution in its unclothed reality is taking place. Only those who understand the causes and processes of such historical changes can hope to accomplish something in the stupendous task of rebuilding society. In this work there is no room for sentimental efforts, however well-meaning they might be. Novels, poetry, paintings, sculpture, music, drama—none are necessary to the social revolution. Science, unemotional, unswerving, deliberate and true, will alone aid the struggling proletariat in its final combat with the forces of reaction and darkness.

KARL ROMAINE.

The Socialist Forum

From the number of queries sent in during the past month The Socialist Forum must have aroused considerable interest among our readers. Each month we will endeavor to clear up some of the knotty points which arise wherever there are students of Socialism. Owing to lack of space we can not guarantee to answer all questions received. In reply to Herbert J. Williams of Mt. Hope, Kansas, and others who want more light on the mystery of money, we will have a complete article on this subject in the near future.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POWER.

"D. E. B.," writing from Seattle, confesses that he is all balled up by the use of the terms "Economic Power" and "Political Power," which he hears bandied about by I. W. W., W. I. U., and other radicals there. Although our industrial union friends talk much about the workers using their economic power they do not seem to understand just what those words mean.

Economic power is the power of man over nature. In modern society this power is in the hands of the capitalist class. They have control over the social machinery of production; the natural resources, the mills, mines, factories, and railroads. Through this control, they are able to dictate the conditions under which the working class is forced to labor. The wage workers have no economic power, they are not able to engage in productive labor, or to procure the means of subsistence, in any other way than by selling their labor power to the capitalists.

The economic power of the capitalists (their control over the means of life), is secured to them by their domination of the Political State. Political Power is the power of one class over another, the power of coercion. The capitalists use this power to regulate the affairs of society in their own interests. If the workers attempt to use what they fondly imagine is their economic power they are forced into subjection by the armed forces of the State.

As long as this power is in the hands of the capitalist class all effort of the workers to gain their emancipation must end in failure. They must leave the shibboleths of economic power, and industrial might, and organize for the first step—the capture of political power.

DOES THE PIECE-WORKER SELL LABOR POWER?

A "Yipsel" in Chicago says it appears to him "that when a man is on piece work he is not selling labor-power but labor." In a long letter he attempts to prove it. He says: "A worker on time work sells his labor-power to the capitalist for a certain period, so many hours, a day or a week; but a piece worker does not receive payment for time spent in a factory, but according to the labor performed. Therefore he sells his labor." Our young correspondent is wrong. What happens when a man works for wages is this, he turns the control of his labor-power, his ability to work, his mental and physical energy, over to the capitalist for

a certain time, if on day work, or for the sake of a definite labor service, if on piece work. Whether on piece work or day work the control of his labor power is turned over to the capitalist. The wage worker has little or no voice regarding the conditions under which he is compelled to labor. He must enter and leave the factory at the hours prescribed by the boss. He must perform certain tasks in certain particular ways according to the rules laid down by the boss. He has no control over his labor-power except to apply it under the conditions laid down by modern industry, or withhold it if he can live without working. The essential conditions of his slavery are not altered by working at piece work. In piece work the rate of exploitation is generally higher than on day work, that is to say, the difference between the value of what he produces and what he receives in wages is greater in piece work than in day work.

In the long run piece wages are determined in the same manner as time wages, that is, by the value of the means of subsistence necessary to keep the class of laborers in a fit condition for further exploitation. The advantage lies entirely with the capitalist. He does not have to drive the piece worker—he will drive himself. All the boss has to do is to see that the work produced is up to the standard laid down in that particular shop. If the piece worker cannot keep up to the standard he soon finds himself on the street in the same manner as the time worker who cannot keep up to the average in the particular industry in which he happens to be working.

SHOULD SOCIALISTS DEMAND SHORTER HOURS?

A friend from Pittsburg who has been a member of a labor union for fifteen years, asks why should Socialists refuse to fight for shorter hours? He says "if the whole of the working class had an eight hour day they could devote more time and energy to Socialism. I do not see any harm in having a demand for eight hours or six hours in the Socialist platform." Our correspondent is right in the first part of his statement, no Socialist would be so foolish as to refuse shorter hours or any other amelioration of present conditions. Socialists are not only working for a revolutionary change in society, but the majority of them are also sellers of a commodity—labor-power. As sellers of this commodity they strive for as good a condition of sale as they can possibly get. Under modern industry Socialists as well as other workers are compelled to combine together in order to fight the encroachments of capital and to force further concessions. As Marx says in *Value, Price and Profit*: "By cowardly giving way in their everyday struggle with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiation of any larger movement." It is not necessary for a man to be a Socialist to engage in this struggle, in fact the majority are not. This condition makes it desirable to fight the everyday struggle over the sale of labor-power in the organizations formed for that purpose.

Socialists, as such, have a vastly different object than that discussed above. They are out for a complete transformation of social relations. The majority of union men through their ignorance of society will not engage in such a revolutionary struggle. To incorporate in a Socialist platform a demand for shorter hours or higher wages is to confuse the issue. Socialists should belong to the union in whatever indus-

try they happen to be working in. They should at all times endeavor to point out the limitations of the struggle over wages. While it is highly desirable to make union men Socialists there are limits to what can be done inside unions. The members are usually so much engrossed in the petty details of job conditions as to furnish little opportunity for real educational work.

ARE SOCIALISTS IDEALISTS?

A correspondent from New York is very much puzzled over the question of materialism, ideals and Socialism. He says: "I am continually reading in the *Liberator* and similar papers that certain Socialists are filled with splendid idealism. I myself think that Socialists have high ideals; but I also learn that Marx was a materialist and Marxian Socialism is called materialistic."

Our correspondent is confused by the use of the certain terms in everyday life and their different meaning when used in some particular field of science. In studying Socialism it is most important that we first get a good grasp of the terms used. To the man on the street an idealist is one who strives to attain some high ideal. He is supposed to ignore his own immediate interests and work for some object for the good of humanity. In this sense of the word, Socialists are Idealists, as they have an ideal to work for, namely: A better state of society. In working for this ideal, however, Socialists adhere to a certain form of philosophy, and in philosophy idealism has an entirely different meaning than that given above. An idealistic philosopher is one who maintains that the mind, the will, and the so-called spiritual qualities are the only real things, and the material things of the universe the mere shadow of the mind. The mind is supposed to be the seat of reason from which all our ideas spring. In its essence idealism is the deification of the idea; all things around us are the results of ideas. The "great-man" is the result of his "great ideas." The great nation is the result of its great men and their great ideas.

The idealist philosophers also hold that Nature and Humanity must be regulated by principles. Engles in *Landmarks*, page 55, sums up the Idealist Philosophy thusly:

"Principles are not the starting point of investigation but the conclusion of it. They are not to be applied to nature and history but are derived from them. Nature and Humanity are not steered by principles, but principles are, on the other hand, only correct so far as they correspond with nature and history. That is just the materialistic conception of the matter, and the opposite, is the idealistic conception, it turns things upside down and constructs a real world out of the world of thought, arrangements, plans and categories existing from everlasting before the world, just like Hegelianism."

The mind is a natural object that can only function in contact with suitable material. With our five senses we obtain impressions of the outside world which are elaborated into ideas, theories and conceptions by the brain. It is this sense of the word that Socialists are materialists. Socialism is not the result of some great idea thought out by a master mind, but is the logical outcome of the evolution of society. Our Socialist ideas are obtained from our experience of capitalist society, therefore it is materialistic.

International Notes

By John Keracher

Ireland A land of turmoil and rebellion for centuries, a thorn in the flesh of British imperial rule, Ireland has come to the front in many a historic crisis with valiant but unsuccessful attempts to cast off the British yoke and establish national independence. In the early days of the war, when voluntary enlistment was the means of recruiting the army, the Irish flocked to the colors in the same manner as the other peoples and races that make up John Bull's empire. Because of this "good behaviour" they were assured that they would be granted home rule. The Irish were elated; "long looked for come at last," said one of their spokesmen. But the fortunes of war and politics proved false once again to the inhabitants of Paddy's land, and drove them into a state of rebellion.

The circumstances that raised the ire of the Irish is interesting to recall at this time, as their new Messiah, Eamon De Valera, is touring this country. In the dark and stormy days of the war when the "voluntary" system would no longer yield the necessary cannon fodder, victory after victory for the Teutons, forced the British Government to resort to conscription. This caused the Irish to get their fighting blood up and to again beat the tocsin for a "free" Ireland. Conscription had always been looked upon askance by the British people. To saddle it upon the English, Scotch and Welsh, and exempt the Irish threatened to cause trouble. The military situation in Flanders was desperate, and the political one at home far from being serene. Yet the smooth politicians thought they could see a way of meeting the conscription crisis, by making the Irish swallow that bitter pill, sugar-coated in an Irish Home Rule Bill.

This "clever" stunt failed. A Home Rule Bill was introduced with the conscription joker in it, but the Nationalists repudiated it; they would not accept Home Rule that way. Many threats to conscript the Irish by force followed, and a condition almost akin to a state of war developed in the Emerald Isle. David Lloyd George, that smooth little Welshman, knowing their internal troubles, passed the buck to the Irish themselves, by giving them an opportunity to thrash out their age-long quarrels in a National Constitutional Convention. Although the squabble between the Ulsterites of the north and the Nationalists of the south did not dominate the situation, still it kept them dragging along until they discovered that they were working in a circle and getting nowhere, in fact, until England's darkest days were past.

In the meantime Sinn Fein had grown by leaps and bounds and the leaders of the movement controlled the Constitutional Convention. Again they proclaimed "The Irish Republic," with Professor Eamon De Valera as President. This militant leader of the Irish capitalist class was arrested and thrown into an English prison. Escaping, he made his way to Ireland and thence to America where he is now being lionized by Irish-American capitalists, priests and other enemies of the working class. At the Waldorf Astoria in New York City crowds of the "best people" flocked to meet him. Had this "immigrant" from Ireland been a

leader of a working class movement he would likely have been thrown into jail, or held for deportation like the "undesirable Russians"; but the valiant "President of Ireland" is immune from arrest, even though he might have landed in an irregular manner, for he is the friend of the high and mighty of the Irish race. It is their battles he has been fighting, it is their economic interests he champions.

Sinn Fein (ourselves alone), is the philosophic expression and movement of the Irish capitalists, seeking to exploit Irish labor direct, and according to their own interests, without any interference from English capital. Colonel Arthur Lynch of Pro-Boer fame, the man that led the Irish Brigade in the South African War against the British, says: "The Sinn Fein movement is being in great part run by young priests in the country, and they have introduced into it undue religious influence * * * at present also the education of the country is mainly in the hands of the priests, and the intellectual output of Ireland, especially in that great field of masculine exercise—science—is a disgrace to our national character."

Amidst all this where do the Irish workers stand? Most of them being extremely Nationalistic, like the workers of other countries, fall an easy prey to a movement that is helping their class enemies, the exploiters of labor. Not all of them are blind to this fact, and it is refreshing to read from a manifesto issued recently by The Revolutionary Socialist Party of Ireland, the following:

"The time has come when they (the workers) must fight for their own cause * * * for the emancipation of their class. The time has come when we must organize towards the establishment of our liberation from the wages system which exploits our human power to labor and produce wealth.

"If Ulster Unionism prevails there will still be an Irish working class. There will still remain an Irish master class, content to be masters of Irish human beings.

"Let us determine that we who produce all that is produced in Ireland—that we who make Ireland habitable and fertile, shall no longer yield the produce of our labor to the masters who whip us with the tyranny of wages. Let us resolve that we shall no longer 'build and another inhabit—sow and another reap' but that we shall make Ireland a Socialist Republic, wherein shall dwell no parasite nor profit-taker and all will contribute to the needs of all and the harmony of the commonwealth."

This sort of manifesto shows that the Irish workers are awaking to the fact that Sinn Fein or any other Nationalistic movement of a Bourgeois character, is not in their interest—but directly against it.

The Irish working class will only be able to get their freedom at the same time as the workers of the rest of Great Britain. They are of one class and by that token must in time, learn to stand together, against the common enemy, the British Bourgeoisie as a whole.

Russia In spite of the heavy handicap of the Allied blockade and the starvation brought on by such a policy, the Bolsheviki are holding out and making considerable progress on some of their military fronts.

The Roumanian Government on the south has been approached with regard to a settlement on that front. A truce has been declared and representatives of the Russian Government have gone on to the Roumanian Capital for the purpose of negotiating terms. It appears that the Reds are willing to concede control of Besarabia to the Roumanians if they will pledge to hold their front closed against General Denikine to prevent his retreat in that direction and to withhold supplies to his forces which have been menacing the southern advance of the Bolsheviki. Further to the east this Cossack leader has been compelled to retire before the advancing Reds who through a strategic move succeeded in landing troops from the Caspian Sea in the rear of the Denikine forces.

A dispatch from Major-General Ironside, the British commander-in-chief on the Archangel front, given out by the British Government on July 24th, tells of the Russian troops which were under his command going over to the Bolsheviki and handing over the town of Onega and the whole of that front to the Soviet forces. Onega is on the White Sea close by Archangel. With the Russian troops in mutiny against those who have come to "help" them, it is plain enough that there is no longer any excuse for the presence of Allied forces in northern Russia.

Moscow dispatches record the loss of Tarnapol in eastern Galicia to the Polish army that is fighting against the Ukrainian Red Guard and at the same time tells of gains made in the Poltava district of Ukraine by the Reds. What has become of Petlura, has he disappeared entirely, or is he fighting against Poles and Ukrainian Reds as well?

All things considered the advantages seem to be with the Soviet Government. The beautiful prophecies of the Bourgeoise, of the fall of Petrograd or the Lenine-Trotsky flight from Moscow, which according to the Press is always about to take place, still remains a wish that is father to the thought.

England Gigantic strikes, with practically the industrie of the country shut off, was the situation that confronted the British Government recently. The issue or issues were political ones, same as in France or Italy, but the strike movement seemed to be more widespread than in the two latter countries.

The Triple Alliance of Labor—railroad workers—transport workers and miners—have decided through their delegates at London, 217 to 11, against the permanent saddling of conscription on Britain, against further participation in the military campaigns in Russia and the intervention of military forces in labor disputes. The mine workers quit in such large numbers, taking with them for the first time in a strike, the pump hands, that the industries of England were practically paralyzed. The Government was obliged, in order to prevent the mines from being destroyed, to send sailors from the fleet to man the pumps and soldiers to protect them in their scab work. This is regarded by those in authority as a necessary evil, but a dangerous expedient, for fear of the sailors going over to the strikers. "Every hour that passes seems

to strengthen the hold of Bolshevik doctrines among the British proletariat," says a writer to the New York World.

The present Government is mistrusted by the masses on account of the many unfulfilled promises of the war period. A further cause for the embitterment of labor was the disclosure of a secret circular that was published some time ago in the Daily Herald. This circular was sent out from the War Office for purpose of learning if soldiers would be willing to act as scabs and if they would be "willing to parade for draft to overseas, especially to Russia?"

That labor is fighting mad with the present conditions can be gathered from the remarks of a correspondent on the ground: "I am in contact with labor leaders and most of them frankly admit the line of action pursued by the rank and file of the workmen is suicidal, but they confess their inability to alter it, because the men are wholly out of hand." This confession by the conservative leaders proves beyond a doubt the revolutionary impulse that is permeating the ranks of labor.

One thing is certain, the determined attitude taken up by British Labor has compelled the Government to concede certain of the industrial demands and also to pledge the withdrawal of the troops from Russia. Mr. Winston Churchill in answer to questions in the House of Commons said it was their intention to have all troops out of Russia before winter sets in. The action of organized labor together with the collapse of their offensive on the Murman Coast and the 200 mile retreat of Kolchak has brought about a combination of circumstances that has brought this desired result.

Mexico Now that the war is over and allied capitalist powers are triumphant the "light" of "publicity," and newspaper propaganda, is turned once again to the nearest stamping ground for capitalist development to the south of us. For several years past Mexico has been a land of great social unrest, with many revolutionary activities, more or less guerilla in their warring nature. So much is this the case that it is hard to find the economic basis for all of these conflicts. The average American regards Mexico as a land gone mad, and their frequent references to the country, shows quite clearly that Mr. average Yankee would regard it as a blessing in disguise, to Mexico itself, if Uncle Sam would take it over and make a few new Southern States out of it. Yet there is much to be said about the general conditions that does not redound to the credit of the United States or Great Britain. The hard feelings between the "greaser" and the "gringo" and the occasional firing over the border, has its basis in the class conflicts let loose with the introduction of capitalism (chiefly of the American variety) into the land of the Hacieando.

As long as Mexico retained its pastoral character, it truged along peaceably, as most backward nations do. When it was discovered, that under the pasture lands upon which the peons herded their domestic animals and tilled the soil in a primitive way, there were vast stores of mineral wealth, principally oil—trouble started.

The ways of capitalism with its almighty dollar are devious and intricate. The new methods of imperialism, according to the War Cyclopedia issued by The

Committee on Public Information, "aims at the acquisition by the capitalists of one State of the rights to loan money, build and operate railroads, work mines, and conduct any natural or trade monopoly of a profitable nature within the limits of another State. The authorization to conduct these monopolies are granted by the Government of the second State and are styled "concessions." This Government is supposed to retain its full sovereignty; actually it is more or less under the tutelage of the powers whose nationals hold the concessions. The new imperialism is especially provocative of war."

For several months leading newspapers have been carrying on propaganda for intervention in Mexico. If they have their way the country will soon be democratized. Congressman Gould of New York started the ball rolling by presenting a resolution calling for a joint committee of the House of Representatives and the Senate's Committee on Foreign Affairs, to investigate and report on the Mexican situation. As far back as February powerful capitalist dailies, such as the Evening Sun, were calling for intervention in Mexico by financial methods from the inside. If the Mexican Government was obdurate "then by overwhelming force of arms."

Most of the railroads, mines and oil wells are owned by powerful American and British capitalists who are naturally opposed to the Constitution adopted by the Carranza Government on January 31, 1917, especially the taxing of their property on the basis of the constitution. During the war these capitalists had to put up with the Mexican situation and pay their taxes, their own Governments being too busy with the European struggle; now their mouthpiece, the "public" press, is demanding action against the Carranza Government.

The glaring cold-shoulder attitude taken towards Mexico at the Peace Conference, contrasted strongly with the policy adopted towards Poland, Bohemia, and other born-in-America-Republics that were baptized at Paris, with professor and pianist presidents. This was no doubt largely due to the Mexican Constitution which provides that "The ownership of lands and waters within the limits of the national territory is vested originally in the Nation. * * * The Nation shall have at all times the right to impose on private property such limitations as the public interests shall demand, as well as the right to regulate the development of natural resources, which are susceptible of appropriation, in order to conserve them and equitably to distribute the public wealth."

It is the pressure of the above clause that the plunderbund fears. Taxation on their property might interfere with the hundreds of millions of dollars they are now raking out of the exploitation of Mexican Labor. Also the rights proclaimed by the government to regulate the development of natural resources, are no doubt regarded as an infringement upon their "concession rights," secured in many cases by bribery and corruption, through the former governments of Huerta, Madera and Diaz. In the oil fields two powerful interests dominate, Pearsons of England, and Standard Oil of America. Then there are railroads, cattle ranches, mines and public service corporations, most of which are owned by absentee capitalists, who refer to the new constitutional policy as "confiscatory."

Powerful organizations of capitalist interests are at work to force their will upon the Carranza Govern-

ment, such as "The Association of Oil Producers in Mexico," and the "Association for the Protection of American Rights in Mexico." This latter organization was formed last February, with J. P. Morgan as chairman, and made up of twenty international bankers, ten from America, five from France, and five from England. This powerful association of profit mongers served notice upon the Government at Washington, of its existence and purposes.

Since the formation of these bodies there has been an apparent organized propaganda for intervention in the press, which has become very vigorous within the last week. Most papers have editorially advocated immediate intervention. Henry F. Fletcher, the American ambassador to Mexico, has appeared in Washington before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and everything points to action of some sort. At the same time news comes to hand of the seizure of the American schooner Cape Horn, in Mexican waters, with munitions for revolutionists, while the head of General Aurelano Blanquet was exhibited to the public at Vera Cruz on April 16th. This "sad" piece of news was brought to New York by the secretary to the general manager of the Bank of London in Mexico City, who knew Blanquet well and recognized him easily.

About the beginning of April this "General" Aurelano Blanquet sailed from New York with men and money (it would be interesting to know who furnished the latter). He landed in the West Indies, chartered a vessel, reached Mexico and joined the counter revolutionists. From an office at 320 Broadway, daily bulletins were issued describing the progress of this "General," evidently the Carranza forces made short work of him if his head was on exhibition on April 16th.

All of these incidents and actions may ultimately lead to a clash with Mexico in which many workers' lives may be lost to insure the interests of American, French and English profiteers. On the other hand the Carranza Government may yield before the pressure. The interior troubles between different class interests, though almost overshadowed by absentee-capitalism and its aggressive policy, express themselves in the usual manner through strikes and lock-outs. The number of these strikes have increased so rapidly, that they have reached unusual proportions, quite recently. Then there is the land problem. Many of the Peons have gone on the warpath, under such leaders as Villa, rather than submit to the wage-slavery of the industries or the big ranches of the American Beef Barons.

In many respects the present economic development of Mexico resembles that of Russia before the Bolshevik revolution. As the Mexican Capitalist class is undeveloped, the country is being exploited by a higher developed capitalist class from without, in fact imperial capitalism is at work through its leases or franchises called "concessions." At this stage of development it is impossible to foresee what may happen. However, should the Carranza government resist, and the pressure of outside capitalism be strong enough, the political control of the weak ruling class may fall into the hands of the proletariat of the city and the peons of the country. As most of them are revolutionists, they may be inspired by the example of the Russian and Hungarian revolution, and set up a dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Revolutionary Political Action

The Road to Socialism

(Third Instalment)

This is the third of a series of articles dealing with the various proposed methods of working class activity toward emancipation. Each of the many panaceas offered as substitutes for revolutionary socialism will be examined and discussed in detail. The subject will be dealt with under the following headings:

1. *Why This Discussion?* 2. *The Purpose of Politics.* 3. *Socialist Political Action.* 4. *Education and Political Action.* 5. *Political Action and Its Opponents.* 6. *Political and Economic Action.* 7. *Our Revolutionary Reformers.* 8. *The General Strike.* 9. *Is Industrial Unionism the Better Way?* 10. *The Value of Mass Action.* 11. *The Lessons of Russia.* 12. *Dictatorship and the State.* 13. *The Situation Summed Up.*

THE EDITORS.

OUR REVOLUTIONARY REFORMERS.

It is not surprising that the direct actionist repudiates parliaments and politics. They expect to abolish unemployment under this system. The Revolutionary Age (of April 26, 1919), tells the Councils of the Unemployed to have an immediate demand. "Industry must be regulated to absorb the unemployed." They do not understand that unemployment cannot and will not be abolished whilst this system lasts. It is a corner stone of the labor market. They further demand that if factories shut down they shall be operated by unemployed councils. On the basis of the present system such demands are futile. If factories close down because they are over-stocked, who will buy the products when the unemployed operate the factories? They will only glut the market further. Whilst the capitalist mode of production prevails, economic laws will always operate to prevent a remedy for our sufferings.

S. J. Rutgers in the Revolutionary Age, March 28, 1919, demands political reforms such as insurance in the following:

"The fight for higher wages including the fight for a guarantee of such wages under all conditions of sickness, incapacity, and unemployment, therefore has to be supplemented by such demands as: taxes on capital and income only, confiscation of war profits, repudiation of national debts, etc. This means that even in the most elementary struggle to maintain life under the present system of exploitation, political action has to supplement economic action even if this political action has to be backed up by industrial action."

His conception of political action means fighting for taxes on capital and income. This idea of reform benefiting the workers while the capitalist controls is foolish. Taxes on capital means the capitalist will tax themselves and use the results to pay for wars, police, secret service, etc. Confiscation of war profits means that the armament manufacturers pay the taxes for the whole capitalist class. Taxation reforms do not concern the working class. Repudiation of national debts is ridiculous unless we expect the ruling class to dethrone the banking or financial interests. If they did repudiate their debts it would not help us. And when the workers get control and establish Socialism, such demands will be out of date.

The I. W. W. have similar dreams of reform under Capitalism. Their immediate demands are printed in The One Big Union monthly (November, 1918). "Complete elimination of unemployment by shortening the working hours to 5, 6 or 7 hours per day, as may be found necessary." They do not understand that along with the shortening of hours there goes an incentive to speeding up, greater division of labor, scientific appliances, better and more machinery. Unemployment cannot be abolished like that. Even in war time with a large army in the field, they brought in women and children and made boys into skilled mechanics almost over night. They would be far sounder in advocating a large standing army, but no reform can abolish unemployment. A reserve army of labor will always be the whip to subdue those who are exploited.

Another dream is demand number 5, "Lowering of prices." The Bourgeois notion of cheapness to get a cheap working class! Reforms to reduce prices give the idea that we are robbed as consumers, not as producers. In other words our "revolutionary" reformers misunderstand economics as they do politics.

THE GENERAL STRIKE

Half a century has gone since Bakunin and other Anarchists advocated the General Strike as an alternative to political action. It gained supporters in France and its chief apostle was Aristide Briand who afterwards climbed into power and ordered the frequent massacre of Strikers. Italy with its weak unions and anarchist groups was a favorite ground of propaganda. Spain, the center of physical force, tried the general strike during the republic in 1872 with dire results to the strikers. Their poor organization and lack of education was replaced by direct appeals to naked force against the massed power of Capital. Frederick Engels in his pamphlet, on the great Spanish general strike and riots of that time ("The Bakunist on Labor") has well exposed the inability of the general strike to replace Socialist political action. In our own time England has been the home of powerful strikers by industrial unions and combinations. The great miners strike of one million men in 1912 for an 8-hour day resulted in the awing of the strikers by a vast army and the passing of an 8-hour law which was so fraudulent that they were forced to strike against it. In this strike the capitalist system "reeled to verge of collapse" says Fraina, but it was the men who collapsed, not the masters. The Welsh strikers in the long bitter strike in 1909 were starved into submission after the armed forces had murdered several workmen. The two postal strikes in Paris in 1910 and the great railroad strike there in 1912 were mercilessly answered by the capitalists. They trained soldiers beforehand to handle mails and telegraphs and used the engineer corps to run trucks and armored cars. The workers were shot down and the railroad men were mobilized by Briand as conscripts and forced to return to their jobs as soldiers. All the leaders of the postal and railroad strike were dismissed and many imprisoned. After the long brave struggle of the Irish transport workers in 1913, the

"Irish Worker" of Dublin confessed that the armed forces of Britain had broken the strike. Economic pressure and the hopeless situation, however, had already driven many of the strikers back on the bosses' terms. Every large strike in the states has the same history. The armed forces together with the lack of food and education combined to break the struggle. The iron ore strike on the Mesaba range and the strike in Patterson several years ago, the terrible struggle of Lawrence strikers in the past and the tragic conflict in the Upper Michigan copper mines; these attempts of enslaved labor to improve its conditions were defeated by the united opposition of the courts, the police, the army, the economic helplessness of the men and the stupidity of their organized and unorganized fellow workers.

The strikes had to be declared off when secession through hunger and treachery made itself felt. Even in war time the strikes sometimes local and often assuming national proportions were opposed and ended by the supremacy of the masters.

The Seattle struggle was a good example of solidarity—for a few days. The 60,000 workers struck in sympathy to compel the Shipping Board to grant the metal workers demand. Within a few days they began returning to work after the most colossal demonstration of armed force which ever faced the workers of the Northwest. The metal workers later succumbed and many of the strike leaders lost their employment. What did the great struggle prove? The strike showed that it is ridiculous to think that all work must stop. The workers at any rate, must be fed. Papers of the workers must be published. Trains must be run to bring food and supplies.

The "New Solidarity" (I.W.W.) of Feb. 22, said that the strike demonstrated: "Lack of a proper commissary." "Failure to get out the Union Record the first day of the strike, failure to hold propaganda and strike meetings."

Joseph Pass on the Seattle Class Rebellion in the "New York Call" magazine (3/2/19) wrote from the battlefield that the struggle proved that no such general strike "can succeed unless a definite time is set for its termination."

The "Industrial Union News," the organ of the Workers International Industrial Union, admits the insufficiency of "direct" action in its comments on the Seattle Strike, in these words:

"This gigantic struggle has furthermore forcefully illustrated to us that labor must organize its forces on the political field, in a Socialist political party of labor, so it can elect candidates of its own class for political offices. Labor must get control of the State, that is of the machinery of government now held and used by and in the interest of the ruling class, it must seek to wrench from the capitalist class the military power that it will otherwise use against labor and make them powerless to resist when labor is ready to take over production. The Capitalist class, by controlling that State, holds absolute power over labor, a power they will not hesitate to use; that is another lesson taught and shown by the present general strike."

The Revolutionary Age says of the Seattle Strike, "The Strike was crushed by the betrayal of the conservative union officials and by the display of military force by the government." (May 24, 1919.)

Strikes and the power to strike is a valuable weapon in the armory of labor. Economic action is essential to maintain the workers' condition and get the best

terms for their labor power. To assert, however, that the general strike is the one weapon to achieve control of society, is foolish. The working class live in poverty when they work and face rapid starvation when they do not. When the local strikes just referred to take place the workers depend upon financial aid from those in work, just as the workers of Ireland looked to the employed men of England for money in their fight.

DeLeon says, "the working class can absolutely cease production and thereby starve out the capitalist class." (I. W. W. Convention 1905—P. 227). Let us examine this view.

When all the workers engage in a general strike the situation is entirely different. There are none in work to help out the strikers. All of them face the same privation. The workers without funds soon find themselves against the superior resources of the capitalists. A long general strike means the general starvation of the workers and if prolonged it means the paralysis of society. But we wish to control and reorganize society, not destroy it. We must continue running industry under the protection of the political machinery we capture from the capitalist class with the armed forces it includes. To strike and leave the factories and machinery in the hands of the capitalists is not the way to take possession of them. Some of the recent great strikes show the supreme necessity of getting control of political power and the armed forces. In Belfast, where industry was completely stopped, the workers found their weakness in the armed power of capital and the undeveloped state of the mass of workers.

The Revolutionary Age of March 1, 1919, quotes the Voice of Labor Dublin on the end of the Belfast strike. "If, however, it is proposed to institute a sustained general strike, until its declared objects were obtained, obvious limitations must be imposed on the extent of the stoppage of work. The community must be fed and therefore the food supplies must keep open shop. Reserve stocks of food are generally insufficient to feed the nation for more than a week ahead. Therefore the mills, abattoirs, and markets and the lines of transportation must not be interfered with."

On the Clyde the vigorous struggle for shorter hours came to an end when faced by the organized power of capitalism. The following account is from "New Solidarity" of April 12, 1919.

GLASGOW STRIKE BROKEN BY TROOPS

London—Issues of the Labor Leader, official organ of the Independent Labor Party, give a detailed account of how the Glasgow strike, all mention of which had dropped out of the American press, was broken up by force. It is charged that the police made an unprovoked attack upon men, women and children gathered in George Square after a procession which had brought the crowd there to hear the report of the strike committee in session with the Lord Provost at the City Chambers. The police started to club the multitude and taken unawares, they were driven off the square. Embittered by the treacherous attack the crowd rallied, hurled the police back off the square. Thereupon attack and counter attack followed each other until the labor leaders, already under arrest, managed to make themselves heard and prevailed upon the mass to march away to Glasgow Green. After that large numbers of the troops were poured into the city with machine guns and tanks and the strike was broken.

Trotsky points out (Our Revolution—p. 109) that "the capitalists can wait longer than labor in case of

interrupted production." The complete general strike in Sweden in 1909 demonstrated that and also the national strike in Italy in 1908. In both cases the great struggle ended in surrender by the workers.

A general strike may be a powerful weapon to force some concessions in a time of capital's extremity. But if the organization is strong, determined and well informed the very threat to strike will be sufficient. That workers have to strike at all is a sign of their weakness. A rapid strike at short notice, well prepared, may obtain its demands if the capitalists are hard pressed. If the demand is small they may concede it but the stronger the demand the more opposition. Leaders may be bought and legal machinery set in motion and if they judge the case warrants it, the capitalists will throw all the forces of repression into the scales. It depends upon the relative demands of labor and the position of the capitalists. Economic laws continue to grind and in spite of all victories gained the workers eventually remain in the same condition. Before the days of consolidation of capital and huge plants, labor could meet the masters on better terms. Now the evolution of industry has strengthened the position of capital against the workers. Marx shows this very well in *Value, Price and Profit* (Page 120).

"As to the limitation of the working day in England, as in all other countries, it has never been settled except by legislative interference. Without the working man's continuous pressure from without that interference would never have taken place. But at all events, the result was not to be attained by private settlement between the working men and the capitalists. This very necessity of general political action affords the proof that in its merely economic action capital is the stronger side."

The belief that the workers could starve out the capitalists during a general strike has been completely answered by the ablest exponent of the general strike idea, Arnold Roller, in his pamphlet "The Social General Strike":

"It is evident in such a struggle the ruling class would pay no sentimental regard to law and would simply seize the provisions of the proletariat for themselves and their army."

It is too early to say what the actual results of the strike will be upon the political entrenchment of capitalism, but with the Russian and Hungarian revolutionists pointing the way to action, the British Proletariat may follow the lead and strike the blow for self emancipation.

The latest manifestations of the general strike fever have been the Mooney Strike campaign and the Canadian One Big Union struggle. The original purpose of Mooney defence and release was forgotten in the building of a huge machine to influence organized labor and incidentally to give jobs to sundry apostles of economic action. Job hunting is not a pastime preserved for politicians alone. After gathering and spending huge sums in the strike campaign to down tools for five days from July 4, the great fiasco came and very few workmen left their jobs. Faked figures had been given out by the Strike Committee claiming 100 per cent support in the leading trades. The fact was that the Strike Committee and organizers wishing to show some results for their salaries, only consulted the sections of organized labor known to be sympathetic. And so though figures can't lie, liars can do their figuring. The general strike against the Mooney Strike showed that even for a political general

strike intensive education is essential to victory. Ignorance kills strikes as it paralyzes political action.

The great body of workers on July 4th had seen the mighty forces of the political machine. They realized that the long notice given to the bosses and the small economic resources of labor killed the strike before it was born. The Government had massed troops and instruments of death-dealing waiting for any trouble in every industrial centre of the country. The leaders of the strike knew it would be a fiasco, but said nothing and kept their official jobs while their dupes paid up. Meanwhile Mooney is in jail and kept there by the political power of the ruling class.

The metal workers' struggle in Winnipeg which resulted in the nation-wide demands on the Union Government by the One Big Union is the latest example of a great general strike. Fought under favorable conditions with the Canadian Unions breaking away from the Internationals—it seemed to many that victory was assured. The One Big Union and the strike was led by members and ex-members of the Socialist Party of Canada, and hence aroused Socialist interest throughout the Continent. But the strike is over, its leaders were imprisoned and under indictment, and members of The One Big Union are refused work. Socialist propaganda facilities are now harder to obtain. The ignorance of ex-soldiers combined with the political supremacy of the employers to break the struggle and the massacre in such street fights as occurred in Winnipeg was an object lesson in the shortcomings of mass action on the streets.

Bravely fought by many of the working class throughout Canada, intensely supported by Socialists there, the strike ended in abject surrender owing to the relative weakness of labor on the economic field compared to capital. Never in Canadian history had the political power of capital demonstrated its fundamental strength in the industrial conflict. While the breaking away of Canadian labor from the A. F. of L. is a healthy sign, the sudden agreement of The Socialist Party of Canada, Social Democratic Party, and Federated Labor Party officials is not an indication of class conscious action. Canada contains plenty of job hunters outside of the A. F. of L. unions, and some will support the new move for new jobs. The Socialist Party of Canada does not appear to officially endorse the One Big Union, but as it is led by S. P. of C. men, they must share the responsibility. The speeches made by S. P. of C. men at the Calgary One Big Union Convention would do well at an I. W. W. meeting, but do not belong to Socialists who realize the value of a revolutionary political party. The S. P. men at the convention fanned the flames of anti-political action which just now finds all too many and all too ignorant supporters.

JOHN O'LONDON.

CONCERNING BAD BOOKS

Bad books are the rank weeds of literature which extract nourishment from the corn and choke it. They monopolize the time, money, and attention which really belong to good books and their noble aims; they are written merely with a view to making money or procuring places. They are not only useless, but they do positive harm. Nine-tenths of the whole of our present literature aims solely at taking a few shillings out of the public's pocket, and to accomplish this, author, publisher, and reviewer have joined forces.—Arthur Schopenhauer.

Capitalist Sociology

LIKE many other firms, the American Car & Foundry Company of Detroit publishes a magazine for the edification of its employees, called "Our Social Magnet." And like other similar publications, it makes pretensions of dispensing sociological knowledge.

It is characteristic of such publications to grace their pages with a series of meaningless and childish mottoes, as if any real knowledge was to be gained from such sources. And, generally, there is a total lack of recognition of the social laws controlling human activities. One might read a paper of this kind indefinitely without ever learning from it even the most elementary principles of the science of society.

The publishers are, however, not quite so ignorant as they appear. If they do not know much about human evolution and social laws, they at least know on which side their bread is buttered, which, we regret to say, is more than the average worker knows, if, indeed, his bread is buttered at all, these days.

They know, for instance, that their income is derived from the skill and energy of the workers whom they employ. And they know also, that much depends upon the mental attitude of those workers—hence "Our Social Magnet."

The name of the "Magnet" is well selected. It is intended to draw the workers over to the side of the capitalists in whose interests it speaks. It is intended to create a capitalist ideology. It is not intended to teach the worker to think critically and for himself, and it is therefore not particular as to facts, or to their logical interpretation.

In this paper the owners of the American Car & Foundry Company present their case to the worker in a manner calculated to convince him that he is not giving his employers a "square deal," and to fill him with a desire to turn out more and better work for the same money and not to seek other employment at increased pay; in short, to create what our dear masters call "loyalty."

In an issue a few months back the "Magnet" deplores that:

"The average workingman has an inherent idea that not only the world owes him a living, but that any particular firm he elects to work for must give him not only a living wage, but something in addition to that."

It calls the labor turnover a "vexatious matter."

We are both surprised and shocked. Considering the humble mein of the worker these many years, how he has ever been ready to accept the teachings of his masters as divine truth, how he underbid his fellow workers for a job in times of unemployment, and how he has in many cases been unable to provide with the most arduous labor even the barest necessities of a decent existence for his wife, babies and himself, (for the accuracy of which statement we refer to the Final Report of the Federal Industrial Relations Commission)—considering all this, for him to now demand "something in addition" to a living wage is a most radical departure from his previous habits.

And we agree that such audacity and selfishness on the part of the workers is most annoying. It is queer that the workers should not understand that their natural and divinely appointed function on this planet is to pile up profits for their employers, or, in other words, to expand their employers' capital. This glorious object can only be attained by being satisfied with a living wage or less, (but no more) and receiving their reward in a future life. (The capitalists will take theirs here.)

Furthermore, when we workers see a chance to get a little more money at some other job, we should forget our own problem of trying to make ends meet and remember how "vexatious" our quitting would be to our master.

Some centuries ago when the forerunners of our present masters were in need of wage workers for their rapidly expanding industries and when many of the working class were still held in bondage by the Feudal Lords, these early capitalists became indignant at the slavery of the workers. They talked bravely for "freedom," meaning the right to work for whom one pleased and for what wages should be agreed upon, instead of being tied to the land and obliged to work so many days of the week for the lord. They fought for this principle, and, with the assistance of the workers, won it. They were not worried either as to how "vexatious" this might be to the lords.

But times have changed. Now it is the capitalists who are trying to retain their slaves. They are vexed with the constant coming and going of the workers who are ever on the lookout for that "good job" which they are going to get some day, and also under the constant necessity of increasing their wages to meet the depreciation of the dollar. Our masters' ideas have changed and it is now "correct" for the worker to remain with his present master. Our ideas must change too and be brought into accord with the latest approved capitalist pattern, otherwise we are "undesirable citizens."

When jobs are scarce, as they have become since the armistice was signed, this labor turnover problem is not so "vexatious." Our "boss" is then in a position to inform us that a cut in wages is due and that if we do not like it there are others who will fill our shoes. The ethics taught us by our masters depends upon the economic situation.

Perhaps, however, it would console the editors of the "Magnet" to know that the Industrial Relations Commission in its investigations a few years ago, found that the average yearly income of working class families was \$740, while the minimum cost of a decent living was estimated at \$700, showing that, on the average the workers have a fairly accurate conception of their proper place and worth, or at any rate, that there is an economic law that holds them in that place.

It is indeed to be hoped that nothing will occur to further disturb the equanimity of our "leaders of society." Their present fears appear to be groundless, for even if the workers have aspirations for something of a fuller life than being a mere machine for grinding out profits for others, yet their position,

as non-owners of industry, is scarcely favorable to the realization of such aims.

Before the workers can enjoy the fruits which modern production, with its marvelous speed, ought to bring to the whole of society, it will be necessary for society to own the industries in which production is carried on. Those who own enjoy. As knowledge must precede the attainment of such a state, the first task of the workers is to educate themselves and others to correct conceptions of society and social evolution. As a preliminary to this they must purge their minds of such rubbish as is taught by the capitalist class as the science of sociology.

L. B.

“Bolshevism”

By John Spargo

(Harper & Brothers, New York, \$1.50.)

John Spargo is a very clever man. He is not only clever, but also very useful—unfortunately not for the proletariat. The average worker, when he takes a reactionary position, usually does so because of his lack of understanding; but to accuse John Spargo of a lack of understanding would be a gross slander. John Spargo knows. He has demonstrated that in his book, called “Bolshevism”, published by Harper & Brothers of New York.

The book was written, as Spargo says, at the request of a native American, also a Socialist, a sincere Christian, who asked him to jot down a few of the things he learned about Russia, with the result that we have a book which has been acclaimed in the capitalist press, and has been “reviewed” by no less a person than William Howard Taft.

That the tactics of the Bolsheviks are distasteful to the Christian and democratic spirit which abides in the “soul” of John Spargo, goes without saying. That the “dictatorship of the proletariat” is something with which he has no sympathy, was well known by his course of action, and no book was needed to make that clear. That all his sympathies lie with Kerensky and his followers was demonstrated when he left the Socialist party.

He takes considerable pains to inculcate into the minds of the unsuspecting public that the book is an impartial study of conditions, and yet it is full of insinuations, but never any direct charges, and when he does make an accusation he apologizes for it.

Just to illustrate, on pp. 213-214, he says:

“The most painstaking and sympathetic study of the Russian revolution will not disclose any great ideal or principle, moral or political, underlying the distinctive Bolshevik agitation and program. * * * Instead of being fanatical idealists incapable of compromises and adjustments, the Bolsheviks have, from the very beginning, been loudly scornful of rigid and unbending idealism, have made numerous compromises, alliances and ‘political deals’ and have repeatedly shifted their ground in accordance with political expediency. * * * For the motto of Bolshevism we might well paraphrase the well-known line of Horace and make it read, ‘Get power, honestly if you can, if not—somehow or other.’”

Then on page 215 he says:

“It is not to be questioned that as Socialists and revolutionists they have been inspired by some of the great ideals common to all Socialists everywhere.”

Then again, on page 215:

“Power to be gained at any cost, and ruthlessly applied by the proletarian minority, is the basic principle of Bolshevism as a distinct form of revolutionary movement. Of course, the Bolshevik leaders sought this power for no sordid, self-aggrandizing ends; they are not self-seeking adventurers, as many would have us believe. They are sincerely and profoundly convinced that the goal of social and economic freedom and justice can be more easily attained by their method than by the method of democratic Socialism.”

He does not confine himself to making insinuations against the Bolsheviks, but takes a fling at those in this country who are in sympathy with them. He says, p. 217:

“Is there no logical sense in the average radical’s mind? Or can it be that, after all, the people who make up the Bolshevik following, and who are so much given to engaging in protest demonstrations of various kinds, are simply restless, unanchored spirits, for whom the stimulant and excitation of revolt is a necessity? How many are simply victims of subtle neurosis occasioned by sex derangements, by religious chaos, and similar causes?”

Lenine he condemns for not being consistent. Demanding a constituent assembly, and then when in power suppressing it. Demanding freedom of the press, and then choking off the free expressions of the people. Spargo admits that “they are not self-seeking adventurers, as many would have us believe,” but he does not like the idea of ploughing into Socialism via the dictatorship of the proletariat. He would like to go or drift into Socialism via democracy. John Spargo knows that the ultimate aim of the Bolsheviks is to bring about the co-operative commonwealth, which is a real democracy, and to accomplish that it is necessary to suppress all other classes, by whatever means possible, to end once for all time the antagonisms existing in society.

The one important and outstanding fact which men of Spargo’s type overlook is that the radical bourgeois element, the Social revolutionists, if you please, had captured and controlled the state, and failed to undertake the first necessary step towards Socialism, i. e., the suppression of the classes in society. The same tragedy is now going on in Germany. The so-called Socialists in control of the German state refuse to take the initial step, with the result that no approach to Socialism is being made.

There is one thing that needs enlightenment. One thing we would be pleased to have Spargo explain. On page 31 of his book, talking about the czarist government, he says:

“There had been organized in support of the government, and by its agents, bodies of so-called ‘patriots’. These were in the main recruited from the underworld, a very large number of them being criminals who were released from the prison for that reason. Officially known as the Association of the Russian People and the Association to Com-

bat the Revolution, these organizations were popularly nicknamed the Black Hundreds. Most of the members were paid directly by the government for their services, while others were rewarded with petty official positions."

Why condemn the state that organized the Black Hundreds, and praise the other that organized a sim-

ilar organization, known as the American Protective League?

In reviewing a book, we must keep in mind the purpose of the author. It is an exposition made for the purpose of enlightening those who now rule society with the aims and tactics of the different groups within the Socialist movement. This Spargo has done. He has earned his thirty pieces of silver.

F. A. S.

Our Job

It might almost be said of the Socialist Party at present, that if you go to the Right you're sure to get left. And to go to the Left, means you're bound to go wrong.

The Socialist Party is in process of discovering at last, what its mission is, namely, an educational organization to explain the why and wherefore of human society and its apparently bewildering moves.

In this profess, certain enthusiasts, (let us call them that, in charity's name), are frantically acclaiming Mass Action as the Only Way to save the working class. We can remember many of the same gentry aforesaid telling us to go easy; "A step at a Time."

Why the change? Russia, is the answer. Well, as it is our business to explain things, we must go into this a little. Because the Bolsheviks possessed daring and initiative, and succeeded in getting control of the State Power, by utilizing the desire of the peasants for Land, the Soldiers for Peace, and the Workers for shop control; these mass actionists of ours, seeing only the spectacular side of this, call for similar tactics here.

They overlook several facts: In Russia, the proletariat were a unit in desiring what they got.

In the United States the farmers and city workers are as the poles apart,—yet. They desire peace and a full stomach which capitalism is still able to approximately give them. In Russia, the masses were in a revolutionary state of mind; they would risk their lives gladly, as they had "nothing" to lose. Here, we can't raise a successful strike for an A. F. of L. victimized organizer, by even his fellow members. And further, a comfortable, "We won the war" feeling is strongly in evidence, and lots of alleged radicals are glad to wave the flag, when attacked by the daily dope rags.

Again, the compromise government in Russia was so weak, that Lenine and Trotzky could carry on a nation wide campaign of tremendous propaganda against them, and escape not only unmolested, but able to openly advocate and put through their plan of insurrection. "American Business Men," says Professor Ross, "would not lie down as tamely as the Russian bourgeois," and indeed, crassly ignorant as they are, we can see evidence aplenty that they possess fighting spirit in abundance.

So we see, that a campaign of Education was necessary in Russia between March and November, 1917, before the Mass Action could be effective; also, that peculiar circumstances aided them tremendously, namely a weak, cowardly government, and the fact that her nearest enemy, Germany, was in mortal combat with superior foes.

Do these Mass Actionists ever think of the tragic fate of Finland; or of the Liebknecht week in Berlin?

Far rather the Menshevik Right of the party than these wind crazed radicals. With the suppressive forces of King Capital on the alert in all cities, instruments of destruction ready at a moment's notice to mow mass actionists down enmasse, will Fraina and his hobbyists call on the people to demonstrate in the streets? And such people are acclaimed intellectuals! May Heaven save us from more Bohns and Russells, erstwhile Reds too.

The working class of America will and must accomplish its own emancipation. No need to waste words and ink on singing the praises of Mass Action, Direct Action or Parliamentary Action. We say the workers will win by Political Action and the Policy or line of such action will depend on circumstances when the all-decisive hour arrives. It is a safe bet, however, that a class that has been made alive to its interests won't be in error in its tactics long. But any organization, huge as it may be, will fail if the quality of its membership is poor.

The Parliamentary organization of the Social Democrats failed to prevent war, not because of lack of industrial organization, as the S. L. P. would have it, but because the membership was a patriotic body of reformers. A 100% industrial organization could not accomplish any change from capitalism to Communism, unless its personal was overwhelmingly Socialist. And we find today, that while huge numbers of discontented strikers will join the industrial unions, just as discontented voters vote for Socialism in hard times, so equally do the majority drop away again, leaving a few individuals who are desirous of studying the movements of their class. And, without digressing into an analysis of these phenomena, we are safe in saying that no matter where a revolutionist may be on watch, he will find only the Marxian Socialist is reliable.

Consequently, we can sum up thus: It is the bounden duty of Socialists everywhere to continually educate, make more Socialists. To use all efforts possible to keep the issue between the class enemies clear, to avoid underestimating the intelligence and strength of the ruling class, to realize that economic evolution will eventually and probably very soon bring about a collapse of the present system of wealth production and distribution. To further realize that the consequent disorganization and suffering will cause millions of now hostile or indifferent people to grope for relief, and instinctively turn to the most promising way out. And we know that in view of these things we can never go wrong if we bend our efforts here and now to the aforementioned task, making Socialists and Red ones at that.

Ignorance is here to dispel. Who but we, can tackle the job?

F. S. Faulkner