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Dictatorship and the International

By Morris Hillquit.

The subject of the International Relations of the Socialist Party being under discussion at the New York Convention of the Socialist Party, the report of the Committee on International Relations, Morris Hillquit, Chairman, was read by the reading clerk.

Upon the conclusion of the reading of the report, Morris Hillquit said:—

Comrades, I believe that in taking up this problem we have reached probably the most important part of our deliberations. At this time there is no more important task for the Socialists of the world than to find a proper basis of International organization.



Morris Hillquit.

Unfortunately we are not authoritatively informed about conditions of the Socialist movement in Europe. During the war and for a considerable time after it, our country was so tightly shut up from the

rest of the world that we had little if any information on the subject of the Socialist movement abroad. At this time information is beginning to reach us in more or less fragmentary form from time to time. We still do not know all of the facts. Furthermore, the conditions abroad are so unstable that what may hold true for today may not be true the next day.

From the best source of information obtainable the situation seems to be this:

In the first place the old International is disrupted. The old International of Socialism was an organization composed of practically all Socialist

organizations of any standing throughout the world. I think it was the most compact, and most organically connected international organization in the world. The Socialist Parties, even of contending and conflicting tendencies in the different countries all belonged to the same International.

With the outbreak of the war and the acute differences arising on the question of the proper Socialist attitude towards it, the International was split wide open, and this is the present situation.

Of whatever remains of the old International, the so-called Second International, is no doubt still numerically the strongest. It includes the Majority Socialist party of Germany, with its large following, and at least for the time being, the Labor Party of Great Britain, with its millions of members. It includes the Social Democratic Party of Austria and the Socialist Parties of Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Finland, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, and a number of smaller countries.

The Third International so-called, that is the Moscow International, represents, as we have characterized it in our report, a nucleus but no more than that of a new International. It was organized originally by the Communist Party of Russia, with the co-operation of similar parties in some former territories of Russia that have since gained their independence, a few small communist parties in neighboring countries, while some representatives of foreign countries attended the Congress without authority from their organizations.

Since that time several Socialist parties of western Europe and then our party have declared their intention to affiliate with the Third International. The former include the Socialist parties of Norway, Switzerland and Italy.

As far as I know these parties have so far had no opportunity to participate in any of its deliberations. We are in the same position.

After our action on the subject however, several events have occurred which are of great im-

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SOCIALIST PARTY OF AMERICA

WILLIAM M. FEIGENBAUM.....Editor
OTTO F. BRANSTETTER.....Bus. Mgr.

AUGUST, 1920

THE August issue of The Socialist World finds the world on the brink of a precipice. For a few days it appeared as if all the world was about to blaze out again into warfare.

But the laboring masses of England and Germany and France and Poland and Italy have learned their lesson. Six years ago, they opposed the oncoming war. They held their protest meetings. They vowed their solidarity with the workers of every other country.

But they were beaten. Capitalism was too strong for them, and the insidious poison of vulgar jingo-patriotism. And they collapsed. They fell into line, mouthing over and over the cheap little war-cries of their masters.

Now six years have gone by, the most potent six years in all history. Those six years have taught much. They have taught the workers the value of the spoken word of their masters. They have accustomed the workers to warfare—and many reason, if for the imperialist designs of the masters, WHY NOT FOR OURSELVES?

And so the enemies of freedom have lost. Labor told them that there must be no war. Labor said that war on Socialist Russia meant Revolution at home. And there was no war on Socialist Russia!

It is a revolution! It is THE Revolution! It is the beginning of the time when the workers all, everywhere, will dictate the kind of a world in which the workers shall work and struggle and suffer—and live.

The glorious stand of the workers of Europe has given heart and hope to workers everywhere. It shows what can be done—it shows what will be done—when the people everywhere learn their identity of interest with each other.

* * *

The Polish adventure has come very appropriately in the midst of a presidential campaign. It is good campaign material for the Socialists. It is a fine object lesson. And it is a warning.

And the Socialists of America, hampered and all but hamstrung by persecution and terrorism and

ignorance and prejudice, are going forward with the Message of Socialism everywhere, heartened and encouraged by events everywhere.

With limited funds, short handed, with savage laws in many states, making it a penal offense to carry on Socialist work, the work goes on, nevertheless.

Sometimes it seems as if the best argument for Socialism is the character and the loyalty of its adherents.

DICTATORSHIP AND THE INTERNATIONAL

Continued from first page

portance as bearing on the condition of the Socialist International.

In the first place the Independent Socialist Party of Germany has adopted a resolution to the effect that it would initiate a movement to bring together all Socialists that had remained true to Socialism during the war and after the war, in one International, to co-operate with the Moscow International, with the further proviso that if such union cannot be brought about in conjunction with the parties of other countries, the Independent Socialists of Germany would join the Third International anyhow. The leaders of the German Independents made it clear, however, that they meant a Union not on the basis of the program of the Third International adopted in Moscow, but upon a common program, acceptable to all parties, including the Independent Socialists of Germany, the Socialist Party of France under the leadership of Longuet and others. The Independent Labour Party of England has recently taken a somewhat similar stand. The Labor Party which is the larger organization of the trade union, still stands by the Second International, with every indication, however, that they likewise may sever their relations with it in the near future.

That is the physical line up. Now, as to the moral side.

The Second International is the International of that wing of Socialism, which we have come to style "social patriotic," composed of those who had unconditionally supported the government during the war and who after the war in a majority of cases are co-operating with the middle classes in the government, either as in Germany, where the Cabinet consists of Socialists and non-Socialists, or as in Sweden, where the Cabinet is purely Socialist—under a somewhat "bourgeois" King.

So far as the third group is concerned, the unaffiliated group comprising the Socialist Party of France under Longuet's leadership, the Independent Labour Party of England and the Independent Socialists of Germany, they come, I should say, as close to the position of our own Party in this country as any Socialist parties abroad.

And now, comrades, it is very important for the understanding of our position by our own comrades as well as on the outside, that we draw a clear and distinct line between our relations to

Soviet Russia and our relations to the Third or Moscow International.

We have always supported the Soviet Government of Russia. We support it today. Our sympathies are absolutely with it. I hope they will always remain so. Because no matter whether that Government styles itself aptly or inaptly, it is the government of the working class of Russia. It is a Government which strives to abolish every remnant of capitalism and for that reason is being persecuted by every imperialistic and reactionary power on the face of the globe. The reasons that impel our Government in Washington, the Governments of Great Britain, and of France to make war upon Russia, are exactly the same reasons that impel us, as Socialists, as working class representatives, to support Soviet Russia in all of its struggles.

But that does not mean, Comrades, that we abdicate our own reason, forget the circumstances surrounding us, and blindly accept every formula, every dogma coming from Soviet Russia as holy, as a Papal decree. By no means. It also does not mean that because we support the struggles of the working class in Russia, we accept for this country or for any other country, the special institutions and forms into which these struggles have been moulded by the historical conditions of Russia.

After we had declared our intention to join the Third or Moscow International, a manifesto was published, signed by the President of the Executive Committee, dated Sept. 1st, 1919. The Manifesto deals with the relation of the International to national Socialist organizations, and among other things states that in France, America, England and Germany the revolutionary elements are adhering to the Communist movement often by co-operating with the anarcho-sindicalist groups, and the groups that now and then simply call themselves anarchist. The Executive Committee of the Communist Party welcomes this most heartily; and another reference is to our own I. W. W., which is supposed to lead the movement or the fight for soviets in the United States. It then proclaims that "the universal unifying program is at the present moment the recognition of the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of soviet power"; that "history has drawn the line between the revolutionary proletariat and the opportunist and between the Communist and the Socialist traitors of every brand"; Kautsky in Germany, Longuet in France, the Independent Labour Party as a whole and your humble servant in America are mentioned as such traitors "because they do not wish to lead the struggle for the soviet power of the proletariat."

Now, comrades, with all my cordial sympathy for the Russian Soviet Government, I say, if I considered this document authentic, final and authoritative, I could, speaking for myself, see no possible way to honestly remain in a Party which accepts this as a universal program. I will say, however, I do not attach as much importance to this docu-

ment as its authors may think it is entitled to. I know how such documents are drafted. I believe that the cooler heads in the Moscow International would repudiate it if it came to a question of actual application. At least I am inclined to think so. I have no authority for any such statement.

Now, why do I think we could not stand on this platform and adopt the formula of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviet Power? Because as a concrete proposition the statement is not only meaningless but misleading, and as applied to conditions here, it would be anti-Socialist and anti-Revolutionary.

The phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" was first coined by Karl Marx, in 1875, when he wrote a letter in criticism of the Gotha program. Speaking of the period of "transformation" he asserted that the State during that period "could be nothing else than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat." Later Engels referred to the Paris Commune as a practical example of such "dictatorship."

Now, what was the Paris Commune? The Paris Commune was a body elected on the principle of universal suffrage, a parliament of Paris, which did not exclude any class from voting and consisted of Socialists of all shades and even non-Socialists.

What Marx and Engels evidently considered as Dictatorship of the Proletariat was evidently the political, even parliamentary majority rule of the Proletariat, and I will say in all kindness to our comrades in Russia that they do not have a dictatorship of the proletariat. The Soviet Government is neither a dictatorship nor a rule of proletariat. It does not make it any less dear to me. But when we speak of dictatorship we can mean only one thing, an irresponsible rule of an irresponsible ruler; otherwise it is not a dictatorship.

Russia has a perfectly responsible government. Lenin is not a dictator and Trotzky is not a dictator. They have been elected to their positions, they have not proclaimed themselves in power. They can be recalled tomorrow. They can be recalled by the Executive Committee of the All Russian Soviet; they can be recalled by the All Russian Soviet; they can be recalled in numerous other ways. There is not an institution or official in Russia that is not subject to recall, or dependent on popular support. Why call it a dictatorship? It is not a dictatorship. It is a somewhat limited democracy. It is a democracy which excludes from its ranks non-producing classes, just as the democracy in the United States at one time excluded non-propertied classes. Whether such limitation upon the suffrage is necessary or not in Russia, I am not going to pass upon, because I don't know. But it is not a dictatorship. Nor is it a rule of the proletariat; the term "proletariat" has a definite meaning. It means an industrial worker, who does not own his instruments of production. The rule of Russia is the rule of the workers and peasants, with the peasants in the overwhelming majority.

Now, Comrades, I don't care what the exact and technical form of the Soviet Government is. It is a government of the working people of Russia, and these are always entitled to the support of our party and every true revolutionary organization so long as they continue fighting the powers of world capitalism.

But we are talking about forms of struggle that we are to apply to our own movement, and there is no reason in the world why we, in the United States, should take it upon ourselves to adopt the ideal of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Comrades, when we do that, and when it is made a condition of our affiliation that we recognize the dictatorship of the proletariat, we must also adopt their definition of the term, and what is that definition? The dictatorship of the proletariat implies the disarming, the disfranchising and the outlawing of the bourgeoisie. In countries of democratic and parliamentary traditions the Socialist movement cannot consistently employ or advocate such methods, because if we do, we practically say to the parties of the bourgeoisie, to our Democrats and Republicans: "Gentlemen, we want to take advantage of the ballot box in order to get into your parliaments, we want to get into power somehow, but when we are in power we will disarm you and disfranchise you and outlaw you, as a necessary measure for the transition to Socialism," and the logical reply would be: "All right, gentlemen, but today we are already in possession of the public powers which you seek to conquer, and consequently we will disarm you and disfranchise you and outlaw you now as a measure of self-preservation."

It is one thing or the other, comrades. Either a fight by physical weapons, a reversion to the old method of street barricades, or it is a political fight with the weapons and methods of political democracy.

If we accept the dictatorship of the proletariat in the sense of destroying, disarming and disfranch-

ising our opponents, then we have no kick coming if the ruling classes use against us the methods that we say we will use against them.

The Socialist Party has never advocated such methods. Marxian Socialism has never stood for it. We cannot consistently stand for it, and for this reason I say that as far as we, Socialists of America are concerned, we cannot join the Third International, if the recognition of this so-called dictatorship is made an absolute condition of our joining.

Now, why do we insist upon remaining in the Third International at all? Because we realize that the Third International represents after all the best spirit in the Socialist movement at this time. Its formulas may be wrong, but with all that, the Moscow organization affords undoubtedly the best field for rebuilding the Socialist International, provided it will not remain an international of eastern or Asiatic Socialism, but will open its doors to all revolutionary organizations of Socialism and provided it will adhere to the rules which have always guided the Socialist Internationals, the First as well as the Second, the rule of self-determination in matters of policy and methods of struggle, so long as no vital principle of the Socialist program and Socialist philosophy is violated.

And such a general organization, including the Third International, will never be brought about so long as the Independent Labour Party of England, the Socialist Party of France and the Independent Socialists of Germany stand outside. Just as much as it is impossible, in my mind, to create a live new International without Russia, just as much is it impossible to create such an International without Germany, France, and England.

Hence the suggestion of your Committee, that we work towards the creation of a larger International on the basis of the Third, and that instructions be given our Executive Committee and our elected officials to co-operate with other parties in that direction.

Socialist Education

By David P. Berenberg.

THE Socialist movement is confronted with a very real educational problem, although only a few scattered members of the Party realize it. If we wish to grow, if we are serious in our intentions to remake the world, we must reach the children.

Everyone who has done agitation work for the movement knows how deeply rooted are certain preconceived notions, certain prejudices which are instilled into the minds of people when they are very young, and which can be overcome only by mental efforts far beyond the powers of the average person.

So, for example, the old "arguments" that "Socialism is contrary to human nature," and that "So-

cialism is an iridescent dream" originate in the teachings of the public schools. In my hearing an army lieutenant told an audience of high school boys to "throw the agitator off his soap-box and wipe his face in the dirt."

On another occasion a militia officer who had taken part in the burning of the women and children at Ludlow came back to the school from which he had been graduated, and was held up to the pupils as a "hero" whose example was to be followed!

The control of the public school by the capitalist class is direct and clear. Boards of education, whether elected or appointed, are in most cases

For the Class War Prisoners

By Winnie E. Branstetter

When you receive a letter from the National Office of the Socialist Party, you may have noticed in the lower left hand corner a character similar to this, O B H Q. These characters have a very machine like appearance, on the contrary they are the identification initials of some one of the very live and sympathetic comrades in the above picture.

These girls constitute the stenographic and clerical force in the National Office. They are all members of the Socialist Party and of the Office Employees Association. As their hands fly over their typewriters, sending messages into every quarter of the world, their hearts beat in human sympathy with the struggles of the workers.

At Christmas time one girl proposed that they each send a box to the family of some political prisoner. They each adopted a family and soon their hands were busy. The noon hour found them deep in the half forgotten ecstasy of beribboned and embroidered doll clothes. Like magic, stiff, paper-wrapped figures became smiling fairy like creatures. Desks were overflowing with tiny wardrobes, marbles, jumping jacks, balls, mechanical toys, rattles, hair ribbons, little beaded purses and strands of brightly colored beads,

and all those things which bring smiles to tiny tads and tears to grown ups. In time these parcels all found their way into the rural homes of our comrades whose lives have been rendered sad and lonely through the unjust imprisonment of father.

One little girl wrote, "I never saw such a beautiful doll, and I did not expect to get a Christmas present since they took my papa away."



Scene on the steps of the Socialist Party Headquarters, 220 S. Ashland Blvd., as boxes of fruit, candy and tobacco for the class war prisoners were awaiting shipment. From left to right: Helen Harvey, Clara Packard, Emma Lemke, Helen Pray, Hilda Gressens, Mary Klopstein, Edna Snow, Winnie E. Branstetter, Ellen Persons, Bertha Hale White. Standing: Otto Branstetter

Working in conjunction with the Prison Comfort Club, these girls are never too tired to assist in the packing, of boxes which the National Office sends regularly to our political prisoners.

Such is the spirit behind the National Office force, such is the spirit behind the Prison Comfort Club. It merits the support and cooperation of every member of the Socialist Party.

If you wish to assist in this humane work—if you wish to bring something of cheer and hope to the hearts of those men who have given their freedom for us—if

you wish to assume your share of responsibility to them and to their loved ones, you may send a contribution to the Prison Comfort Club, care of The National Office, 220 South Ashland Boulevard, Chicago.

Notice!—Every cent contributed to this fund will be spent for comforts for political prisoners and their families.

made up of businessmen; teachers who are in any way radical are frequently expelled. Even liberal opinions are frowned upon. The cases of the New York school teachers are too recent to have been forgotten. The resignation of Dr. Arthur Wolfson because of restrictions placed upon his freedom of thought from the principalship of a large New York High School served again to draw attention to autocratic management in the public schools.

A few years ago business control of the colleges and universities became painfully evident in the persecution of radical and liberal instructors. Scott Nearing was expelled from the University of Pennsylvania for his economic views. Harry Dana and Prof. Cattell were dismissed from Columbia for their war views. In the University of Wisconsin, Prof. Ely was forced to recant his liberal views.

The prejudices created in the public schools, owned as they are by the money interests, extend to things other than Socialism. Labor Unions are often

the subject of attack. The great myth of the "public" is created in the schools.

To schools that create prejudice against ourselves we must send our children. To these schools the workers must send their children. As a result, the next generation must fight to overcome the same wall of stupidity and prejudgement that faced us.

And to supplant the "education" of the capitalist public schools we have a few poorly equipped Socialist Sunday Schools. At present these schools are worse than useless. They have no aim, no course of study, few teachers, and no money.

Here is a concrete situation that must be met. The National Office of the Socialist Party has taken the first steps to solve the problem. It has directed the present writer to prepare a text-book for the use of the Socialist schools. This book, which is intended for the teacher rather than for the pupil, will provide a curriculum, lesson plans, songs, poems and a complete course in physical education.



Scene on the steps of the Socialist Party Headquarters, 220 S. Ashland Blvd., as boxes of fruit, candy and tobacco for the class war prisoners were awaiting shipment.

From left to right: Helen Harvey, Clara Packard, Erna Lemke, Helen Prav, Hilda Gressens, Mary Klopstein, Edna Snow, Winifred Franstetter, Ellen Persons, Bertha Hale White.

Standing: Otto Branstetter

It is hoped that it will be ready for use in the fall of this year.

But this book alone cannot solve the problem. A book is useless unless, (1)—there is a school, (2)—there are teachers, and (3)—the teachers and the committee understand the problem of the school.

There have been Socialist Sunday Schools in the past. Most of these have been failures for one of several reasons. Some have sought to teach "Socialism" to immature children, entirely overlooking the fact that "Socialism" as a system of political thought presupposes a great deal of historical knowledge, and requires a thorough understanding of economics. Other schools, in an endeavor to avoid the dogmatic teaching of Socialism, have taught a watery reformism or a stupid and incorrect version of evolution and anthropology, totally unrelated to Socialism.

The first type of school produced the ununderstanding phrase—monger,—the bigot. The second type produced the kind of "Socialist" who in 1912 voted for Roosevelt because he was "progressive," and who in 1916 supported Wilson because "he kept us out of war."

There were a few schools that did try to supply the fact-knowledge and the historical information upon which Socialism is built. These schools, unfortunately, were few in number. Too often they existed only as long as some particular individual

kept them going. When that person dropped out, the school collapsed.

Many of the schools were smashed during the war. We are well rid of most of them but we must fill the vacancy. We must seek to organize a school in every local, which shall attract, not only the children of Socialists, but others as well.

In every local there must be a few people who are vitally interested in the education of the youth. This education is the best kind of work for Socialism. Instead of allowing the local to be idle between campaigns, why not get busy, and organize a school?

The power of education is tremendous. As the twig is bent the tree will grow. Why should we allow the rulers of society to bend and warp the minds of our children? Why should we rest idle while the bending process takes place? Education is worth all the money that is put into it,—and more. The time to begin is now!

The value of schools can hardly be overestimated. It may be said that in an hour or two, once a week, we cannot overcome the effect of the pounding of the public schools which have the child thirty hours a week. But now we have nothing.

Besides, there is a positive work that the schools can and should do. In addition to overcoming prejudices they can create our ideals,—the Socialist ideal of a better world.

Is it worth the trouble?

The Co-operative Movement and the Socialist Party

By Louis Waldman.

AT its National Emergency Convention held in Chicago last September, the Socialist party went on record favoring co-operative enterprise, "by workers in the cities and on the farms." Recently, at its convention in New York, the party reiterated its position.

If these resolutions are not to be dead letters, Socialists, members and sympathizers, should take an active interest in the Co-operative Movement.

For generations the powerful English Co-operatives pursued the go-it-alone policy. It had little to do with the political or industrial arm of labor. It was conservative and business-like in its attitude towards political Socialism. Only recently, when the Labor Party was about to become the sole Opposition Party in England, did the co-operative movement join hands with labor, politically.

The Co-operatives in Belgium, on the other hand, have been from the very start one with the Socialist movement. The Belgian Co-operatives have not been the worse for it, and Belgian Socialism has been greatly benefited. Both are a power in the country for constructive service.

Whether, in this country, the co-operative movement is to be what it had been in England—conservative—or as it has been in Belgium—Social-

istic—is entirely up to us Socialists. If we are luke-warm in our activity, the movement will grow just the same. It may not grow as fast as it might, but it will grow. Instead, however, of growing with us, it will grow away from us.

The Co-operative movement, here, is still in its infancy. Now is the time for Socialists with constructive mind to throw themselves into it. I make bold to say that if the Socialists spent half as much energy on Co-operatives as they do on political campaigning there would be appreciably more to show for it. This is not said to deprecate political action.

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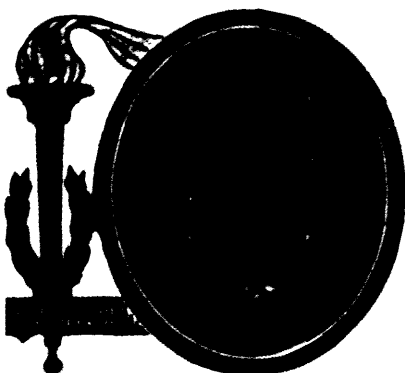
Generally speaking, there are three phases of co-operative enterprise: Co-operative Banking; Consumers' Co-operatives, and Producers Co-operatives.

Each country, depending largely upon its own needs and circumstances, determines for itself which branch of the movement it shall go into. Germany developed Co-operative banking. England distinguishes herself in Consumers' Co-operatives. France is better known by its gigantic Producing Co-operatives. It is yet uncertain just what field the United States will occupy. From indications, however, it seems that immediately its greatest activities will be

Debs, Apostle of Labor

(Remarks of Eugene V. Debs, Upon Being Sent to Prison.)

“TWENTY centuries ago One appeared upon earth whom we know as the Prince of Peace. He issued a command in which I believe he said, ‘Love one another.’ He did not say, ‘Kill one another,’ but ‘Love one another.’ He espoused the cause of the suffering poor and the



poor heard him gladly. It was not long before he aroused the ill-will and the hatred of the usurers, the money changers, the profiteers, the high priests, the lawyers, the judges, the merchants, the bankers — in a

word, the ruling class. They said of him just what the ruling class says of the Socialist today—“He is preaching dangerous doctrine. He is inciting the common rabble. He is a menace to peace and order.” And they had him arraigned, tried, convicted, condemned.

“This has been the tragic history of the race. In the ancient world Socrates sought to teach some new truths to the people and they made him drink the fatal hemlock. It has been true all along the track of the ages. The men and women who have been in advance, who have had new ideas, new ideals, who have had the courage to attack the established order of things, have all had to pay the same penalty.

“A century and a half ago, when the American colonists were still foreign subjects, and when there were a few men who had faith in the common people and believed that they could rule themselves without a king, in that day to speak against the king was treason. If you read any standard historian you will find that a great majority of the colonists actually believed the king had a divine right to rule over them. They had been taught to believe that to say a word against the king, to question his so-called divine right, was sinful. There were ministers who opened their bibles to prove that it was the patriotic duty of the people loyally to serve and support the king. But there were a few men in that day who said: ‘We don’t need a king. We can govern ourselves.’ And they began an agitation that has been immortalized in history.

“Washington, Adams, Paine—these were the rebels of their day. At first they were opposed by the people and denounced by the press. But they had the moral courage to stand erect and defy all the storms of detraction; and that is why they are in history, and that is why the great respectable majority of their day sleep in forgotten graves.

“At a later time there began another mighty agitation in this country. It was against an institution that was deemed a very respectable one in its time, the institution of chattel slavery. All the organized forces of society, all the powers of government, upheld chattel slavery in that day. And again a few appeared. One of them was Elijah Lovejoy. He was murdered in cold blood in Alton, Illinois, in 1837, simply because he was opposed to chattel slavery—just as I am opposed to wage slavery. When you go down the Mississippi River and

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enlisted in favor of co-operative banking. The forecast is based on the fact that organized labor, which has thrown itself into the movement as a body, finds banks least difficult to organize.

Besides a multitude of smaller co-operative banks, already existing and successfully doing business, there has recently been launched a movement for Central Co-operative banks which has long passed the academic stages. In Cleveland, Ohio, the Brotherhood of Engineers, that powerful and wealthy labor body, headed by Warren S. Stone, has already perfected its organization to open a labor Co-operative bank, with a ready capital of \$1,000,000.

At a recent meeting, the Central Labor Union of the city of Philadelphia has adopted a resolution to organize a co-operative bank, to be controlled and operated entirely by labor organizations of Philadelphia. It was explained by officials that the formation of this bank is the first step organized labor of Philadelphia has taken to combat the action of the

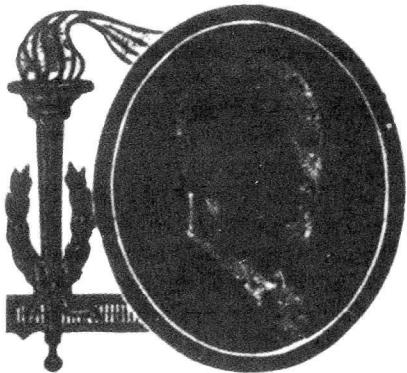
Chamber of Commerce in endeavoring to make Philadelphia an “open-shop” town.

According to James H. Duncan, President of the Seattle Trade and Labor Council, that body has already collected close to one half million dollars and is soon to open a Labor Co-operative bank.

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, that virile, magnificent and fighting labor body, decided to open a Co-operative bank. As soon as conditions only permit, such bank will be opened, and perhaps, more than one.

The United Co-operatives of Chicago, composed of the radical wing of organized labor and its tributary organizations, are laying plans for a co-operative bank.

A sure gauge of the rapid progress made by the movement for co-operative banking is the number of states that enacted Credit Union laws. Lead by Massachusetts, the states of Oregon, Texas, New York, Rhode Island, Utah, Wisconsin, North Carolina and South Carolina have all enacted special



laws to facilitate the organization of local co-operative banks.

Space will not permit to discuss the fine distinction between these laws nor to elaborate upon the details and the methods of organization. This must be left for another time. Those interested will find a rich literature on the subject.

Co-operative banks, alone, are not sufficient, for they are of full value only when they have a great Co-operative Commercial field to operate in. One of the cardinal principles of a co-operative bank is not to finance private business.

The Narodnaya Bank of Moscow, Russia, the largest Co-operative bank in the world (long before the Soviet regime came into being) never loaned money to any private enterprise. It dealt with co-operative societies only. It became the financial Clearing House of the Co-operative movement in Russia. Though its field was thus circumscribed, it grew into enormous proportions, a living monument to the creative genius and idealism of a great people.

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Consumers' Co-operatives, though less spectacular in their appearance, are, nevertheless, springing up everywhere, east, west, north and south. Without noise and with little herald, small and large co-operative establishments of every description are born daily among farmers and industrial workers alike.

The corner stone of Consumers' Co-operatives is to organize the consumers' purchasing power and wield it co-operatively for the benefit of the community. The virtue of it is that a group of people determined upon a co-operative course do not have to wait for the sweet by and by when the rest of the "Henry Dubbs" are convinced that private exploitation in the factory and a system of robbery after the products leave the factory is criminal and ought to be abolished.

Any group of two to three hundred people can organize a co-operative store—grocery store, butcher shop, clothing store or any other retail store. When several such stores are organized in a given locality, they can get together and establish a central purchasing agency or wholesale. In time, they can, by intelligent co-operation with producers co-operatives, eliminate from a large portion of their purchases all capitalist intermediaries.

People hardly realize the immensity of their combined purchasing power, and its possibility for good or evil. Take Chicago as an illustration. And what is true of Chicago is even more true of New York, and is at least equally true of Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis and other cities in the country. With slight variation it is also true of agricultural communities.

In Chicago, there are at least 50,000 families, the heads of which are radical. Some are Socialists, some Communists, some Communist Labor,

some I. W. Whites, some labor partyites; some have votes and cast them, some have votes and do not cast them, some care to cast them but do not have the votes, and some do not have the votes and would not care to cast them, if they had them. One hundred and fifty thousand of such families in Chicago is an underestimate. While differing on methods, most of them are agreed on two things: first, that the present-profit system is bad and must go, and second, that the Co-operative Commonwealth is to be instituted in its stead.

The combined annual purchasing power of 50,000 families for necessities alone is about \$50,000,000. Ten per cent profit, which is certainly a smaller figure than the retailers and wholesalers combined actually make, nets \$5,000,000.

The 50,000 "Revolutionists" contribute annually \$5,000,000 to the support of the Capitalist class and its institutions, the press, the old political parties, the endowed colleges, etc. While, generally, these families could not help supporting capitalism on account of the fact that they are still in the minority, they can withhold this support—\$5,000,000 annually—and use this gigantic sum to strengthen the side of labor.

Of course to organize the full purchasing power—even though it be only the purchasing power of necessities alone—of these 50,000 families is the ideal, which can not be accomplished in a year or two. But a good beginning can be made. While a few of them are scattered throughout the city, most of these radical people live in "neighborhoods." These neighborhoods could be organized. Its inhabitants could be trained to purchase in the co-operative store, owned and managed by themselves.

In a co-operative store goods should be sold at market price. Every three or six months each purchaser is to receive consumers' "dividends"—that is the amount he or she paid on purchases over and above actual cost.

In some cases these consumers' dividends are never claimed by the consumers individually, but is kept as a collective fund to be used for some special social purpose. The co-operators are the masters of their own money. The more developed their social conscienceness and spirit of co-operation, the more likely that all surplus funds would be so invested as to yield the greatest social good.

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Whatever our opinion, as Socialists, as to the merits or demerits of "immediate demands" and "Social reforms," there can be no honest difference of opinion as to the value of immediate action in the co-operative field. If the Co-operative Commonwealth is our ultimate goal, and it is, then every slice of that "Commonwealth" we can grab we should cheerfully do so.

Political action, Industrial action and Co-operative action must go hand in hand in the onward march of labor towards ultimate emancipation.

Letter of Acceptance

By Seymour Stedman.

To the National Executive Committee and Membership of the Socialist Party.

Comrades:

I accept the nomination you tender me, deeply appreciating the confidence and comradeship with which it comes, and pledge my best efforts to meet the duties and requirements of the task you have set for me.

Our beloved standard bearer is mute by the judgment of a harsh and unreasonable interpretation of war-time legislation. His imprisonment is continued by a ruthless despotic chief of the Democrats, supported by a Republican Congress. Yet his clarion call will rally together all the intelligent workers of hand and brain, all who love liberty and believe in freedom and humanity.

The aim of our party is to transform the present capitalist system into a collective and co-operative society. We have always in the past advocated a peaceful change and this high hope is still cherished by us.

During the closing years of the Nineteenth Century and the opening years of the Twentieth, there were obvious symptoms of the breakdown and decay of capitalist society. Prices for the necessities of life were continuously rising accompanied by a vast number of unemployed—the capitalist paradox, unemployment and scarcity—this condition prevailed within the dominion of every industrial nation, and was reflected even in countries predominately agricultural. Trustified industries had reached mammoth proportions, and, following the rise of the industrial capitalist class, a new class came into existence—the finance group—extending its investments into every land, seeking foreign fields of exploitation and large returns from investments. The threatened crash and breakdown was interrupted by the world war, the great massacre and murder-lust, the unholy offspring of international finance and dynastic imperialism.

The masses of our people entered into this conflict with lofty ideals. The humane declarations of the President, in depth and breadth were unmatched in all history. Inspired by this world crusade for democracy, justice and lasting peace, thousands of the bravest and the best, with full faith, rallied to the support of the Allies' cause.

The President of the United States pledged the faith of our people to exalted purposes in matchless phrases. The fourteen points became historic. Secret treaties were to be abolished. The dark chambers of charlatans pretending to preserve the peace of the world by a balance of power, were to go forever.

Self-determination of nations was to be recognized and guaranteed, a cohesive nationalism encouraged as an essential basis for internationalism.

The Armistice came and the victor nations assembled to make a lasting peace, a peace "without sting."

At the very threshold of this conference the curtains were drawn, the sunlight excluded and in darkness the people of the world became the pawns and toys of designing, grasping, hating and revengeful men. The faith pledged by the people of this country was broken by their representatives.

Without reference to race or natural boundaries, they have carved up Germany, Middle Europe and Asia Minor, parcelling out oil, minerals, forests and trading rights among the victors, and creating irresistible causes for new world wars.

Self-determination meant to our party and comrades what it said. It was a declaration which first came to life from a convention of our party and at this hour we are the only political party in the United States which stands for keeping the faith and recognizing the Russian Socialist Republic, the only party at this hour in the United States which demands the recognition of the Irish Republic.

India is a vassal and subject country of many millions of people. They, too, are not less entitled to self-determination. It is a fundamental principle of democracy that the people of a country are the source of all its political and industrial rights and power.

To the charge that we are meddling in foreign affairs by these declarations, we reply that all the allied countries accepted, expressly or by their silence, the declarations made by the President as the purposes for which we entered the conflict.

As the recognized and only genuine internationalist movement, we favor a league of free peoples administered by delegates elected directly by and responsible to the people.

We denounce the proposed League of Nations as an organization of international capitalists banded together for the purpose of subjugating and exploiting the peoples of the world.

The proposed League of Nations breaks into the established traditions of this country "against entangling alliances with foreign countries." It constitutes the grouping of international bandits who propose to subjugate and exploit the workers in every civilized and uncivilized country.

The League of Nations in Part Thirteen, with forty articles, makes a provision for a conference of twenty-four persons, twelve to represent the governments, six to represent the employers and six to represent the workers. And in this it is provided that the League of Nations may prevent the adoption or compel the repeal of laws for the benefit of the working class in this country.

I call attention to the above provision with an analysis which appears in the Congressional Record

for October 29th, 1919, Pages 8137 to 8145, inclusive.

On November 11th, 1918, the Armistice was signed. War then ended, yet oppressive war legislation remains unrepealed and the President of the United States recently announced that these laws would continue to be enforced.

The Espionage Act is today in full force and effect, the most cowardly, brutal and inexcusable act ever passed by political representatives of the capitalists. For a citizen to announce that the war was a commercial and industrial war was construed a crime or which hundreds were sent to the penitentiary.

Notwithstanding this, the President of the United States announced in his address in Turin that "a country is owned and dominated by the capital that is invested in it. I do not need to instruct you gentlemen in that fundamental idea." And in 1919, in the City of St. Louis he said, "Does not every man know, does not every woman know; nay, I will say, does not every child know that this was a commercial war?"

Many a citizen who stated this fact became a felon.

Freedom of speech has become a byword: the liberty of the press is a lost liberty: representative government is attacked and successfully throttled in the State Legislature of New York: the citizens of a Congressional district have twice been denied representation by denying its elected representative his seat and participation in Congress; newspapers, the most enlightened in the country, are denied the use of the mails: mob violence and murder has been and is being tolerated and approved; houses have been searched and papers seized and people arrested without warrant or legal procedure.

Large industries go unchecked in grabbing profits; the railroads are handed back to private privilege with a loan and guaranteed dividends; the miners and railroad workers are crushed by injunctions and indictments, and tried under war statutes for offenses charged to have been committed within the last few months. And now, by no means, do we behold a relaxation. The most firmly entrenched capitalists of the world are in this country. The world war has solidified and united them. They control the press and the avenues of information and the economic power and wealth of the country.

The closing of war in Europe opens more clearly the class conflict. There is no middle ground and no moderate sublime phrase can conceal the big truth. We are drifting into a firmly established capitalist despotism with thousands of spies, reckless power and subdued workers. Capitalism may topple over and bring in its wake chaos, starvation and destruction; to meet this impending change intelligently, to avert this chaos and destruction, our party offers the only sane and practical program.

We are preeminently the American party, because we stand four-square with the ideals and traditions now betrayed by self-styled patriots. We are preeminently the party of civilization and progress because we are the only party which has the courage to face the impending breakdown without compromise. We offer the only possible solution for the preservation of civilization.

The ever increasing cost of living, shortage of coal cars, scarcity in coal production, high interest rates, increasing unemployment, calls for an immediate remedy.

We declare the remedy now—socialize the railroads, the coal and metalliferous mines, now; the flour mills and stockyards, now; open unused land to cultivation, now; prepare to substitute for this capitalistic oligarchy the social ownership and democratic management of the means of production and the control of government for the producers by the producers.

Our prophecies of the past have been fulfilled. When the hurricane of passion and hate swept across the country our party weathered the gale. Our comrades stood the storm-shock and now rise to the call. When we behold the trees twist and bend before the hurricane and they rise again and again; finally, after the storm has passed, to stand erect, triumphant in the clear sunlight, we know that down beneath the soil the strength of thousands of roots has been tested: they have held; they have taken their grip and the large trunks stand true because the roots run deep. So, the candidates of our party know that their strength and power for the fleeting hours of an election campaign rests upon the deep strength, the determination and the will of the working-class which is the base and power of the movement.

Mere political issues will not meet the requirements of today's social problems. Economic readjustment of a fundamental character must be made, and can be made peacefully if we prevail. We enter the conflict with the call "from the dungeon to liberty." "from the white walls of Atlanta's Bastille, to the White House at Washington."

Brave workers fired with the zeal for work in a great cause, respond!

Sincerely,
(Signed) SEYMOUR STEDMAN.

EDITOR'S NOTE—The excellent article, "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" in the July issue of The Socialist World was written by Charles Solomon. Credit was omitted from the article by mistake.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT

HOW TO ORGANIZE AND CONDUCT A YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL- IST LEAGUE CIRCLE.

THE first thing to do is to canvas the neighborhood, your school friends, etc., for available young people. It is not necessary to confine your efforts to getting the children of socialist parents interested, but it is usually easier to get started with them and then, if the League is made as attractive as it can and should be, the others will come in due time.

After you have some idea of those you might expect to be interested call a meeting at some comrade's home or if this is not possible, in an available hall. This meeting should be in the nature of a social gathering. Have a good program arranged, if possible, for if the young folks have an interesting time they will see the possibility of having more good times in the future and be anxious to join. Send to this office for application cards in good time so that you will be sure to have them for the first meeting. They are seventy-five cents a hundred.

Some time during the evening explain the nature of the Y. P. S. L.—what it is for and what it hopes to accomplish. Have application cards ready to be handed out and be sure that each one has been sufficiently urged to join. Get those prospective members to choose a name for the Circle. Show them that you mean business by at once filling out the application for charter blank with the members' names and the name that has been chosen for the new League.

Ask each one to pay at least one month's dues so that you can send for dues stamps and supplies at once. The dues rate is usually twenty-five cents per month but each Circle is free to set its own rate. The National Office sells the monthly dues stamps to your circle for five cents each, you sell them to your members for twenty-five cents (or whatever rate you set). The difference, twenty cents, on each dues stamp, goes into the treasury of the Circle for the purchase of supplies and other necessary expenses.

It might also be well at this meeting to map out some plan of procedure for meetings. Many Leagues have adopted a very good plan of having a business meeting the first week, an educational the next, and a social the third, and so on. Make arrangements to secure a suitable meeting place. It may be well to call upon the Secretary of the Socialist Local, for the Party is always glad to co-operate with the League. He will help you in getting a meeting place, and in all other ways.

When your League is started, be sure to keep things moving and lively. Emphasize the educational and social side of the League and devote as little time as possible to the discussion of trivial matters not pertinent to the welfare of the League or to routine business. Establish a good library and keep it up to date.

Business Meetings.

Business meetings should be conducted in an orderly manner. Remember that there is something to be learned even in a business meeting, namely, the art of being business like. Get a copy of Roberts' Rules of Order and follow it as far as practical. Some people dislike business meetings; some, on the contrary, enjoy them. Business meetings are necessary, but they should not be overdone by drawing them out, and by referring everything to such meetings. That is, do not cater to the one element or bore the other. See that everything you do is of intense interest and importance. Without business meetings you would not be able to do your other work. The business meeting must be conducted, not as an end in itself, but as the way of getting what you all want, and training the members in orderly and intelligent work.

Educational Meetings.

This part of league procedure is really the principal thing, after all, that for which we are organized, and we cannot afford to slight it. A good plan would be to follow some good study course. The Rand School, New York, has an excellent one for this purpose. Have frequent debates on various subjects and be sure that each member gets a chance to express himself. It is well to have members who can go ahead with things, but do not let them do so to the exclusion of others. Mock trials are lots of fun and at the same time educational. Other interesting features can be added from time to time.

Do not overdo the straight Socialist end of it. Not every one is a Socialist and young people are apt to think that Socialism is politics and politics means one candidate versus another. Emphasize history, literature, science, etc., all of which lead to Socialism. Have talks and discussions on literature etc. This office will be glad to advise Circles on the value of different writers as mediums of discussion. Above all, do not take the attitude that the schools in their teaching are wrong and that we alone have the correct key. Nothing is worse than that; it will cause criticism on the part of the people you are trying to interest who will assert that you are intellectual snobs. Work along our lines, discuss literature, history, current events, etc. from our standpoint

but carefully avoid coming into collision with the teachers of those you are trying to interest.

By all means keep away from Socialist controversies. There are many places where those discussions are out of place. The Y. P. S. L. is one of them. If anyone attempts to discuss Communism as against Socialism stop him at once. If he is over twenty-one, tell him to join the party and talk it there. If he is not, tell him to wait until he can. We want to interest young people in Socialism and the things we all agree on, not the things we may happen to differ in.

Social Meetings.

The social side of the league is by no means unimportant, for it is mainly through the social activities that we get members who as yet know nothing about Socialism. When they have come to a few of our parties or have gone with us on some of our hikes they will want to know more about us and will be likely to become members. It is not usually necessary to tell young people how to have a good time; so we need not go into detail on this topic. Just be sure to make your affairs so interesting that members would rather come to them than go elsewhere, and they will want to bring their friends with them.

Of course these are only suggestions for the organization and management of a league. Other schedules can be used and new methods tried. When you hit upon any especially good plan let us know so we can tell the others about them.

Y. P. S. L. NEWS NOTES

A READING, Pa., circle reports a membership of fifty and still growing. They have been having lots of affairs lately, among which was a May Day outing. These young people are anxious to help re-organize the league in their state.

A LEAGUE in Baltimore writes for a charter. It is to be known as Circle One. They have not yet told us how many members they have, but we think they are getting a good start, judging from the attractive letter heads they have gotten out.

THE comrades of Lincoln, Ill., are organizing a circle. The Gene Debs circle of Staunton have kindly offered to send a delegation to help them get started. If they follow the example set by the Staunton crowd they will get along all right for they are a live bunch.

THE Friendship Circle puts in its claim to membership in the Yipes family after having been disbanded for a time.

The Worker or the Profiteer?

Who Is Responsible for the Increased Cost of Living?

By Benj. Glassberg.

THE notion that labor is responsible for the increased cost of living has been widely spread by the press and the profiteers. If it were not for the demands of the labor unions for greatly increased wages, they insist, prices would not be as high as they are. What are the facts? Is Labor really responsible for the enormous increases in the price of necessities, or is it rather the profiteer? Facts and figures may at times be dry, but even figures may tell an interesting story—as they do in this case. Let us examine a few that have come to light.

The annual net profits of corporations during the war, after all possible deductions had been made, including many for the purpose of concealing profits, averaged over ten and a half billion dollars as compared with an average of over four billion just before the war. Five thousand corporations earned over one-half the value of their capital stock, and over 2000 earned THE ENTIRE VALUE IN A SINGLE YEAR. During the war the corporations with an income of a million dollars or more earned a quarter of their capital stock annually. They made profits sufficient to replace the entire value of their capital stock within a period of four years. These corporations averaged almost five billions more in profits during the war than before, or three times the pre-war profits. This group of profiteers took an average of \$240 a year from every family in the United States in excess of what they were satisfied to take before the war. During the four years, 1916-17-18-19, corporate profits cost each family a total of \$1500. Let us see the share that Labor got of these immense profits:

SUGAR went up 14 cents a pound during the war, or 300%. Wages went up about 2 cents a pound, or less than 15% of the increased cost of producing sugar. The sugar profiteers will take from the American people during this year at least \$600,000,000 and it may approach one billion dollars, if sugar goes up to 25 or 30c. This means that every family this year will pay a tax of from \$30 to \$50 and perhaps as much as \$100 over and above a fair profit for sugar alone. If the sugar trust were satisfied with the same profit margin that labor received as its share, sugar could have been sold at 11½c a pound instead of 25c. Mr. Hoover recently testified to the truth of this conclusion.

MEAT—Profits in meat were three times as large in 1917 as before the war. Between 1912-18, the meat packers made a profit of over \$200,000,000 or twice their invested capital. They tried to cover this up, of course, by issuing new capital stock. The price of meats went up during the war from 50 to 100%. Was it because of the high wages that labor is supposed to be getting. The testimony of

Swift and Company proves that the entire labor cost of dressing and distributing meat is 69c per 100 lbs., or 5% of the total cost, a very small part of the total expenses of the industry. If labor had received an increase of even 100% the increase in the price would have been only 5%. The increase in the retail price of meat was over twelve times the entire labor cost in the meat-packing industry, and the 1918 price was twenty-five times the total labor item. An increase in wages of 1000% would not account for the great increase in the price of meat. At a matter of fact, wages did not go up more than 50 to 75%.

CLOTHING. Profits in the clothing industry have been three times as great as before the war. One half the retail price is absorbed by profits. Labor costs amount to only 1-14 to 1-20 of the price. Take an ordinary suit of clothes that sold for \$25 in 1910 and now retails for \$65. We find that profits on the cloth have increased 365%, the manufacturer's profit on making the suit, 255%, and the retailer's profit 141%. The largest woolen manufacturing company in America increased its annual net income from a million and a half before the war to nearly nine millions a year during the war.

SHOES. In 1914 the profits in shoes equalled three times the total labor costs. In 1917 they equalled over five times the total labor costs. In 1917 all the labor from a hide to a finished shoe absorbed less of the price paid by the consumer than in 1914. Of the \$3.50 increase in the price of shoes labor received 15c, while the profits of the manufacturer and retailer absorbed \$2.75. Shoes retailing for \$10.50 in 1920 cost the manufacturer \$5.48, says the Federal Trade Commission. The leather used cost \$3.37, and the labor cost \$1.04. The manufacturer's profit was \$1.02, and the retailer's profit was \$4.00.

COAL. Profits of coal companies have been at least two and a half times what they were before the war. One half of the coal companies made profits of over 50% on their capital stock, and one third showed profits of over 100%. Every man, woman and child in America has paid a tax of \$10 to the coal companies over and above what would be sufficient for a reasonable profit. Here again increased wages have had but little to do with the great increase in the price of coal. The increase in the retail price of bituminous coal is four times the increase in labor cost. When the miners were granted an increase of 40c a ton on April 1, the price at the pit-head at once jumped from \$2.75 to \$4.75, an increase exactly five times the labor cost. Profits of the anthracite coal companies were larger than the entire cost of production. When the consumer in 1918, paid \$11.32 a ton in New York, \$4.22 went to the cost of producing, and \$2.30 for trans-

portation. The balance \$4.80 is eaten up in the form of profits. The increase in profits was more than three times the increase in labor.

IRON AND STEEL. Profits in steel were more than four times the pre-war returns. Steel rails show an increase in price of \$26, or four times the total labor cost and eight times the increase in the labor cost. The labor cost in operating a blast furnace is not more than 3% of the selling price of pig iron. While the labor cost in making a ton of iron was going up from about 40c to about 86c the price went up from \$15 to \$30. Prices rose at a rate of four times the increase received by labor. Even if wages were doubled it would not cause the product to rise more than 12%. Profits of over one billion dollars were turned over to the steel corporations during 1916-18. This makes a tax of about ten dollars for every person in the United States.

The same story could be told of all the industries in the country, whether it be soap, flour, rubber goods, building materials, hardware, furniture, paper, matches, electrical supplies, all alike reaped a golden harvest during the war. It has been estimated that during the last four years, the corporations cleaned up a total net swag of 34 billion dollars, which is not at all bad—for the capitalist class.

Do you wonder why they wanted war so much? Do you still think the worker is responsible for the increasing cost of living, or can you see that the workers' demands for increased wages were absolutely necessary if he was to avoid starvation? In spite of all increases in wages, labor is unable to buy today as much as it could before the war—with the exception of a few trades. The profiteers are however richer by 34 billions.

During these four years, Congress has been controlled, first by the Democratic party and recently by the Republican party. Did either party make any honest effort to check profiteering, to reduce the cost of living? Not one single effort! It could not. Both old parties are the servants of the capitalists and profiteers. They are sent there to help Big Business, not to hurt it. And so Congress was quick to use the Lever Law to prevent a coal strike, but never used it to prevent profiteering. No Republican or Democratic Administration will prevent profiteering, or interfere with the profits of the capitalist class, in war time or peace time. These parties are the faithful servants of the Interests. They know their master's voice.

As long as we live under the present conditions, where we produce things so that a few people may make profits, and where all the means of life—the land, machinery, and natural resources are privately owned, so long will we have profiteering and all the other evils that we see about us. You can abolish profiteering only by abolishing the system which makes profiteering possible, and that is by abolishing private ownership and substituting for it ownership and control by the people. Let the people own the land, the machinery, the factories, the natural resources, upon which their lives depend.

The Socialist Party calls upon you at a time when great changes are taking place throughout the world, to throw off your prejudices, and examine intelligently the message of Socialism, which is the only hope of a suffering world, so that you may contribute your share in remaking the world along newer, better and juster lines.

What is Socialism?

By Charles Solomon.

YOU read about Socialism in the newspapers and magazines. A multitude of books have been written for and against it. It is discussed from innumerable platforms and pulpits. Socialist governments have come into existence in many parts of the world. No question is receiving greater attention.

What do you know about it?

The object of this article is to acquaint you with the nature and purpose of Socialism.

It might be defined as a movement for the ownership by all the people—by society—of the sources of wealth and the principal means of production and distribution, and their democratic management for the benefit of all.

These things—the capital of the nation—are not today owned and controlled by all of the people for the benefit of all, but by a small part of the people—the capitalists. The primary interest of the capitalists in the ownership of the means of life of the nation—the land, factories, mills, mines, shops,

railroads, telegraphs, telephones, and the like—is to make profits, to amass private fortunes for themselves. This purpose they pursue regardless of the consequences to the great masses of the people.

Because they privately own the capital of the nation, the capitalists own the jobs and control the opportunity to work upon which depend the lives of the workers. This is true because the workers, in order to produce wealth, must first receive permission to have access to the sources of wealth and the tools of labor, which are the private property of the capitalists.

In hiring the workers, the economic interest of the capitalists is to buy their labor power—which is sold like any other commodity in the open market—as cheaply as possible. The workers on the other hand seek to get as much for their labor power as possible. This gives rise to a conflict of economic interests which arrays the capitalists and workers interests Socialists call the class struggle. The more effectively to wage this struggle, capitalists and

workers organize, the former into employers' associations of one kind or another, and the latter into labor unions.

This class struggle is not wilfully created by individuals or groups. It grows inevitably out of the present economic arrangement, the core of which is the ownership by the few of the means of life of the many, and the consequent control by the same few of the opportunities to work and live. The class struggle with all its consequences, such as strikes, lockouts, boycotts, and other industrial disturbances, will continue so long as there are economic classes in society, and these will exist so long as a part of the people are permitted to own and control the social means of life.

Time was in this country, and not so long ago, when most of the people individually owned the tools with which they individually worked. They therefore owned their jobs and practically controlled their opportunities to live. That was in the days of handicraft production, before the modern mills, factories, railroads, telegraphs came. All these are here today, and they are the property of the capitalist few, whose ownership clothes them with a tremendous economic and social power over the comparatively propertyless masses.

Not only do the capitalist few own and control the means of life and the opportunities to work and live of the many, but all statistics disclose that this ownership and control is rapidly concentrating into ever fewer hands, condemning the great masses to dependence upon the modern ruling class, the oligarchs of capital.

These capitalist oligarchs rule in many ways; but principally they rule economically, directly through the ownership of the social means of life, and politically through the control of government. To rule in the latter way the capitalist owners of the nation's wealth are in politics to make certain that only such persons will be chosen to make, interpret, and enforce the laws as are in unquestioned sympathy with their economic and social interests. The capitalist oligarchs function politically through the dominant political parties—the Republicans and Democrats. From capitalist sources come substantially all the campaign funds of these parties. It is not to be wondered at then that such parties when in power represent the interests of the capitalist owners of the nation's wealth. You know that he who pays the piper calls the tune.

You will also find, if you take the trouble to investigate, that the educational facilities, the press, pulpit, public platform, in brief, the means of making and disseminating public opinion, has come overwhelmingly under the control of the capitalists, whose interests they are to reflect and protect. The press is a conspicuous example of this capitalist control.

Ruling classes are not new in history. They are not peculiar to our own time. But wherever society has been divided into ruling and subject classes, the division grew out of the ownership and control by

one class of the means of life and the opportunities to live of the rest of the people. This was true in ancient and feudal times, and is true today.

The ruling classes of our day, as we have already said, is interested primarily in profits, and from profit-taking to "profiteering" is only a step. Where the one ends and the other begins no one has been able to tell.

The profit interest of the few in the ownership of the means of life is the basic cause of the high cost of living.

When the capitalists can no longer make satisfactory profits, they shut down mills and curtail production in order to bolster up prices—and thus they cause industrial depressions, crises, and widespread unemployment. From unemployment flows a host of familiar social evils, principally all sorts of crimes. When people are desperate and hungry, and the opportunities to earn a living are denied them, many of them will break the laws.

War, too, is ultimately due to the clashing of the interests of the capitalist groups of the different industrially developed countries, who compete with each other for markets, sources of raw materials, and investment opportunities. To enjoy advantages in this international rivalry, the capitalists of the different nations bring pressure to bear upon their governments, demanding a "vigorous foreign policy," which in turn requires large standing armies and navies, and vast expenditures for military purposes.

We have been speaking here of the capitalist and working classes, because they are the two principal social classes. There are those who are strictly neither capitalists or wage workers. These are denominated the middle classes. However, they are closer in their economic interests to the workers, into whose ranks they are being rapidly thrust, to make common economic and political cause.

The division of society into classes and the resultant conflicting class interests—these are back of and determine the issues in political campaigns. Political parties express and champion class interests. The dominant parties are the political champions of the interests of the capitalist owners of the nation's wealth. They always have and will continue to represent those interests in public office. To vote for these parties is to vote for the capitalist oligarchs; for the private ownership and control of the social means of life and opportunities to work and live, and for all the consequences that flow therefrom, including the high cost of living.

Against these parties and the social system they stand for the Socialist party arrays itself. It summons the people to strike at the root of social injustice by making the social means of life—the land, natural resources, railways, factories, etc.—that is, the principal means of production and distribution—the property of the people, of society.

To accomplish this basic change is the political object of the Socialist party. But while Soa;

strive ever for this objective, they work immediately for a greater democracy, and for the improvement of the conditions of the masses wherever possible, pledging themselves in their platforms to specific economic and political reforms.

Socialism is not a scheme invented by some ingenious thinker. It is the logical result of the development of industry. Before the factory system of our day Socialism in the modern sense was unknown. The demand for social ownership—ownership by all the people—of the tools of work, did not and could not arise before the appearance of socially used implements of production, such as the modern industrial establishments and transportation and communication systems which are operated and maintained not by individuals or small groups, as was the case in the old days of the hand crafts, but by thousands and even tens of thousands of workers. The Socialist demand for collective ownership is based on the fact of collective production and distribution. In the days when the artisan with his

own tools and his own labor made the product, individual appropriation was logical. Ownership was based on labor. Today we have private appropriation by capitalists, who own but do not work, of the wealth created by workers who work but do not own. This fundamental contradiction in society, you will find after thinking it over, is responsible for most of our troubles. It can be remedied in one way only—those who work must own and all must be workers. By workers we mean all who do useful work. This is the Socialist proposition.

You have probably heard and read that Socialism means dividing up, that it is opposed to the home and family and religion and that Socialists believe in and advocate the use of force and violence. All this is false and those who are responsible for these notions are ignorant or malicious.

Socialism is a matter of economics, a bread-and-butter proposition. Its purpose is to free mankind from want and the bitter struggle for existence.

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DEBS, APOSTLE OF LABOR

(Continued from Page 7)

look up at Alton, you see a magnificent white shaft erected there in memory of a man who was true to himself and his convictions of right and duty unto death.

"It was my good fortune personally to know Wendell Phillips. I heard the story of his persecution, in part at least, from his own eloquent lips just a little while before they were silenced in death.

"William Lloyd Garrison, Garret Smith, Thaddeus Stevens—these leaders of the abolition movement, who were regarded as monsters of depravity, were true to the faith and stood their ground. They are all in history. You are teaching your children to revere their memories, while all of their detractors are in oblivion.

"Chattel slavery disappeared. We are not yet free. We are engaged in another mighty agitation today. It is as wide as the world. It is the rise of the toiling and producing masses who are gradually becoming conscious of their interest, their power, as a class, who are organizing industrially and politically, who are slowly but surely developing the economic and political power that is to set them free. They are still in the minority, but they have learned how to wait, and to bide their time.

"It is because I happen to be in the minority that I stand in your presence today, charged with crime. It is because I believe as the revolutionary fathers believed in their day, that a change was due in the interests of the people, that the time had come for a better form of government, an improved sys-

tem, a higher social order, a nobler humanity and a grander civilization. This minority that is so much misunderstood and so bitterly maligned, is in alliance with the forces of evolution, and as certain as I stand before you, it is but a question of time until this minority will become the conquering majority and inaugurate the greatest change in all of the world. You may hasten the change; you may retard it; you can no more prevent it than you can prevent the coming of the sunrise on the morrow.

"We hear a great deal about human brotherhood—a beautiful and inspiring theme. It is preached from a countless number of pulpits. It is vain for us to preach of human brotherhood while we tolerate this social system in which we are a mass of warring units, in which millions of workers have to fight one another for jobs, and millions of business men and professional men have to fight one another for trade, for practice—in which we have individual interests and each is striving to care for himself alone without reference to his fellow men. Human brotherhood is yet to be realized in this world. It never can be under the capitalist-competitive system in which we live.

"I have stated to this court that I am opposed to the form of our present Government; that I am opposed to the social system in which we live; that I believed in the change of both—but by perfectly peaceable and orderly means.

"Let me direct your attention to the fact that in this system five per cent of our people own and control two-thirds of our wealth, sixty-five per cent of the people, embracing the working class who produce all wealth, have but five per cent to show for it.

"The five per cent of the people that I have made reference to constitute that element that rules our country. They privately own all our public necessities. They wear no crowns; they wield no scepters, they sit upon no thrones; and yet they are our economic masters and our political rulers. They control this Government and all of its institutions.

"The five per cent of our people who own and control all the sources of wealth, all of the nation's industries, all of the means of our common life—it is they who declare war; it is they who make peace; it is they who control our destiny. And so long as this is true, we can make no just claim of being a democratic government—a self-governing people.

"I believe, in common with all Socialists, that this nation ought to own and control its industries. I believe, as all Socialists do, that all things that are jointly needed and used ought to be jointly owned—that industry, the basis of life, instead of being the property of the few and operated for their enrichment, ought to be the common property of all, democratically administered in the interest of all.

"John D. Rockefeller has today an income of sixty million dollars a year, five million dollars a month, two hundred thousand dollars a day. He does not produce a penny of it. I make no attack upon Mr. Rockefeller personally. I do not in the

least dislike him. If he were in need, and it were in my power to serve him, I would serve him as gladly as I would any other human being. I am simply opposing a social order in which it is possible for one man who does absolutely nothing that is useful to amass a fortune of hundreds of millions of dollars, while millions of men and women who work all the days of their lives secure barely enough for existence.

"This order of things cannot always endure. I have registered my protest against it. I recognize the feebleness of my effort, but fortunately I am not alone. There are multiplied thousands of others who, like myself, have come to realize that before we may truly enjoy the blessings of civilized life, we must re-organize society upon a mutual and co-operative basis; and to this end we have organized a great economic and political movement that is spread over the face of all the earth.

"There are today upwards of sixty million Socialists, loyal, devoted, adherents to this cause, regardless of nationality, race, creed, color or sex. They are all making common cause. They are all spreading the propaganda of the new social order. They are waiting, watching and working through all the weary hours of the day and night. They are still in the minority. They have learned how to be patient and bide their time. They feel—they know, indeed—that the time is coming in spite of all opposition, all persecution, when this emancipating gospel will spread among all the peoples, and when this minority will become the triumphant majority and, sweeping into power, inaugurate the greatest change in history.

"In that day we will have the universal commonwealth—not the destruction of the nation, but, on the contrary, the harmonious co-operation of every nation with every other nation on earth.

"In that day, war will curse this earth no more!

"I ask no mercy. I plead for no immunity. I realize that finally the right must prevail. I never more clearly comprehended than now the great struggle between the powers of greed on the one hand and upon the other the rising hosts of freedom.

"I can see the dawn of a better day of humanity. The people are awakening. In due course of time they will come to their own.

"When the mariner, sailing over tropic seas, looks for relief from his weary watch, he turns his eyes toward the southern cross, burning luridly above the tossing ocean. As the midnight approaches, the southern cross begins to bend, and the whirling worlds change their places, and with starry finger-points the Almighty marks the passage of time upon the dial of the universe, and though no bell may beat the glad tidings, the look-out knows that the midnight is passing—that relief and rest are close at hand!

"Let the people take heart and hope everywhere, for the cross is bending, the midnight is passing, and joy cometh with the morning."