

Known by Its Fruits (December 24, 1904)

If by its fruit we know the tree, so by the same token do we know our social system. Its corrupt fruit betrays its foul and unclean nature and condemns it to death.

The swarms of vagrants, tramps, outcasts, paupers, thieves, gamblers, pickpockets, suicides, confidence men, Fallen women, consumptives, idiots, dwarfed children; the disease, poverty, insanity, and crime rampant in every land under the sway of capitalism rise up and cry out against it, and hush to silence all the pleas of its mercenaries and strike the knell of its doom.

The ancient and middle-age civilizations had their rise; they ruled and fell, and that of our own day must follow them. Evolution is the order of nature, and society, like the units that compose it, is subject to its inexorable law.

The day of individual effort, of small tools, free competition, hand labor, long hours and meager results is gone, never to return. The civilization reared upon this old foundation is crumbling.

The economic base of society is being transformed.

The working class are being knit together in the bonds of cooperation, they are becoming conscious of their interests as a class, and marshaling the workers for the class struggle and collective ownership.

With the triumph of the workers the mode of production and distribution will be revolutionized. Private ownership and production for profit will be supplanted by social ownership and production for use.

The economic interests of the workers will be mutual. They will work together in harmony instead of being arrayed against each other in competitive warfare. The collective workers will own the machinery of production, and there will be work for all and all will receive their socially due share of the product of their cooperative labor.

It is for this great work that the workers and their sympathizers must organize and educate and agitate.

The social democratic movement is of the working class itself; it is from the injustice perpetrated upon, and the misery suffered by this class

that the movement sprung, and it is to this class it makes its appeal. It is the voice of awakened labor arousing itself to action.

As we look abroad and see things as they are, the capitalists entrenched and fortified and the workers impoverished, ignorant, and in bondage, we are apt to be impressed with the magnitude of the task that lies before the socialist movement, but as we become grounded in the socialist philosophy, as we understand the process of economic determinism and grasp the principles of industrial and social evolution, the magnitude of the undertaking, far from daunting the socialist spirit, appeals to each comrade to enlist in the struggle because of the very greatness of the conflict and the immeasurable good that lies beyond it, and as he girds himself and touches elbows with his comrades his own latent resources are developed and his blood thrills with new life as he feels himself rising to the majesty of a man.

Now he has found his true place, and though he be reviled against and ostracized, traduced and denounced, though he be reduced to rags and tormented with hunger pangs, he will bear it all and more, for he is battling for a principle, he has been consecrated to a cause, and he cannot turn back.

To reach the workers that are still in darkness and to open their eyes, that is the task and to this we must give ourselves with all the strength we have, with patience that never fails, and an abiding faith in the ultimate victory.

The moment a worker sees himself in his true light he severs his relations with the capitalist parties, for he realizes at once that he no more belongs there than Rockefeller begins in our party.