

THE WORKERS' CALL.

"Workingmen of all countries unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains; you have a world to gain."

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SOCIALISM VS. REFORM

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Proposals for Im-
provement.

SOCIALISTS NOT DESTRUCTIVE

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Laws of Advance.

The great problem of today is an economic one. Furthermore, it is the problem of the laborer. Other ages have had their problems of philosophy, theology and politics, some of which are still unsolved and may remain to test the powers of generations now unborn. But the question which has been submitted to this day and age for solution is, how shall justice be secured to the producers of wealth—how shall the social product be distributed among its members. Upon this question attention must be focused, from this point of view all suggestions for social betterment must be viewed. Let us see what light is thus cast upon the points now under discussion concerning the relation of those persons who are seeking to affect changes within the present economic organization of society to those enrolled beneath the banner of socialism.

Because of their lack of sympathy with so-called reforms the socialists are ever being accused of "narrowness", "bigotry", and "intolerance". To such we would reply that we intend to be as narrow as truth, as bigoted as scientific fact, as intolerant as demonstrated logic. If in the pulsance of that policy any scheme or reform blocks the way we shall not hesitate to strike. It is complained that the socialist is always found opposing reforms, and objecting to schemes of social betterment—that he is destructive in his tendencies.

It might be replied that the very fact that any movement can be destroyed by the force of logic is prima facie evidence that it should be destroyed. No real vital portion of social development, no section of eternal truth need ever fear attack or destruction. "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." Adverse criticism of a living truth but tears away the dead husks that confine the growing germ within. Socialism is itself the best illustration of this position. At different times in its development, and growth error of tactics or philosophy have crept in. But the fierce storm of hostile criticism that has ever beat upon it, has been quick to tear away any such obstructions, that would have otherwise choked and distorted the growing vital truth beneath. The socialist welcomes attack and hostile criticism, as a purifying fire that will burn away the dross and bring the pure gold into the light of day.

In the second place it is from no love of the office of "devil's advocate" that the socialist is continually found in opposition to other's efforts for good. It is because socialism is essentially a "jealous good", and that its fundamental principles lead to the inevitable conclusion that all attempts at piece-meal renovation of society must be obstructive of the normal and best social growth, that forces the socialist into conflict with all reform movements.

The fundamental position of socialism, as stated by the writer in a previous article, is that "Our present society is to be transformed through a universal class conscious revolt of the workers with a view to capturing the machinery of social control that they may collectively organize the productive and distributive forces of society in the interest of all producers."

The laborers thus being the predestined ruling class and the only vital necessary portion of our present society, it follows that all movements for social betterment must center around that class and move in harmony with its interests. Bearing in mind that the socialist includes as laborers, all producers of social values and excludes only those performing the useless and obstructive exploitative function of ownership, it is evident that this is the only class

for whom anything can justly be demanded. Therefore it is to this class and to those who are in sympathy with them that I address myself, from their position I proceed, in their interests alone I speak.

The position here taken being once granted there is no escaping the conclusion that the "first step" to be taken is the class-conscious capture of the powers of social control by the workers, and cannot possibly be any movement looking toward improvement in the working of those powers while they remain in the hands of the present ruling, idle class—the capitalists.

The socialist philosophy is thus in its very nature a presumptive refutation of all reform movements working within our present capitalist society. Let us now examine separately and inductively some of the claims put forward by reformers for support.

A claim most frequently advanced by those who admit the temporary and inefficient character of reforms is that they are educational—that they "set people thinking" and so help on the general movement. So they do, but their educative value comes from their pre-determined failure, and that is a terribly costly way to educate. The socialist seeks to avoid the delay caused by tampering with truth, and endeavors to save the human suffering that such delay must always bring.

This position as to education and "setting people thinking" rests upon an error more fundamental than would at first appear. It implies that social changes come through the working of an idea—that society can be moulded to fit preconceived plans of individuals or groups of persons, whereas, society is a growth, a development according to established laws, which laws, are as little under the control of man as are those affecting growth and development in the animal or vegetable world. Just as man by taking advantage of biological laws can make his treatment of animal and vegetable growth intelligent, so in the social world, by working in accord with the laws there found he may intelligently and conscientiously improve social conditions. But as little as he can grow beets from turnip seed can he introduce a social change or stage which is not in the direct line of social development.

The preaching of an idea at a time when social evolution demands the triumph of some phase of thought not represented in that idea is the sowing of seed upon the rock. For countless ages many of the socialist ideals have been the dreams of political philosophers. Plato, Sir Thomas More, the early Christian Fathers, and a host of others preached in a more or less distinct way many of the features of what socialists call the co-operative commonwealth. But their teachings bore no fruit until capitalism had paved the way by improving productive forces; concentrating and unifying industry and drilling and educating the laborers. Then it needed but a word to set the workers of the world in motion in the most tremendous social movement this earth has ever known. The fundamental feature of this movement is the struggle between the present ruling class and the rapidly rising body of laborers. That this will end in the complete triumph of the workers, no one who has in the least comprehended the situation will deny. But the fact that this triumph is the essential feature of the social question is one the reformer fails to grasp.

Viewed from the position here stated all so-called reforms are seen to fall into two divisions. One division consists of the efforts of the capitalist class to improve their instruments of social control—our present government and social institutions—in order that they may be more effective for their purposes. To this class belongs civil-service reform, law enforcement leagues, etc. These are but the Pharisaical whitening of the sepulchres, within which all is uncleanness and dead men's bones. That these movements are of no importance, let alone of vital interest to the worker, would seem evident at first sight. It does not interest the imprisoned hawk beating its life out against the bars in a struggle for freedom to be told that there are some portions of the cage that might be polished to a brighter radiance. Just as Christ's fiercest denunciation fell upon the scribes and Pharisees, who were perfecting institutions and improving forms and methods, while they left the spirit intact, so today the heaviest blows of the laborer must sometimes be directed at those who are conscientiously seeking to improve the instruments for labor's exploitation.

The other class of reforms is a

more important one, and one around which much more controversy turns. These are those expressions of class interest put forth by some dying or hard pressed class, whose interests, however, are not in accord with that law of general social progress which puts the laborer as the foremost factor in the coming society. Perhaps the best example of such a movement was the free silver agitation of the presidential campaign of 1896. At the bottom (though confused in actual operation by the influence of other conflicting interests) this movement was an essentially agrarian one—an attempt by the debtor and farmer class to advance their interests at the expense of the remainder of society. It is at least extremely doubtful if the conditions that gave rise to this movement can ever again appear. The great majority of reform movements have their origin in attempts by the disappearing middle class to save themselves from the certain destruction that social evolution is destined to bring upon them.

Social development has divided the two great fundamental class divisions of laborer and capitalist into two minor divisions each. Within the laboring class there has been developed a body of servile dependents composed of such diverse elements as the beggar and pauper upon the one hand and the cringing lackeys and personal attendants of the capitalists upon the other. From these there is no hope of social advance. Whatever progress is secured to its members must be through their being carried onward by the society of which they are a part. With them we are not further concerned and their existence is only mentioned to illustrate the dual division referred to.

On the side of the capitalist there is, for our present purpose at least, a much more fundamental division. The process of "trustification" and concentration of industry has divided the capitalist class as a whole into a plutocracy upon the one hand, who are really performing the whole capitalist function, and a decaying and disappearing body of small manufacturers upon the other, whose ownership of the means of production is generally only sufficient to secure them an opportunity to use their own labor as producers. How utterly separated these two classes are is shown by the fact that the crisis of 1894-95, popularly supposed to be universal in its operation, never affected the plutocracy but raged entirely within the limits of this class of industrial cripples and economic outcasts.

Of all the bankruptcies that took place between the years 1893 and 1897, 87.75 per cent were of firms having a capital of less than \$50,000; 97.05 per cent less than \$20,000, while 95.76 per cent were for less than \$5,000. Any one who is at all familiar with the size of modern business operations knows that much less than fifty thousand dollars does not constitute capital at all in any effective sense in the business world of today.

Within this class of small producers competition still rages fiercely. They represent a defunct stage of society through which the main portion of industry passed from ten to twenty years ago. They are the geological relics of our industrial organization, and as such should mainly be of interest to the historian. They are the very last portion of society to be capable of constructing a live, progressive social program. Yet from this class originates the greater mass of reform, and the battle of reformers is more often waged in their interest than in that of any other social class. The reason for this unnatural activity and class-consciousness is at once apparent. They are in a desperate situation. According to Bradstreet's for 1897 there were 1,168,343 firms in business at the beginning of the year. During the year 241,542 new names were added, but 223,332 were erased. In other words one firm in every five of the whole number engaged were wiped out in this single fairly prosperous year. Taking this in consideration with the fact shown above that practically all of these were of small firms and some idea is gained of the fearful commercial pressure resting upon this middle class and the industrial slaughter that is going on in their ranks. The propositions for social change so continuously put forth and so fiercely defended are the death agonies of a dying class.

From this source come the proposals for municipalization and nationalization of industry, and the whole class of schemes seeking to extend the powers and functions of government, and often referred to as being

THE BALLOT

Its Present Power and
How It Was Ob-
tained.

THE RESULT OF CLASS STRUGGLE

Given at First by Capitalists to Conquer
Landlords, Now Class Divisions Make It
the Weapon of the Proletariat—Effort
to Disfranchise and Debauch the Laborer
as to His Interests.

As we are but a few weeks removed from the time when everyone is supposed to express his opinion at the ballot-box of the things in which he is interested, would it not be worth our while to spend a few minutes in looking at this occasion from a point of view that has escaped the notice of the majority of the public writers on political subjects. Let us see what election-time means to the laborers of Chicago.

The majority of them look upon their ballot as a sort of a matter of fact affair that is the most natural thing in the world. They are only concerned in election-time as a date when the particular individuals who are to apportion "jobs" for the next electoral period are to be chosen and unless their particular job or of some of their friends is in question they are seldom much interested. If they were to cross the ocean to Sweden at this time they would find the workers of that land intensely interested in the subject of the ballot. They would find that the laborers there are gathering beneath the leadership of the Socialists preparatory to a universal strike to secure that right that is looked upon as such a natural thing by the Chicago workers. It might surprise them to see the tremendous sacrifices that the Swedish laborers are making to secure the right that thousands of Chicago laborers barter away for a Thanksgiving turkey or think of only as a means of securing the "soft snaps" of political jobs. It is even probable that he would tell his Swedish brother that the game was not worth the trouble, and if the Swedish worker intended to use it in the same way as the Chicagoan has there can be little dispute as to its uselessness. But as we shall see the Swede knows what he wants and how he expects to get it and therefore sees in the ballot a means to a very desirable end. Of this, we shall speak more later.

There was a time when the right of suffrage was a cry to set the laborers aflame and to cause them to offer up their lives if need be to secure this precious privilege. At the close of the last century and until the first half of the present the capitalist class were in most countries under the rule of the landed interests. The old landlords, the descendants of the Mediaeval barons held the reins of power. The capitalists were trying to obtain this power for their own use. The laborers had just been cut off from the land by changes in methods of cultivation and were becoming attached to the capitalist class in the relation of employees. The capitalists saw in them a conventional weapon with which to accomplish his purpose of overthrowing the landlords. They became mightily interested in the "rights of man," and declared for democracy. The interests of the laborer at this particular point were more nearly in accord with the capitalist than they have perhaps ever since been. Social progress demanded the rule of the capitalist and enfranchisement of the laborer became the means to secure that end. He was given the ballot, overthrew the landlords and enthroned capitalism. For a while all was well. The absolute economic dependence of the laborer on the capitalist class, together with his own ignorance of his real interests made him a ready tool for his employer's purposes. In fact the vast majority of the American laborers still fulfill those conditions.

There soon came a time however when what small vestige of common interest there was between capitalist and laborer was swept away. The landed class disappeared as a real vital portion of society and class divisions now took on another form. The line of division was now between employer and employee. With his overwhelming numbers the victory of the laborer would seem to be a matter of course. There was but one way for the capitalist to retain power. That was to prevent the laborer from recognizing the existence of this class division. No matter what else he might do so long as the laborer did not become conscious of his class interests the rule of capital was safe. But the laborer had been given the ballot and

by virtue of the laws of the various countries an opportunity was given him to use it at stated periods. It therefore became necessary that certain "issues" be presented for him to vote upon. The result has been that trifling differences between divisions of the capitalist class have been exaggerated, and elaborated and presented to the laborer as of vital importance to him.

Do not misunderstand this statement. It is not alleged that there has been any conscious conspiracy to mislead the workers but simply that the capitalist has followed his own class interests closely. When a class becomes a ruling class it must be sufficiently homogeneous to act spontaneously in the direction of its class interests. So it has been with the capitalist. While directly he has been simply seeking his individual interests the result has been that as a class he has taken the only possible way of preserving his position as a ruler.

The result of this action on the part of the capitalist to divide and rule by keeping the laborers from seeing the real issue and dividing according to it, is that there have arisen a variety of political parties, divided on questions of individual capitalist interest, but all united in upholding capitalist domination.

In none of these can the laborer have any possible interest. There is but one vital issue to him and that is the abolition of wage slavery—the overthrow of capitalist class rule—the capture of the powers of government by his class. It is easy to see that none of the ordinary political parties ever touch this point. The socialists are the only ones who dare to insist that the fundamental issue shall be discussed. In every nation in the world they are now calling upon the workers to gather together in a party which shall be representative of their class interests.

The result of this action on the part of the laborers has been very significant. The capitalist politicians immediately began to attempt to mislead the laborers from the position which threatened capitalist domination. To do this they adopted new tactics. They became "radical." Let me explain this a little further. In stating their position the socialists were compelled to point out certain necessary changes in society that would follow from the victory of the laborers—shortening the hours of labor, popular and direct government, by the people, operation of industry by the community, etc. All of these are but the effects of the great cause of the proletarian victory. But capitalist politicians, seeking to avert this movement which meant their destruction, put the "cart before the horse," and announced that the securing of these "reforms" was the real issue. Though as a general thing somewhat muddled in their own reasoning they saw clearly enough that unless the workers were in some way kept from dividing along the lines of their actual class interests capitalism must disappear, and hence they decided that the surest way to divert that action was to offer the laborers a division of the capitalist class claiming to champion the same things as the socialists. The capitalist became "socialist."

This may seem a trifle far-fetched at first sight, but when an international view is taken no other explanation is possible. In every nation in the world, as soon as socialism was agitated, we have had our populists, our Liberals, our Bryans, our Pingree, Mayor Joneses, and Altgelds. And as has been the case every time the capitalist has taken the only possible way to defeat the triumph of the laborer. As soon as the cause of the socialist became identified with certain definite issues, then it became necessary to claim that the ends sought in those issues, and which the laborers were determined to secure, could just as well be obtained immediately through some capitalist party. Just so long as the issue of class domination could be kept in the background all else might be conceded. The capitalist is willing to manage industry through his government as a class if he cannot have it independently as an individual, hence he offers to nationalize and municipalize whatever is demanded. So a party forms itself out of those elements of capitalism for whom there is no longer any hope of individual operation of industry with the avowed object of placing all industry in the hands of the government. The great capitalists, who are now managing industry individually, naturally object to this movement on the part of the weaker members of their class to secure a share of the plunder and hence an "issue" is created. If now the workers can be induced to believe that their interests are united with either of these parties capitalism is safe.

But as these parties such expedients

ALTGELDISM

The Municipalization of
the Chicago Street
Cars.

PURELY MIDDLE CLASS SCHEME

A Plan to Perpetuate Competition, Ob-
struct Economic Progress and Continue
the Enslavement of the Worker by Rais-
ing His Rent and Increasing the Num-
ber of His Exploiters.

At last, after seven numbers of J. P. Altgeld's campaign sheet, the Municipal Ownership Bulletin, have been issued it succeeds in producing an article on municipal ownership. Up to this time, although this was ostensibly the avowed purpose of the aforesaid organ, their space had been taken up with eulogies of Henry George and remarks on Harrison's personal character.

When at last the article does come it completely substantiates the position taken by this paper last week and repeated in another column of the present issue, that Altgeld's campaign was a purely middle-class movement (in so far as it is not spite work) in the interest of the small shop-keepers and property owners—the most reactionary class in our society and the last one with which the laborers have any common interest.

Regarding the municipalization of the street-cars, and the cheapened fares that it is alleged would result, the article referred to says: "That means that \$300 will be added to the value of your lot." Of municipal gas, it says, "That means a saving to every house-holder of at least \$30. It means more new businesses. And it means that \$500 more will be added to the value of your lot." Then the whole matter is summed up as follows: "It means with more abundant revenues that the city will be able to clean the streets, to pave them and keep them in good order. That means \$50 more added to the value of your lot."

There you have it laborers of Chicago. The whole thing is to add to the selling value of lots. Do you know what that means? It is a wonder that the Single Tax editor of the paper did not go on to show how land values originate. That would have been an excellent place to have put in some work for his theory. Since he omitted it I will explain it for you and have no fears that it will be disputed by him as it is one of the few places where Henry George's analysis is correct. Land values are simply CAPITALIZED RENT. They depend wholly upon rent. A piece of land is valued at just what the rent indicates. So that to revise the sentences so as to express the truth they would read something like this: "Workers of Chicago, vote for municipal ownership of the street cars, it will increase your rents \$1.00 a month, vote for municipal gas, it will raise it fifty cents more; vote for more earnings in your landlord's and employer's taxes and increased corporation funds for the city government, that will send it up another dollar."

In the words of the article quoted, "Think of these things. Work for municipal ownership. Vote for it." Do not permit the immense value that should be yours (they really mean your landlord's and your employer's) as their actions show, to enrich Sam Allertons, C. T. Wilson, Marshall Field or L. Z. Leiter.

The article closes in a burst of oratory that bears testimony to careful study of the effusions of Henry George. When municipal ownership comes, the writer concludes:

"Prosperity will dwell among us; the millions which now demoralize the idle and useless over-rich; which strengthen the hands of monopolists and the despots of the people will be distributed among our industrious citizens. The mechanics (?) and small store-keepers will rejoice and North Clark St., Blue Island Ave. and Milwaukee Ave. will blossom like the rose."

There you have it. You would not believe it when the socialists told you that this was a purely middle-class movement—that it was a frantic struggle of a dying class to secure a little longer lease of life, and to continue the competitive system for a few years longer. What interest have you as laborers in this? What do you care whether taxes go up or down? Your wages are fixed by what you can be hired for with a vast army of unemployed competing for the place. Why should you, to quote another column of this issue, join those who "will vote for Altgeld because they know that municipal ownership will

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THE WORKERS' CALL.

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TROWING AWAY YOUR VOTE.

An objection that is perhaps more often advanced than any other by laborers when asked to vote the Socialist Labor Party ticket is that it is "throwing their vote away."

Regarding the Republican and Democratic parties, they have been turned in and out of office for the past thirty years and we would defy anyone to point to a single instance where the laborer was ever benefitted by the election or rejection of either of them.

Many of the workmen will say that in this election there is one man for whom we can cast a vote that will be truly in the interest of the laborers. How about Altgeld?

But it is principles not men that should determine action. It is not the particular individual that happens to be at the head of the ticket but the class interests that the party is dominated by that decides whether it is worth while for a laborer to cast his vote for it.

As we saw last week Altgeld is the representative of the middle-class—of the small shop-keepers, who seeing the brilliantly lighted downtown store and then feeling his hair rise at the thought of his own gas bill, wishes municipal ownership that he too may illuminate, who watching his own little property disappear beneath the taxation that he is too poor to dodge by buying up a tax-collector as does his richer competitor, thinks to shove a few cents off his burden by getting hold of some of the street car profits for the use of the municipality. But the workers have no interest in all this.

There is just one point that is of importance to the laborer, and that is that he get what he produces. To do this he must have control of the tools with which he works—the land, mines, factories, etc. So long as these belong to another class he will be only kept enough to allow him to live and keep up his race at the standard of life set by the community in which he lives.

dition will never be changed so long as the capitalist class have the political power in their hands. At present we are as absolutely beneath the power of the capitalists as ever any medieval country was beneath the hands of feudal lords.

None of the parties which we have discussed dares to suggest that this be done. Therefore to vote for them means to vote for the continuation of the present class rule, wage-slavery and exploitation.

The only party that does take such a stand is the Socialist Labor party. We ask you to read carefully its platform which you will find on another page of this paper, and compare it with the platforms of other parties.

PROFESSOR ANDREWS AND THE LABORERS.

A rather remarkable lecture was recently given at the West End Woman's Club by Dr. E. B. Andrews, City Superintendent of Schools.

He said that the great obstacle to human advancement was that the masses of humanity had such a low ideal of life, and no ambition to live better.

We would simply like to ask Dr. Andrews where he obtained his idea that the masses of humanity had no desire to live better.

The point, however, is just here—that so long as competition and the capitalist system ordains that the great mass of our society must struggle for the opportunity to use the instruments of production, the tools, land, and factories, and that even the fortunate few who do obtain access to them must surrender the largest portion of their product for the privilege of the highest ideals that ever animated humanity would be but tantalizing mockery.

With his statement that "the remedy for this evil is largely in the hands of these objects themselves" we heartily agree, save that we strongly object to the designation of the largest portion of our population as "these objects."

On the contrary "scientific socialists" are very certain that this poverty can and will be relieved and that it will be done through the exertions of the laboring class themselves, but it will not be done by any mere raising of "higher ideals" while exploitation continues.

The comment of the Chicago Tribune in its editorial columns on this same speech contains a couple of sentences that in view of the Tribune's usually muddled economics are somewhat interesting.

ceive in what paroxysm of common-sense the Tribune penned those words but we want to emphasize their truth.

If the laborer of Chicago will just apply the socialist doctrine of the use of the ballot to secure their freedom to Dr. Andrews' statement they have their salvation in their own hands and cheer themselves with the Tribune's position that present evils are but stepping stones to a better organization of society both speech and editorial will soon bear fruit that will somewhat surprise their authors.

An almost perfect example of class-conscious revolt against economic pressure is found in the anti-department store movement. So perfect is this response that it can be traced geographically as a mark of the spread of influence of the department stores.

Do not forget the Commune Festival to be given by the Socialistic Singing Society next Sunday at Brand's Hall, 362 North Clark street. The proceeds are to go to the Agitation fund of the S. L. P. and all comrades should turn out and help to show their appreciation of the efforts of those having the matter in charge.

If there is such a war on between Altgeld and Yerkes why does Altgeld's organ print the Inter Ocean's report of his speeches? Why does it echo the articles of the latter on the "newspaper trust" (as if the Inter Ocean was not in that trust)?

Many sample copies of this issue have been sent out. To those receiving such numbers we invite a careful examination of the paper, and believe that you will find it of interest to you and of assistance in helping you and all others to secure justice to themselves and the welfare of humanity.

It beats all how good some laborers feel who had their wages cut from \$1.50 to \$1.30 three years ago when they are raised to \$1.25. Just about half of them are fools enough to continue to vote for the party that happened to be in power when the last raise was made.

We wish to express our thanks for the many friends who have sent in clippings and items of interest. Permit us just one suggestion in this matter and that is that all clippings to be of value must be marked with the name and date of the publication from which taken.

The entire work consists of two articles, the first of which was prepared in 1873, and the second in 1884. Viewed historically, the opening article, of which we present the first half in this issue gives an excellent idea of socialist philosophy at that time.

Some few minor points will be noticed in which the position then taken differs from that of the German comrades of to-day. These were mostly owing to the influence of La Salle and were seen to disappear in the second article where the reasons for their rejection are explained.

To take an illustration from a popular movement at present, the slight claim that is offered to labor in connection with municipalization of street-railways, that fares will be reduced. No one who has watched the effect on rents of the opening up of a new line of transportation can doubt for an instant that if street-car fares were reduced to three cents through municipalization, it would simply be a question between the landlord and the employer as to who would get the additional two cents, while wages would remain unaffected.

SOCIALISM VS. REFORM.

(Continued from page 1.)

socialistic. In the adoption of these measures this class see a reduction of taxes, direct exploitation of the workers by government instead of by their plutocratic oppressors, and in general a possibility of a continuance of the status quo for some time longer, thus securing to them an extension of life.

When one before us in cold print, however, even the most extravagant claims for the worker are seen to be of slight importance, and when even these trivial claims can be shown to be untenable, the case for reform from the laborer's point of view is faint.

Perhaps the first answer to be made to all such proposals is to point out their narrow provincialism in contrast to the universal features of the problem with which they are playing. To the English worker who has had the bread snatched from his children's mouth by an American competitor, or to an American cotton spinner who sees his opportunity of living taken from him by a Japanese woman 5,000 miles away, there is something ridiculously tragic in the suggestion of municipal gas-works and street railroads as affecting his troubles.

Further more when he sees that in those places where all the demands of the reformer (as known in America at least) have been attained, the condition of the laborer is worse than in those where he has just begun his work, a suspicion is aroused that here is something in which he has no interest. When he sees that in London with its ideal County Council 30 per cent of the laborers are normally below the poverty line, as set by capitalist writers, and that over 50 per cent of their number must be buried by the public when he finds that in Glasgow (the reformer's paradise) the condition of the workers is, as a body, as bad as, if not worse than any other city calling itself civilized on this green earth, it would be a wonder if he was not led to the opposite extreme of error, and concluded that these reforms were the cause of the workers' misery.

The socialist, however, looking beyond the transient present which fills the eye of the reformer, into the past and future, just as he looks beyond his provincialism into the universal problem, sees that these conditions are but coincidences and have no vital relation in either way to the problem of the laborer. He sees in all such movements but an indication that a certain stage in industrial development has been reached, which must continue until the middle class have either been exterminated economically by competition, or overwhelmed politically by the action of the workers.

Taking this universal and historical view of society, and seeing that the misery of the laborers is widespread and of long standing, the socialist naturally seeks to find some factor that is historically and geographically continuous with this misery. He finds that since capitalism, this feature has been the wage-system. An examination of this system shows that until it is overthrown any efforts put forth for the alleviation of the laborer must from the very nature of things be ridiculously ineffective.

When remember that these reforms can only be carried through appeals for proletarian votes the ghastly humor of the thing almost appalls one. Laborers living in the awful river wards or "back of the yards" in Chicago, holding on to life from day to day on the pitiful wages of a sweeper or the "short-time" of a packer, rising each morning to the certainty that the mere physical demands of themselves and those they love must be stinted and scrimped to the point where existence itself is threatened, even if the usual monotony goes on, while ever before them quivers the more than possibility that they will be shut out by powers as much beyond their control as those of the tempest of earthquake, for this mere apology for an opportunity to live—these men are to be told that the "next step," the something "right off" which will relieve them is—to vote for municipal ownership of gas, telephone and electric lights, with a possibility that this will lead to a similar ownership of the street-cars.

Reformers often deny in theory the existence of class rule, but I have never yet been able to listen to one of their speakers, or read one of their arguments, in which it was not at some point either directly stated or taken for granted. Their organs and speeches abound in such expressions as "trust-ridden legislatures," "mammon-ruled nations," "money-governed courts" etc. Yet they propose to place in the hands of these same governing powers the direct instead of the indirect government of industry. To be sure they generally couple their movements with the capitalist ones previously described, seeking to "purify and improve" the government. But as was there shown these but strengthen and perfect the machinery of capitalist control and in no way affect the fact of class rule.

A claim is, however, sometimes made at this point that is worth our consideration. Until a few years ago reformers were careful to point out that there was nothing "socialistic" about their proposals. But of late the odium has somewhat worn off the expression and socialism has become a word to conjure with. Now we are told that all steps toward municipalization and nationalization of industry are direct steps toward socialism. It is claimed that all that is necessary is to vest all industry in the hands of the government and we will have socialism.

To this the socialist enters a most emphatic protest. As was pointed out in the earlier portion of this paper and at greater length by numerous socialist-writers, socialists hold, as a fundamental portion of their philosophy that in every stage of society the governing powers are in the hands of a dominant class, the overthrow of which constitutes the first step toward the liberation of the oppressed class. In our present or capitalist society the capitalists constitute this ruling class whose overthrow is demanded at the hands of the workers.

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When driven from every other point the reformer takes refuge behind the claim that he wants to accomplish something "right off," that human misery cannot wait for the coming of the co-operative commonwealth, that we should endeavor to improve present conditions as much as possible while they last. But he has been trying to do "something right off" now for half a century and things have grown steadily worse. Reform after reform has been tried, plan after plan has been experimented with and the mass of human suffering grows ever greater. As this goes on its awful mockery becomes more evident every day. To me it is something like a crime to so experiment with human suffering—to offer such stones of consolation to a people literally dying for bread.

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that they are to seek "immediate relief" through fighting fifty-year franchises. The three million idle workers who have not yet been driven to the road, but are still striving to keep their household gods about them and to preserve some remnant of the precious associations that still cluster around even a proletarian home, are to be told as they go vainly from office to shop begging humbly for a master (when before did slaves ere do the like) that they must not dream of any far away Utopias of justice, but must seek "temporary alleviation" through nationalization of the railroads and telegraphs.

No! In the name of the God of truth and mercy and justice suffering labor has "no time" to watch and listen to this awful mocking, taunting farce. He is beginning to see that "they who would be free themselves must strike the blow." He is recognizing that upon him and his class rests the destiny of the future. Refusing longer to respond to the deceiving calls of false friends and to fight the battles of warring factions of their oppressors, the laborers of the world are carving out their own fortune and pressing forward to a realization of their own interests, opportunities and duties. Of those who claim to be anxious to assist the worker it is simply asked that they unite with him in his great battle for liberty. He offers you a program the most constructive ever known, a plan that is in exact accord with social development, a theory that is but an application of social laws to scientifically gathered facts.

But, the reformer may ask, how do we know that these claims you make are true? One of the cheapest of all the cheap ways of meeting the claims of socialists is to sneer at their conviction of the truth for which they stand, to compare them to religious fanatics, and to ridicule their faith in the cause they represent. At its base this attitude of the reformer is easily explained. Accustomed through long experience to the advocacy of half-truths and patch-work schemes of social tinkering, which always fail to accomplish anything that has been claimed for them; bound in by a narrow provincialism and confined to the immediate present in his reasoning, it is no wonder that he has well-nigh ceased to have any faith in the existence of eternal universal truth.

Time and space will not permit me here to enter into an elaborate explanation of the reasons for the faith that is in me as a socialist, and I would simply refer those who are interested to the various expositions of socialism, which are easily accessible to those really wishing to know the truth. I would only say here that as yet no student of the subject has ever even attempted a refutation of the fundamental premise of socialism upon which the argument of this paper rests, i. e., that society is to be transformed through a class-conscious movement of the workers—and this notwithstanding the fact that for over fifty-years that proposition has been subjected to the hostile examination of the best intellects of every nation where capitalism has gained a hold. The strongest opponents of socialism concede its truth, the heaviest thinkers that capitalism has developed admit the certainty, while they deprecate the fact of its advance; it has remained for the dilletante reformer to sneer at its philosophy and ridicule the sincerity and earnestness of its followers.

To all such who have left in them any earnestness of purpose, any sincere desire to advance the cause of those for whom they speak, before you again mock at the faith that has had the power to unite thirty million of workers across all the lines of race and creed and sex and nationality, and has inspired them to endure ostracism, the dungeon and the scaffold by the thousands, do them at least the honor to familiarize yourself with the doctrines they believed in, lived and died for. Read them in the pages they have themselves penned and not in those of their opponents, detractors and commentators, or worse yet their cheap imitators. When you have done this, and not before, your opinion will be entitled to some respect, and when you have done this I have no fear that you will longer sneer, no matter what else you may do.

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(Continued from page 1.)

taxes, lower their expenses and increase the value of their property." You have no interest in such things. Your interest demands that you put your vote where it will abolish rents, not raise them—wipe out private property in the tools of production, not increase their value—further concentration, not block progress—abolish the middle-class, not strengthen their rule—destroy the whole competitive system, not extend the sphere of its operation—abolish wage-slavery, not tighten the employer's grip. And the only party that stands upon that platform is the Socialist Labor Party.

