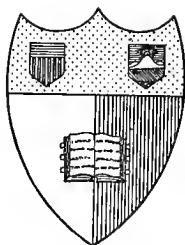


Social Democracy  
- Explained -

JOHN SPARGO

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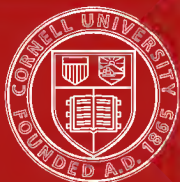
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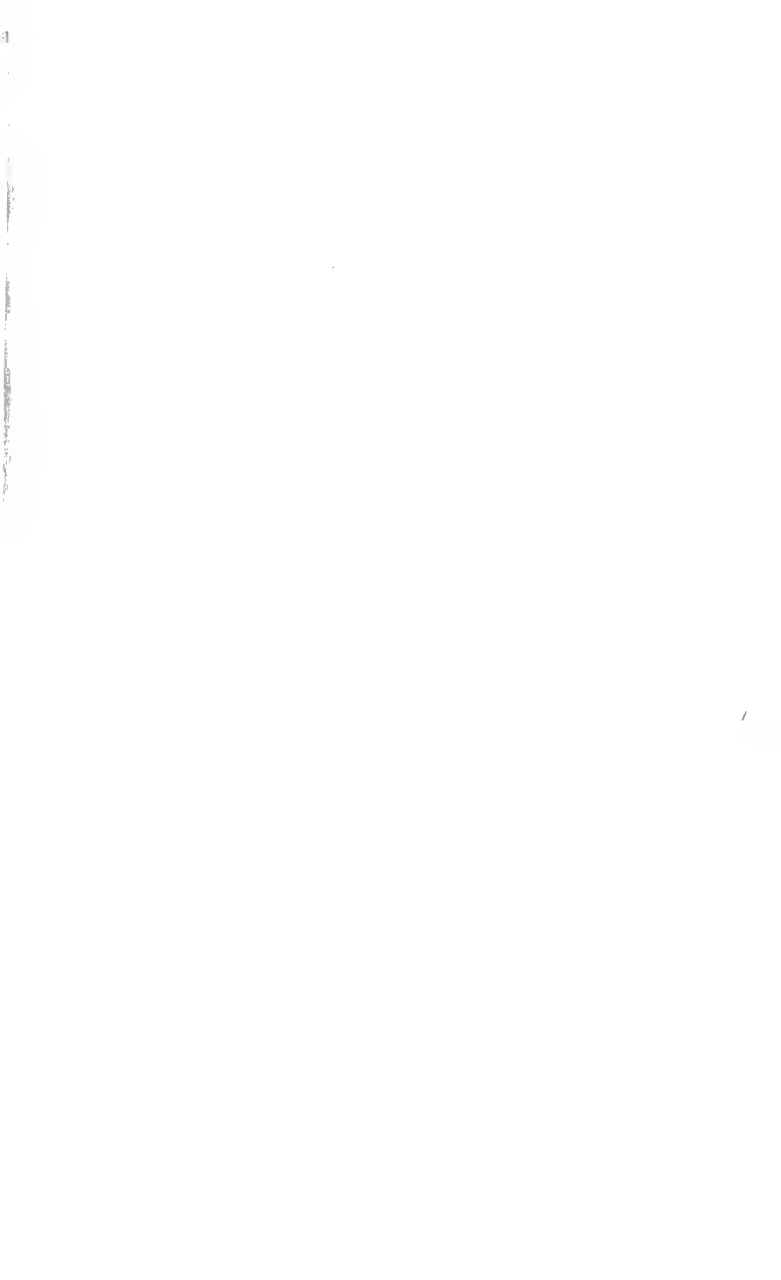


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**SOCIAL DEMOCRACY  
EXPLAINED**

*✓*





# Social Democracy Explained

*Theories and Tactics  
of Modern Socialism*

BY

JOHN SPARGO

*Author of*

"AMERICANISM AND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY" ETC.



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS  
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# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	vii
I. THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM . . . . .	I
II. REASONS FOR SOCIALISM . . . . .	26
III. THE SOCIALIST STATE . . . . .	50
IV. HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE SOCIALIST MOVE- MENT . . . . .	85
V. THE MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS . . . . .	123
VI. CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT . . . . .	158
VII. METHODS AND WEAPONS . . . . .	187
VIII. REVISIONISM . . . . .	208
IX. SYNDICALISM . . . . .	244
X. SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM . . . . .	278
XI. SOCIALISM AND THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC . . . . .	291



## PREFACE

THIS volume is an attempt to state in simple, popular, and untechnical language the essentials of the Socialism of the Marxian school. I have tried to present a clear and comprehensive view not only of the philosophical and economic theories of Socialism, but of the principles underlying the policies of the Socialist movement.

In justice to the reader as well as to the writer, it should be stated that these pages were written prior to the outbreak of the European war. I was at the time a member of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, and by invitation of the General Committee of the party organization in New York City I delivered a course of ten lectures which were designed to assist in the education of the party membership. Given under official party auspices as they were, the lectures attracted a good deal of attention and favorable comment, so that by request I repeated most of the course in

## PREFACE

several other cities. In response to numerous requests I undertook to prepare the addresses for publication in book form, and that work was nearly completed when the great war broke out. The chaos and demoralization in the Socialist ranks which occurred as a result of the virtual breakdown of the Socialist International, and the betrayal of the movement by the German Socialist majority, caused me to lay the manuscript aside until a more propitious season. Now that we are recovering from the shock, and in all countries the Socialist movement is undergoing a process of readjustment and reorganization, I find myself deeply involved in the struggles incidental to that readjustment. Having severed my connection with the Socialist Party because I believed that the party had been unfaithful to the principles of Socialism, it is perhaps necessary for me to say what otherwise would be superfluous—namely, that I am still a Socialist and an Internationalist, and that I am in the main a believer in the principles of Marxian Socialism.

The war has modified my views upon some matters, so that there is not a little in the following pages which I would now change. I have preferred to leave the volume in its

## P R E F A C E

original form rather than to rewrite it, because it does represent the average Marxian Socialist's position. Another and more personal reason for not attempting to rewrite the volume is that by presenting it in its original form I can point my Socialist comrades and former comrades to the fact that the position I have taken in this war controversy is entirely consistent with that taken in these lectures, delivered under official party auspices, long before the war began. The view of internationalism, for which I have contended against a majority of the Socialist Party of this country, is precisely the same as that outlined in these pages. Moreover, the conception of the spirit and guiding principles of Socialist policy is the same.

It is impossible at this time to forecast the future development of the International Socialist movement. As these lines are being written, an invitation reaches me to join with other Socialists in other lands, including Germany and Austria, in the formation of a new Socialist International which will be a competitor to the existing Socialist International so long dominated by the Germans. Whether this project will be carried out, or whether I shall assist it, I am unable to

## PREFACE

say. This much, however, is certain: the Socialist movement will be revived and restored and the Socialist program will be realized. That the radical extremists with their destructive attitude of mind are likely to achieve anything worth while it is impossible to believe. Bolshevism is a form of romanticism which cannot be of lasting influence. It seems probable that the schism which has developed in the Socialist ranks during the war will outlast it and continue in the period of reconstruction: on the one hand, the dogmatists, hidebound and insisting upon their special formulæ; on the other hand the practical opportunists, freely and gladly embracing every opportunity to share in the work of actually applying Socialist principles. The first of these elements will constitute a noisy, truculent, ineffective minority. The second may prove to be of inestimable value in the building up of industrial democracy.

I hope to follow up this volume with another in which the new phases of our American social democracy will be interpreted.

JOHN SPARGO.

NEW YORK, END OF JANUARY, 1918.



**SOCIAL DEMOCRACY  
EXPLAINED**



# SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

## I

### THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

#### I

**O**F the making of definitions of Socialism there is truly "no end." Each new recruit to the army of Socialist propagandists strives to reduce the essentials of Socialism to a formula; to compress an accurate description of its meaning in the narrow confines of a brief statement of easy intelligibility and memorability. To formulate a definition which meets these requirements, and, at the same time, secures the approval of his fellow Socialists, is an ambition that is born anew in the heart of every Socialist.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

The libraries teem with definitions of Socialism as numerous and as varied as the books which contain them. It is well that it should be so. It is well that every Socialist propagandist should regard it as the most important part of his work to crystallize his own concept of Socialism and make his statement of that concept concise and luminous. Just as the sculptor chisels away from the rough marble every superfluous particle, but is careful to retain every necessary particle, until at last the perfect form appears, so the propagandist who aims to make a definition of Socialism must rigorously eliminate the non-essential and carefully preserve every particle of the essential truth in order that the result may be a perfect representation.

### II

The multitude of definitions of Socialism has suggested a criticism which has discouraged and deterred many a prospective student. The criticism is that hardly any two Socialists agree in defining their beliefs and their aims, and that there are as many varieties of Socialism as there are Socialists. There is hardly a weapon in the armory of

## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

the opponents of Socialism which is more frequently used than this. "Why does Socialism suggest So-and-so's pickles?" asks the clever and facetious critic. "Why, because there are so many varieties of it!" comes the answer.

Like much of the criticism of Socialism indulged in by the clever young men who write and talk on the subject, this criticism is far less true than plausible. Its sole support is the difference of expression and emphasis which belongs to, and is inseparable from, individuality. Its fatal defect lies in the fact that, underlying the differences of form and emphasis of statement which mark the definitions of Socialism, there is a remarkable degree of agreement upon fundamental principles.

The man who is mainly interested in Socialism as a political movement naturally emphasizes the political aspects of Socialism in defining it. The man who is inspired by the splendor of its forecast of the future of society will naturally emphasize that aspect of Socialism in his definition. The man to whom Socialism appeals as a great system of philosophy will as naturally emphasize that aspect of his subject in defining it, and perhaps slight the political movement on the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

one hand and the beautiful ideal on the other hand. Each in his definition treats as most important that which means most to him. But the differences in the three definitions are not contradictions. The definitions are partial and incomplete: a perfect definition would include them all.

I venture to claim here, at the very outset of our study of Socialism, that candid investigation will reveal the fact that the representative expositors of its doctrines have shown quite as much unanimity in defining Socialism, and quite as little fundamental disagreement, as the advocates of any movement, secular or religious, at all comparable to Socialism. We shall search the vast literature of political science in vain for a greater unity of understanding and interpretation of essential principle and purpose.

For adding another to the vast number of definitions of Socialism we may not plead inability to find among the definitions already existing one with which we can wholly agree. Indeed, there are many such. Our justification must rest upon very different reasons: First of all, there is the lure of the hope that, profiting by all previous experiments, we may succeed in formulating the ideal definition—accurate, comprehensive, intelli-

## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

gible and invulnerable to criticism. That is the cherished hope of every Socialist. Secondly, and of greater immediate importance, is the belief that through the labor of constructing our own definition we shall gain fuller and more certain knowledge than could be acquired by much study and exposition of existing definitions. The principle is the well-known law of pedagogics, that learning comes best by doing.

### III

The first step toward definition is a survey of the field, an appreciation of the subject of definition. So our first task must be to delimit the scope of our inquiry. We are concerned only with that great modern movement represented by Marx, Engels, Lassalle, Liebknecht, Bebel, Kautsky, Guesde, Jaurès, Vandervelde, Hyndman, Plechanoff, Adler and others—in a word, with the international Socialism which is the great challenging movement in modern politics. We are not concerned with the dream-castles of the numerous utopian architects from Plato onward. We have nothing to do with schemes and plans devised by ingenious social inventors. Nor

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

are we concerned with that mysticism which inspires the religious devotee with an optimistic faith in the coming of a millennial age of universal brotherhood and peace. That which we are to define is the Socialism which marshals the workers of the world under one banner proclaiming their purpose to be the use of their power to reorganize the political and economic structure of society.

As we observe that movement, study its programs, listen to its advocates in the parliaments, note its struggles for political power and its active participation in the battles of organized labor for economic betterment, we learn the necessary scope of our definition. It must clearly and comprehensively indicate the essential characteristics of Socialism as (1) a criticism of society as it is at present constituted; (2) a philosophy of social progress; (3) an ideal to be attained; (4) a movement inspired by the discontent reflected in the criticism, guided by the philosophy and aiming at the attainment of the ideal.

### IV

*1. Socialism as a criticism of existing society.*—Social discontent is an essential con-



## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

dition of Socialism, but social discontent is not, *per se*, socialistic. Social criticism does not of necessity lead to Socialism. The preacher who arraigns the existing social order and attributes its poverty and other evils to the wickedness of men, to their unregenerated human nature, is not a Socialist, no matter how savage or sweeping his attack may be. The Anarchist whose social indictment points to the extremities of wealth and poverty, to vice, crime, and other evils, attributing them all to the existence of government based upon law backed by force and authority, with a resulting denial of absolute individual freedom, is not a Socialist. He may attack the same evils which the Socialist attacks, and use very similar language, with the result that the two criticisms appear alike to the superficial observer. But in reality they are fundamentally unlike and antagonistic, and they lead logically to radically different proposals.

The Socialist criticism of society, then, is a particular criticism, peculiar to Socialism. Its distinctive characteristic is *class consciousness*, an insistence upon the fact that such evils of capitalist society as poverty, vice, crime, unemployment, overwork, industrial crises, war, and social warfare by

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

such methods as strikes, boycotts and lock-outs, arise from the class domination of society. It emphasizes the fact that in the economic organization of present society one class, a relatively small part of society, owns and controls the natural resources and the machinery of production and exchange. The actual producers of wealth are dependent upon this owning class and subject to exploitation by it.

Thus, we have in society a great conflict of interests. One class, the producing class, is exploited by a smaller class of non-producers. The actual producers do not receive the sum of values which they create, but a far smaller sum in the form of wages. The difference between product and wages constitutes the revenue of the exploiting class as a whole. The affluence of this class, rather than the comfort and well-being of the producers, is the end to which industry is directed. In other words, the primary aim of modern industry is profit for the non-producing but owning class. The genius of capitalism is not exerted to see that all the members of society are well fed, well clothed, well housed, and well equipped with all the advantages and blessings of civilization. It is exerted, rather, to the end of adding to

## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

the luxury and power of the owning class. From this fundamental fact arise most of the evils which harass modern civilization.

As a criticism of the present social order Socialism is an expression of the natural discontent of the producing class. It is, therefore, strictly a class criticism, and inevitably supplies the necessary basis for class-revolt. Yet, as we shall see, it does not condemn the individuals comprising the ruling class, nor assert that the individuals comprising the class in revolt are beings of superior virtue. It does not inspire the individuals of the working class with hatred of the individuals of the capitalist class, but, on the contrary, teaches the folly of such hatred. The philosophy of the Socialist enables him to draw a sharp line between the evils of the system and the responsibility of its beneficiaries. It enables him to see that economic classes are developed by economic necessity, that individuals are not responsible for the basic evils of class rule, and that the remedy for those evils lies in changing the system.

v

2. *Socialism as a philosophy of social progress.*—We cannot understand the phi-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

losophy of Socialism, or its bearing upon the practical movement, without a comprehension of the fact of evolution and the universality of its laws. For Socialism is an interpretation of human progress, a theory of social evolution. The forecast of the future development of society which we call the Socialist ideal, and the program and policies through which the attainment of the ideal is striven for, are based upon a study of the laws governing the evolution of human society.

When we trace the evolution of mankind from pure savagery, through the various stages of barbarism to the great civilizations of antiquity onward to the civilization of the modern world, it is natural that we should seek the motive force of progress. To explain the ascending spiral of human progress has long been the objective of the profoundest thought of mankind. What is the nature of the ladder upon which man has risen from the lowest depths of savagery? Has he risen upon a ladder of beautiful ideals, of dreams, woven by spinners in the sun, or upon a ladder whose rungs are material, a ladder composed of his own material accomplishments?

The Socialist philosophy is based upon

## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

the materialistic hypothesis. Its fundamental tenet is the theory of historical development formulated by Karl Marx. The central proposition of this theory is that the methods of producing and exchanging wealth and the social relations which they involve condition the general character of society, and that the rate and direction of social evolution are conditioned mainly, but not wholly, by the development of production and exchange. Thus, the political and legal institutions of a particular historical epoch, and its general character, depend upon its economic structure. And only an understanding of that economic structure will enable us to understand and explain the characteristics of the epoch. The theory does not deny the influence of other factors, but it does ascribe to economic conditions a controlling influence in social evolution.

It is part of the theory that the great decisive social changes which mark distinct epochs in human history are actually achieved through class conflict. Ever since the introduction of private property and the passing of rude tribal communism, the economic organization of society has resulted in a division of mankind into economic groups or classes with opposing interests.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Whenever a subjugated class has thrown off the yoke of the class by which it was ruled and itself become the ruling class, a comprehensive epochal change has been ushered in. New legal and political institutions have been developed and corresponding social and ethical conceptions. Thus history is, from one point of view, essentially the record of class conflicts and their outcome, each decisive conflict marking a definite historical epoch, a stage in the ascending spiral.

Every ruling class, therefore, has in its turn played an important rôle in the great drama of human progress. Each new ruling class has broken down old tyrannies and widened the area of freedom. Then, having firmly established its own rule and power of exploitation, it has resisted every attempt to further progress made by the classes below. New economic developments—generally the result of discovery or invention—have made it possible for some subject class or group to revolt successfully and to become in its turn the ruling and exploiting class. It was thus that the modern capitalist class, developed by new economic forces, was enabled to overthrow the feudal nobility and was obliged as a condition of its own

## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

success to greatly enlarge the freedom of the individual, opening a new and in many respects splendid epoch.

The modern proletariat differs from every other class in history in one important particular: it is not struggling to acquire the power of exploitation. There is no class beneath it to be exploited. Like all revolting classes, it is struggling to free itself from exploitation and oppression; but, unlike any other revolting class, it can have no hope of becoming an exploiting, oppressing class. It can only free itself by destroying the possibility of economic exploitation altogether. Its victory, therefore, must put an end to all forms of class rule. Therefore, the triumph of the proletariat will mean the end of that cycle of class struggles which began with the dissolution of primitive tribal communism.

### VI

3. *Socialism as an ideal to be attained.* The modern Socialist ideal is a social state free from all forms of class domination. It may be objectively defined as a perfect political and industrial democracy, in which there is no economic exploitation of one class by another, but a complete communism of

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

opportunity. In such a society the worst evils of our present social order could not exist. The class antagonism of to-day would find no place in such a society, nor is it conceivable that poverty, vice, and crime could flourish in it.

Before this perfect political and industrial democracy can be established there must be a complete readjustment of our economic system. That readjustment is the immediate concern of the Socialist movement, which aims at substituting for the present system of production for the profit of a class production for the common good. This involves the abolition of the private or class ownership and control of those agencies of production and exchange which are essentially social in their nature because their functions are social, and the substitution therefor of a system of collective ownership and control.

It is no part of the Socialist ideal to establish and maintain an artificial equality. Therefore, it does not involve the suppression of the private ownership of consumption goods. In this material respect Socialism differs from pure communism. Nor does the Socialist ideal involve the forcible suppression of individual enterprise in pro-



## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

duction and exchange in the interest of a vast state monopoly. The impelling motive of Socialism is the destruction of class rule based upon economic exploitation. Production and exchange by methods which do not involve such exploitation, whether carried on by individuals or by voluntary autonomous groups, is not at all incompatible with the realization of that aim.

### VII

4. *Socialism as a movement.* Of the distinctive features of the modern Socialist movement the most vital is its class character. It is essentially a class movement, having for its aim the emancipation of a particular class, the proletariat. It is not the fact that the majority of its adherents belong to that class which makes it a proletarian movement, and its proletarian character is not lessened, necessarily, by the fact that among its adherents are many who are not proletarians.

One of the remarkable features of the Socialist movement in all lands is the increasing number of non-proletarians to be found in its ranks. This non-proletarian element consists of members of the pro-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

fessional class, small merchants, and manufacturers, farmers, people with moderate incomes derived from investments, together with a relatively small number of active capitalists.

These non-proletarian elements are inspired by a variety of motives. Some are drawn into the movement by intellectual conviction. The intellectual training of the professionals makes it comparatively easy to interest them in the theoretical literature of Socialism. Others are actuated by motives of self-preservation and enlightened self-interest. This applies especially to the small manufacturers and merchants, who see clearly that if capitalism continues to develop along the lines of its recent development they will be forced into the ranks of the wage-earners. Others, like the farmers, join the movement because they are exploited by the great capitalist combinations as surely as the wage-earners are, though in other ways. Finally, many join the movement for purely ethical reasons. They are appalled by the evils of capitalism, its poverty, vice, crime, and strife. They believe that Socialism will destroy those evils and bring nearer the Golden Age of Brotherhood. Probably most of those who come to the

## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

movement from the ranks of the active capitalists, and most of those whose incomes are derived from investments, are thus inspired by ethical considerations.

In some places these non-proletarian elements constitute a very considerable part of the movement. It is easy enough to see that their influence might be exerted to very materially modify the program and policies of the movement, and its temper, or even to destroy its class integrity altogether. But while it is conceivable that this *might* happen, it is not a necessary result of the presence of these non-proletarian elements in the movement. What gives the Socialist movement its proletarian character is not the external fact that it is mainly composed of wage-earners, but the fact that its sole reason for being is to destroy the system of capitalist exploitation and effect the emancipation of the proletariat. So long as the movement aims steadily at that goal, to bring about the collective ownership and control of the means of production and exchange, and refuses to limit its activities to the achievement of reforms within the existing order, it will be a proletarian movement, regardless of its personnel.

Quite as surely as it is a class movement,

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Socialism is an international movement. Wherever economic evolution develops a capitalist class and a proletariat Socialism inevitably appears. But the movement is not merely international in this physical, external sense. It is international in spirit, consciously proclaiming and aiming at international solidarity. It does not, indeed, spend its strength attempting to realize utopian schemes of world-federation, like Fourier's ingenious hierarchy, but it ceaselessly proclaims the unity of interests of the working classes of all lands against the interests of the master classes of all lands. From the very first, the movement has been inspired by the ideal of international working-class solidarity. "Working-men of all countries, unite!" the exhortation of the famous *Communist Manifesto* is an expression of that ideal. That the Socialist movement is, in consequence of its fundamental internationalism, the greatest force in the world making for universal peace is admitted on all sides.

But while the movement is inspired by the ideal of *internationalism*, it is not *anti-national*. There is no reason why a sane and normal love of one's country, which does not involve hatred or envy of any other

## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

country, should be construed as being opposed to the wider ideal of international solidarity, any more than the love of one individual for another should be construed as being opposed to a loyal attachment to the nation. Socialists everywhere have defended the independence of nations while vigorously championing international unity.

### VIII

Finally, the Socialist movement is revolutionary in its character. This feature of the movement is less obvious and more difficult to understand. The popular concept of revolution is still identified with violent uprisings, with bloodshed, arson, and fighting behind barricades. Thus the rebellious outbreaks in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century, the struggles of the "red forties," are regarded as revolutionary.

With such a concept of the meaning of revolution, it is difficult to see wherein the Socialist movement with its more pacific and less dramatic methods is revolutionary. For the activities of the movement are almost everywhere bounded by legal forms. Whether we confine our definition of the movement to the political parties of the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

proletariat which aim to destroy capitalist exploitation through the reconstruction of the state upon the basis of collective ownership and control of the principal means of production and exchange, or broaden it to include all other forms of proletarian effort to that general end, the result is the same. They are all striving within the bounds of law. This is as true of the "mass strikes" of the Socialist unions as it is of the programs and policies of the Socialist parties, or of the industrial and business enterprises of the Socialist co-operatives.

Obviously, if we are to call Socialism a revolutionary movement we must adopt another concept of the meaning of revolution. This is precisely what the Socialist does. He means by revolution not a method of change, but the change itself. He is not concerned with the *means*, but the *end*. What he means by social revolution is such a thorough transformation of the basis of society as will necessarily involve a corresponding change in social relations. He seeks to make the social forces of production social property, subject to social control, in order that all class divisions which treat upon economic exploitation may be abolished. This is the revolution. It is not the less

## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

revolutionary if its accomplishment is as peaceful as the coming of daylight after the blackness of the night.

Another feature of the movement tends to obscure its revolutionary nature and purpose. Everywhere the energies of the movement seem to be largely devoted to the task of securing reforms which, while beneficial to the proletariat, can be realized within the existing social order, without any fundamental, revolutionary change, and are, therefore, not essentially revolutionary. In the parliaments its representatives fight for social legislation for old-age pensions and the like. The unions and the co-operative societies strive to increase wages, lessen the hours of labor, and raise the standard of living. All of these purposes can be realized without abolishing the capitalist system.

It cannot be doubted, I think, that in every country where the Socialist movement is strongly developed it has reached this condition by a remarkable change. In the early stages the emphasis was upon the urgent need of fundamental revolutionary changes, while reforms within the existing order were treated with marked indifference as relatively unimportant. With the growth of power and responsibility more emphasis is

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

laid upon the things which can be done now and here. This is the fact upon which the charge that the movement has ceased to be revolutionary is based.

The explanation of this change is obvious enough. The essence of Socialism, the governing principle of the movement, is not an elaborate theory of social action, but a living reality, the class struggle itself. The Socialist movement is the expression of the proletariat, its fighting arm. And because the proletariat must fight here and now, must resist every force which tends to depress his condition and seize every opportunity to improve his condition, the Socialist movement becomes, apart from theoretical considerations, an agency for the present advancement of the interests of the proletariat. It is of necessity committed to a very definite and comprehensive policy of social reform.

If we take the program of social reform advocated by the Socialists in any country we shall find that it contains very few specific proposals which are not somewhere or other advocated by non-Socialist reformers. But we shall find that the program as a whole has certain qualities which are not to be found in any non-Socialist reform programs; qualities, that is to say, which stamp it as



## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

a Socialist program. In the first place, it is not a thing of shreds and patches, a medley of reforms, unrelated to one another, each one adopted as a cure-all for a particular evil, as though social ills bore no relation to one another. The measures advocated are logically connected with one another like the various parts of a watch. In the second place, every measure in the program is obviously devised for the benefit of the proletariat. There are no proposals aiming to bolster up the middle class, for example; no proposals which aim at "good government." Every measure proposed bears the mark of its birth in the class struggle. Its aim is to increase the power of the working class, and to enable it to win its battles with the master class. The aim of the political reforms proposed is to increase the political power of the proletariat in order that it may wrest control of the state from the master class. The aim of all the other reforms is to raise the workers to a higher economic, intellectual, and moral level in order that their fighting strength may be increased and their victory made certain.

So long as the movement is guided by this principle, and shapes all its policies by the experience of the actual class struggle, there

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

is no danger of its ceasing to be revolutionary and becoming merely a reformist movement. Only when it goes outside of the class struggle and its necessities, and adopts reforms which do not aim at strengthening the working class, as such, for the sake of gaining the votes of those who are not in sympathy with the aims of the proletariat, is there danger of its ceasing to be revolutionary. A Socialist political party which aims to secure social legislation which will strengthen the offensive and defensive powers of the workers does not by that fact become a party of mere reforms, any more than does the revolutionary union lose its rights to that characterization because at a given time and place it aims to secure an increase of wages or a lessening of the hours of labor.

### IX

We are now in a position to formulate our definition. Having surveyed the essential characteristics of Socialism as a criticism of society, as a philosophy, as an ideal, and as a movement, our task is to summarize those characteristics and embody them in a concise statement. We may define Socialism, then, as follows:

## THE DEFINITION OF SOCIALISM

Socialism is a criticism of society which attributes most of the social evils of to-day to the private or class ownership and control of the social forces of production and exchange which enables a class of non-producers to exploit the actual producers of wealth; a theory of social evolution according to which the rate and direction of social progress are determined by the development of the economic factors of production and exchange; a social forecast or ideal of an approaching epoch in social evolution to be distinguished by the collective ownership and control of the principal agencies of production and exchange, the absence of economic exploitation and the equalization of opportunity; an international revolutionary movement, principally consisting of members of the working class, which seeks to control all the powers of the state and to bring about the Socialist ideal.

This definition is as comprehensive as a definition can well be, and will be accepted by practically all Marxian Socialists.

## II

### REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

#### I

OUR title, "Reasons for Socialism," is a trifle ambiguous and needs delimitation. We are concerned here with the *causation* of Socialism, not with its *justification*. It would be a sad misuse of our time to catalogue the reasons why we desire Socialism. The little maiden with the big, wondering eyes who lately helped me to plant bulbs in a New England garden already knows quite well the need for Socialism. We were covering the bulbs well and taking care to provide ample nourishment to insure their healthy development. Little Helper had to have every step explained. Presently she said, "I wish we had Socialism, for then all little children would have nice warm beds and plenty of food and grow strong and

## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

beautiful." Out of the mouth of the babe cometh wisdom! Little Helper knows reasons aplenty why we need Socialism.

Most of us are like Little Helper in that we yearn for Socialism because we believe it will put an end to the evils which distress us, because we believe it will do away with poverty and give warm beds and abundant food to all the children. We see more evils than the child of six knows, and we sense a closer parallel between flowers and babies than she does. We comprehend more fully and clearly the close relation of nutrition and environment to life. That is all. We strive for Socialism because we believe that human life can never attain its richest and fairest flowering until we have conquered the economic problem and provided the soil of nourishing economic conditions.

But poverty and misery are not modern phenomena. They are incalculably aged, infinitely older than Socialism, the whole history of which covers little more than a century. Our present task is to discover and set forth the causative reasons for this modern phenomenon. We are to investigate the economic forces which have brought the Socialist movement into being, determined its aim and shaped its policies.

# SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

## II

In constructing our definition of Socialism we took note of certain striking characteristics of the movement, to wit: its class character as a proletarian protest and struggle, its internationalism, and its revolutionary purpose to transform the whole social order.

Now, if we consider these characteristics of the Socialist movement, together with the central aim of the Socialist program, the collective ownership and control of the principal means of production and exchange, we shall find no difficulty in the proposition that modern Socialism exists as a result of capitalism, and not simply as a result of poverty and misery—evils which are vastly older than capitalism, having existed in all the pre-capitalistic ages.

The capitalist system of production based upon wage-paid labor developed the modern wage-working class whose interests are represented by the Socialist movement. By its development of great world markets capitalism has taken the concept of internationalism from the world of dreams to the world of reality. And capitalism has so developed the processes of production by specializing indus-

## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

trial functions and organizing them in collective production—that is, production by masses of specialized workers—that the collective ownership and control of the means of production appears, for the first time in history, not only as a possibility, but as a most obvious development.

Until the capitalist mode of production was far advanced there existed neither the physical basis nor the justification of necessity for the collective ownership of the means of production and exchange. The all-inclusive causative reason for the Socialist movement is, therefore, modern capitalism. We cannot conceive of such a program being developed apart from the capitalistic development.

Prior to the era of machine production individual production was the rule. The tools were relatively simple and inexpensive, and their purchase did not necessitate a large capital. The individual mechanic could always set up in business for himself provided that he possessed ordinary ambition and skill. So long as this individual production was the rule, private ownership of the necessary implements of production involved no social hardship, and no social advantage from their collective ownership could suggest itself.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

It was quite otherwise when the modest workshop of the individual artisan developed into the factory in which large numbers of workers are engaged in collective production. Instead of the simple and inexpensive tool, intricate and costly machinery, requiring a large amount of capital for its purchase, became the rule. Instead of complete production by the single workman, from raw material to finished product, we have production by masses of workers with specialized functions, the whole intricate system of divided labor being directed and correlated by a special class of workers who bear to industry a relation similar to that which the conductor bears to the orchestra: their function is the direction of the producing power of masses. In place of the relation of an individual producer to an individual customer we have now masses of workers working for an impersonal market.

These, then, are the conditions which have produced the demand for the collective ownership of the principal means of production. Now, as formerly, the tools of individual production are regarded as properly subject to individual ownership and control. There is no demand for the socialization through collective ownership and control of



## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

any but the sources and instruments of social production. Individual production still prevails with individual ownership of tools, and it is quite likely that it will continue to exist to some extent long after the realization of the Socialist program, just as petty production by hand labor has survived the development of machine production. But the dominant and characteristic method of production is collective and social and must be made subject to social control and direction for the collective good.

### III

Capitalism is not only the all-inclusive reason for the being of the Socialist movement, but the particular problems and evils which it presents are responsible for the policies of the movement. But the capitalist system itself is not static. It is not a fixed and unchanging form of social organization. Social forms are never static. Like all life, they are subject to the unchanging universal law of change. The capitalist system is always changing. It is always transforming itself, and in the process it transforms the Socialist movement which it produces.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

that the capitalist system is always transforming itself, and that the Socialist movement must, as a necessity of its own existence, transform itself in like degree. No thoughtful student of Socialism can read with care the literature of the movement and fail to observe that it is profoundly influenced by the changing phenomena of the capitalist system itself. Twenty-five years ago, in our indictment of capitalism, we emphasized the wastefulness of competition. To-day the emphasis is upon the perils of monopoly.

For our present purpose it will be sufficiently accurate and comprehensive to divide the history of the capitalist epoch into three periods. The first, or formative, period is characterized by the workshop system. By the latter part of the fourteenth century the craft guilds had largely supplanted the merchant guilds as rulers of the cities, just as the merchant guilds had wrested their power from the feudal lords. Under the guild system there was some division of labor, some specialization of function, groups of independent workers co-operating and sharing their products upon a basis of quality. Working for wages was exceptional and confined mainly to apprentices. The power of the guilds over the craftsmen was very great.

## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

As the guild system became powerful in government it became more rigid, and journeymen found it increasingly difficult to secure admission to the guilds and thus to become masters. Hence arose journeymen's organizations, the "Bachelor's Companies," similar to the modern trades unions. The guild master now became a petty capitalist, securing the raw materials and giving them out to artisans who were paid by the piece, yard, or other unit of manufacture, doing the work in their own homes or workshops and generally using their own tools. These characteristics of this stage of production have caused it to be called the "domestic system." Many of the artisans lived in the country and combined handicraft and simple agriculture. All the members of the family, even very young children, joined in the work of manufacture, just as we may see them doing to-day in certain "tenement trades."

During all this period we find the relation of the worker to the state to be one of tutelage. The guild had exercised a strict supervision over its members, imposing qualitative standards, fixing prices and hours of labor. So long as the guilds represented apprentices, journeymen, and masters this was not at all a bad thing. But when the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

guilds became masters' organizations completely they used their immense powers to oppress the workmen. Predominant in government, they passed laws fixing prices and hours of labor and forbidding combinations of workmen.

The second period of capitalism, its golden age, began with the birth of the machine age in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the period which we call the Industrial Revolution. Previous changes in the forms of industry had been very slow, but this was an amazingly rapid transition. In 1738 Kay invented the flying shuttle as if in fulfilment of Aristotle's dream of shuttles that should weave of their own accord. Then, in 1767, came Hargreave's "spinning-jenny," followed quickly by Arkwright's "water frame" and Crompton's "mule." Then came Cartwright's power loom and Eli Whitney's "cotton-gin." It was no longer profitable to manufacture textiles laboriously by hand in the homes of the workers. Work-people were gathered into factories in large numbers, the modern industrial proletariat was born.

### IV

We should wander far from our purpose if we attempted to describe the distress and

## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

social anarchy produced by this rapid transformation of the industrial system. Of these things the student can read in the pages of Toynbee, Gibbins, Green, and other historians. Our concern is with the two great features of the new régime—competition in industry and *laissez faire* in political theory and practice.

Under the guilds competition was avoided. To avoid competition was the *raison d'être* of the guild. But the new régime was competitive. Great world markets were opened up and the new methods of production offered rich prizes. Competition was regarded as “the life of trade,” and the description was not unmerited. True, it led to the most appalling misery and degradation of the workers, but it also stimulated invention, pushed outward and onward the boundaries of civilization, and increased productivity to a point heretofore undreamed of.

But competition in industry involved *laissez faire* in legislation. It required the utmost freedom to exploit the workers, an entire absence of legal restrictions as to wages and hours of labor. The political philosophy of the régime was that the best government of all was that which governed least or not at all. True, laws were

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

passed to end and prevent the worst forms of the exploitation of women and children, but they were passed after much struggle against the prevailing political philosophy.

Within this period of capitalism the modern Socialist movement was born. Coming into existence in consequence of, and as a product and revolt against, the evils of capitalist competition, it was inevitable that its propaganda should be directed against the wastefulness of competition and against the failure of the state to care for the life, comfort, and well-being of its citizens. As one turns to the propaganda literature of a generation ago, one is struck by the *a priori* argument against competition, and the eagerness with which collective institutions developed by the capitalist system, like the post-office, for example, are used to illustrate the needlessness of the competitive waste.

It is a notable instance of the irony of history that the destruction of competition has been largely achieved, but not through the efforts of those who first saw its evils and struggled so nobly to destroy it. Competition is to-day regarded as a curse by the leaders of the capitalist class. They no

## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

longer regard it as the life of trade and industry, but rather as a deadly force to be shunned. They have found that competition ruins trade and industry and exhausts the competitors.

It is one of the greatest of the many merits of Marx, the great thinker who gave to Socialism the force and character of a science, that he foresaw and foretold this result. More than fifty years ago Marx plainly described the process of concentration and monopoly growing out of competition. Competition, he pointed out, carries within itself the germs of its own destruction. The units of production must increase in size, and with every increase of size competition between them must become more dangerous, and the failure of a single competitor involve a wider circle of misery and suffering. The tendency must be toward combination and monopoly, he argued, and monopoly being incompatible with the fundamental institutions of capitalism, must burst these asunder and result in socialization—that is, in the transfer of the ownership and control of industry to the body politic. Laughed at and derided for many years, this Marxian prophecy has been largely fulfilled.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

### v

We are now in the third and last period of capitalism. This period is characterized by new forms of industrial ownership, administration, and control, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by a theory of the relation of the state to industry utterly unlike the *laissez faire* philosophy of the previous period. Economically it is distinguished by the concentration of industry and the elimination of competition. Politically it is distinguished by a vast extension of the powers of the state, an increasing amount of interference with the conduct of industry, and the social relations involved in production and exchange between employers and employed, vendors and consumers. The regulation of monopoly, a task imposed upon the modern state, has given rise to a great body of legislation of this kind.

In reality, this is the period of the decline of capitalism. Competition and a minimum of governmental regulation are the essential conditions of capitalist society. Monopoly and government regulation of industry mark the period of transition to a new epoch. It is still the era of capitalism, but the era of capitalism in decline. Its glory lies in



## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

the past. It has no considerable scope for further development. Just as an industrial revolution created the necessary conditions for its development, so a social revolution is already developing which will bring it to a close and create the necessary conditions for the development of a new epoch.

Just as the characteristics of the Socialist movement in the competitive period were peculiar to the economic and social conditions of that period, so the new economic and social conditions are reflected in the changed character of Socialist propaganda and policy. A new set of problems has to be met and grappled with.

The trusts have profoundly influenced the life of modern society, and their influence has not been wholly good or wholly bad. The destruction of competition has not been achieved under the urge of the idealism of the Socialists who a generation ago denounced it. The capitalists themselves have, in obedience to the laws of their own existence, organized industry upon new lines. Naturally, they have not aimed at the goal of the Socialist, but at a very different goal, the perpetuation of their own rule and power. Monopolized industry has lessened waste, enormously conserved productive energy,

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

regulated production and exchange, and diminished the frequency and duration of industrial and commercial crises and upheavals.

It is no longer necessary for the Socialist to emphasize the evils of competition as he formerly did. His assault to-day is upon capitalist monopoly. Industry is still run for profit, and the laborers are still exploited in the interests of the capitalist class. The exploitation is, on the whole, greater than ever. There is a greater intensity of labor to begin with. Never at any time in the world's history have men worked at the exhausting pace demanded to-day. And the economic organizations of the workers are relatively less powerful than they were in the competitive era. Then they could take advantage of the divided state of the employing class, attacking the single employer and reckoning upon his fear of losing his trade to his rivals. But where a single great trust practically controls an industry this is no longer possible. The unorganized state of the workers employed in the industries which are most trustified is not an accident.

Monopoly makes possible the arbitrary fixing of prices. Formerly, with free and

## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

unfettered competition, the price of commodities rose or fell according to the relation of supply to demand. The cost of production, the chief element of which was the labor cost, was a norm or standard around which prices hovered. But with the attainment of complete or practical monopoly the price of commodities are arbitrarily fixed, without relation to production-cost. Despite the enormous economies in production the prices of commodities steadily rise. Thus a double source of exploitation is maintained. The worker is exploited "goin' an' comin'," as a consumer as well as in his capacity as a producer; through the medium of prices as well as through the medium of his wages.

This that Marx called the "secondary exploitation" of the worker, formerly relatively unimportant, now becomes extremely important. It is no longer possible for the Socialist propagandist to claim that prices matter little to the proletariat; that there is an automatic adjustment of wages to prices. The world-wide revolt of the workers against famine prices, the universal concern over the high cost of living, rent-strikes, meat-boycotts and bread-riots show how vital and far-reaching this new evil is. Thus we find

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

all Socialist parties everywhere adapting themselves to the new conditions, abandoning outworn theories and fighting against the subtle peril of "secondary exploitation."

The amount of exploitation is hidden as never before by means of the overcapitalization which monopoly makes possible. Immense profits upon the capital actually invested appear as small or nominal profits only upon the inflated and "watered" total capitalization. This is one of the ways by which the exploitation of the workers is hidden from view, and it makes the socialization of industry all the more desirable and necessary.

Another new problem which involves an important readjustment of Socialist policy to social conditions is the new alignment of classes which is taking place. In the heyday of capitalism, the competitive era, the proletariat was practically the only class in revolt. There were, of course, notable exceptions, members of other classes, some of whom rendered great service to the movement of the proletariat. But to-day we find that the small merchant, the petty manufacturer, the professional man, and the farmer are dominated and controlled by the trusts, and exploited by them just as surely as the

## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

wage-worker is, though in other ways. To the manual wage-working class other elements are now uniting themselves, and the struggle is more and more becoming one between the active capitalists and their allies and the rest of the people. Of course, this adds much of assurance to our hope of early triumph, but it also extends the scope of our movement. The term "working class" must henceforth signify to us not only the wage-earners, but the small farmers and small shopkeepers and a goodly portion of the professional workers.

### VI

When we turn to the state and its relation to the economic life of our time, we are challenged anew to political struggle. It becomes increasingly necessary for the working class to conquer the political powers, to wrest the control of the state from the master class. I am not unmindful of the recent development of a semi-anarchistic spirit within the Socialist movement, of the impatience at the slowness of political methods, and the distrust of the state manifested by our Syndicalist friends, when I say that the political life of to-day holds for the working class no greater lesson than the urgent need

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

for political action and the control of the state.

Socialism implies the ownership and control of the sources and instruments of social production by the collectivity, the whole adult community. This aim is fundamentally and irreconcilably opposed to the idea of the ownership and control of industries by the workers engaged in them—that is, to the ownership of the coal-mines by the coal-miners, the railways by the railway-workers, and so on. The state is the only organization comprehensive enough to represent the whole community. It is true that to-day the state is dominated by the capitalist class and represents the interests of that class. But it can be socialized, and that is the task which lies before us. Without the socialization of the state the socialization of production and exchange is impossible.

With the development of monopoly the state becomes, as Frederick Engels long ago predicted it would, a perfect capitalist machine. The *laissez faire* philosophy is definitely abandoned, and its place is taken by a philosophy which imposes upon the state responsibility for the proper regulation of industry and the conditions of employment to some extent. We hear less of the theory

## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

of "freedom of contract." Legislation providing for old-age pensions and insurance against accident and disease is sponsored by capitalist political parties, in the hope that thus the workers may be pacified and their revolutionary aspirations tamed and subdued. Even the nationalization of great capitalistic functions, the once-dreaded "government ownership," is complacently regarded as a development of the near future. The state and the capitalist class becoming practically identical, the state is no longer feared by the capitalist class.

Socialists need not fear that the revolutionary temper and mission of the working class will be impaired or destroyed by an improvement in the conditions of life. Experience teaches no lesson more clearly than that the slum proletariat is the least desirable and least dependable element in a truly revolutionary movement. A high degree of physical, mental, and moral development is an essential condition of success. Marx taught us that in the *Communist Manifesto*. We need not be alarmed when capitalist political parties "steal our thunder."

Yet, it were infinitely better to secure these and other reforms ameliorative of our present condition by our own might, by

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

struggle, rather than to receive them as concessions on the part of a shrewdly prudent master class. I am not thinking so much of the fact that wisdom enjoins us to "beware of the Greeks bringing gifts," that the reforms themselves are less valuable, less extensive, than the reforms we might ourselves accomplish. There is a profounder, if subtler, reason than that: in securing social reforms by our own struggle as a class, wresting them from the master class, we attain something greater than the social reforms themselves—namely, an increase of class solidarity, and we advance toward the conquest of the state, the crucial act of social revolution.

At first sight it might appear that the proposal to extend government ownership, no matter what the source of the proposal, ought to be welcomed as a definite step toward the Socialist goal, a certain hastening of the Co-operative Commonwealth. Yet it may well prove, on closer examination, to be something else, an obstacle to the onward march of the proletariat, a device for the prolongation of capitalist-class rule. Of course even government ownership in the interests of the capitalist class has for us great potential value. It provides the necessary forms, the organization, for socializa-



## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

tion which will be of infinite value when we wrest the state from the control of the capitalist class. In this sense state ownership is aptly described as a form waiting to be vitalized by the breath of the Socialist spirit, like the form of red earth in the Bible legend into which God breathed the living, vitalizing breath. That is what Engels meant when he wrote, "State ownership of productive forces is not the solution of the conflict; but it contains in itself the formal means of the solution, the handle to it." The need for the political struggle and victory of the revolutionary movement is not lessened, but increased by social reforms and so-called "State Socialism."

It matters greatly to us whether that which is generally called "State Socialism," but which I prefer to call "State Capitalism," is to become extensive and general or a mere incident in social development. It matters greatly to us whether it is to obtain for a brief period only or prevail over a long series of years. The capitalist state is not less ruthless as an exploiter of labor than the individual capitalist, or the capitalist corporation—except in so far as the workers can menace its existence and thereby modify its rule.

It is because "State Capitalism" is full of

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

peril to the workers, and involves the danger of a despotic industrial oligarchy, that we must devote ourselves with all our energies to securing control of the political organization of society, the state. Belittling the political action of our class, advocating its relinquishment for other methods, is reactionary. In the words of Liebknecht, it is to "erect inaction into a program and practise the propaganda of do-nothing with a flood of revolutionary phrases."

### VII

The task of transforming capitalist society arrived at the stage of monopoly into Socialist society need not be a long one. Given the necessary intelligence and determination of the proletariat, the change can be made far more quickly than was the development of competition to monopoly as the characteristic form of capitalism. With fine insight into the law of social development, Marx long ago pointed out that the process of developing industry is one of accelerating speed. The domestic stage was the longest period without substantial change. The competitive stage required a much longer period for its full development than it has taken monopoly to attain its present high state of perfection.

## REASONS FOR SOCIALISM

With the political power in our hands ready for use, the conquest of the state need not take a long time. And once we have taken the control of the state into our hands the socialization of industrial monopolies can be speedily accomplished. There is no conflict between the evolutionary view of society and the concept of social revolution. To regard society as a developing organism does not impose upon us the acceptance of immeasurable periods of time, like geological epochs, for the realization of our program.

There is no finality to the human struggle; the time will never come when men will say, "We have scaled the highest heights, let us be content; there is no further goal challenging our powers." So I speak not of the end of all struggle to nobler and freer life. But it is my profound belief that the next stage of the eternal march can be reached in a much shorter time than most of us dare to think—that there are children already living whose eyes will greet the day when mothers shall bring their babies into the world in the glad consciousness that they are heirs to all the opportunities and advantages of life, and that their toil shall never be exploited by the masters of bread.

### III

#### THE SOCIALIST STATE

##### I

IN Ibsen's great drama, "Hedda Gabler," the ill-starred Eilert Lövborg tells Tesman, his rival, of a new book which he has written, saying that it "deals with the future." Tesman, unimaginative soul, exclaims: "With the future! But, good heavens! we know nothing of the future!" and Lövborg answers, "No, but there is a thing or two to be said about it all the same." That seems to me to be an admirable statement of the attitude we must take toward the Socialist State. Unimaginative souls may scoff at the idea of our attempting to forecast the main features of the coming social order, however tentatively, and tell us that we can know nothing about the future. "But there is a thing or two to be said about it all the same."

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

I do not propose to waste time here discussing at length the hoary question of the destruction or disappearance of the state, so familiar to students of our academic literature. I have dealt with the subject at great length in my *Applied Socialism*. In the main, the furious controversy over the use of the term "Socialist State" is, as Liebknecht said at the Erfurt Convention of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, in 1891, "a pure strife of words." It is a notable example of the "Talmudic hair-splitting" so commonly encountered in Socialist literature.

The subject would hardly merit any attention at this time but for the fact that the Syndicalist agitation has revived interest in it. In the recent controversy between Pannekoek and Kautsky in the *Neue Zeit*, upon party tactics, Pannekoek argued that the essence of the proletarian revolution is "the complete destruction of the organization of the state." Those who hold this view commit the vital error of too narrowly defining the state as an agency of class oppression, and ignoring its other characteristics and functions. I do not think that I can be accused of failing to see the importance of the state to the capitalist class as a means of coerc-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

ing the workers and defending the capitalist system, nor can such a charge be brought against the Socialist movement in general.

What we say is that the fact that the powers of the state are used to oppress the workers and to maintain the rule of the exploiting class is a good reason why the workers should struggle to obtain control of that power, but not a reason for the destruction of the state. All that is needed is a change in the use of the power. The ancient distinction between Anarchism and Socialism holds good—the Socialist wants to acquire the power of the state and use it, while the Anarchist wants to destroy it. The state is not merely an agent of class rule. It has many other functions, entirely social. The future will witness a great extension of these social functions. But the state will remain and its powers will, in all probability, be increased. To emphasize the vital distinction between our position and that of the Anarchists, there is some advantage in the use of the term "Socialist State" to describe the social organization of the future.

### II

Now, it is the most natural thing in the world that those whom we seek to enlist in

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

the Socialist movement should desire some definite description of our goal. It is both natural and reasonable that the great question should be asked, "How will the Socialist principles you advocate be realized in actual practice?" Surely, when we say that we are working to bring about a reorganization of society, a co-operative commonwealth, we must have some mental picture before us, inspiring our labor and our sacrifice! We must see more or less well defined social institutions and relations and regard them as our goal.

But, strangely enough, we have hesitated to describe this goal with anything like the clearness with which we perceive it. We have been too ready to dismiss the most reasonable request for information upon this vital matter with the impatient and not altogether relevant remark that we are neither prophets nor the sons of prophets. For this attitude there can be no adequate defense. It arises, I think, partly from a deplorable intellectual indolence and partly also from a narrow, sectarian pride of intellect. As evolutionists who have rejected the naïve methods of the old Utopia-makers, we aim above all else to keep ourselves free from the slightest taint of the much-dreaded evil

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

of "utopianism," and so adopt a policy of silence concerning the future, except for the single generalization that it will be free from class domination and exploitation.

It is true enough, of course, that thousands of questions can be asked about the future which are best met by the simple statement that we are not prophets, questions which we cannot honestly answer in any other way. But we must be very careful not to repeat this reply, parrot-like, every time a question is asked concerning the Socialist State. There are many questions to which we can confidently give very definite and comprehensive replies, and many others to which we can suggest possible and helpful answers.

But how shall we avoid the pitfalls of utopianism? What are the boundaries of the scientific spirit and method? How shall we test the soundness of our forecast?

These questions, which form themselves in the mind of every serious student of the problem before us, can be best answered in the light of a clear understanding of the differences between the utopian and scientific methods. The term "utopianism" has rather a technical value in our Socialist literature. It refers not so much to the attempt



## THE SOCIALIST STATE

to forecast the development of society as to the manner in which the forecast is attempted. Utopianism consists in the disregard of the realities of economic and social development and the basing of schemes or forecasts upon abstract principle. Your true utopian regards human society as a thing to be molded at will. Untrammelled by any consideration for the laws of social evolution, he asks himself, "What is the most desirable organization conceivable?" and develops his plans to accord with the answer to that question which his own reasoning brings him.

The scientific method is very different. It is based upon a recognition of the great fact of the universality of evolution. Social systems are not made in accordance with preconceived plans; they develop under the pressure of great social and economic forces and needs. Human society is not a machine, but a living organism. The new social order will not be "made," but will grow out of the present social order in response to our experience, our needs, and the pressure of economic development.

This is by no means a doctrine of social fatalism. It does not involve the idea of the automatic development of society, re-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

ardless of human will and effort. It does not make puppets of human beings, and condemn them to drift helplessly with the vast currents of blind forces. Circumstances do shape the lives of men, but men also shape circumstances. As Liebknecht said at Erfurt, nearly a quarter of a century ago: "As the class war is a constant human wrestle, so the attainment of our end can only be the fruit of a ceaseless war, in which all fight together, and each throws his whole self, his existence, recklessly into the balance, joyfully staking life and property."

So, the scientific method limits our forecast to the observed facts and tendencies of evolution. The Socialist ideal itself is not the arbitrary creation of the mind, but essentially an interpretation of the trend of the evolutionary development of society. We must not make plans and schemes; our forecast must not be *utopian*, but must be a logical deduction from the realities of social and economic development, the facts of the present considered in their proper relation to the facts of the past. Such a forecast will not have the ample wealth of detail which the ingenuity of a Bellamy invents. It will necessarily be limited to rather broad generalizations. But it will

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

have far greater value than the detailed utopian description. The proper valuation and comprehension of the tendencies of economic development will enable us to act in intelligent co-operation with them, and to hasten development instead of retarding it, as many of our well-meaning reformers do.

### III

Our definition of Socialism as an ideal describes it as "a social forecast or ideal of an approaching epoch in social evolution to be distinguished by the collective ownership and control of the principal agencies of production and exchange, the absence of economic exploitation and the equalization of opportunity." In other words, the Socialist ideal is synonymous with full political, industrial, and social democracy. Discussing this subject in another place,<sup>1</sup> I wrote, "Socialism without democracy is as impossible as a shadow without light." That is true, but it is not the whole truth. Socialism is not only inseparable from democracy, it is identical with it. Not only is Socialism inconceivable apart from democracy, but de-

<sup>1</sup> *Socialism, a Summary and Interpretation of Socialist Principles*. New and Revised Edition (1909), p. 287.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

mocracy is inconceivable apart from Socialism. Democracy implies the abolition of class restrictions and distinctions, of all privileges based upon birth or possession. Formal equality, whether of political power, legal status, or educational opportunity, does not constitute democracy. So long as economic exploitation is possible, democracy is an unrealized dream.

The political organization of the Socialist State must be democratic. Class distinctions in citizenship are incompatible with Socialism. With very rare exceptions, Socialists have universally held that political democracy includes equal suffrage, regardless of sex; that sex distinctions and privileges are essentially anti-democratic. Men like my good friend, Belfort Bax, who insist upon excluding sex equality from their interpretation of political democracy, and who oppose equal suffrage for both sexes, by their extreme isolation in the Socialist movement serve to prove how completely the broader conception of democracy prevails in the movement. Personally, I cannot imagine a Socialist State basing the suffrage on sex distinctions.

Democracy is generally far too narrowly defined as the "rule of the majority." The

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

implied indifference to the rights of minorities has brought the term into contempt among Socialist writers. But indifference to and suppression of minority rights are not necessary conditions of democracy. The most careful protection of the rights of minorities may well characterize the most highly developed democracy. Indeed, safeguards of minority rights already appear. We have, as Bernstein remarks, already come to regard the oppression of the minority by the majority as "undemocratic" and repugnant to the modern mind. There is every reason to believe that this solicitude for the minority will become even stronger under Socialism.

But how will the popular will be manifested in the Socialist State—will representative parliamentary government prevail or will its place be taken by some form of direct legislation? By "direct legislation" I mean legislation by the deliberative assemblages of citizens, like the "town meeting" of New England, on the one hand, and legislation by the popular Initiative and Referendum, on the other hand. Will any or all of these take the place of elected parliaments?

So far as I can see, there is nothing to

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

warrant such an expectation. It is true that our conceptions of democratic methods are in a state of great uncertainty and flux. Parliamentary government is condemned for its slowness, its compromises, and its tendency to reaction. In the name of democracy it is demanded that the powers of parliamentary bodies be lessened, and legislation directly initiated and approved or rejected by popular vote. But, on the other hand, also in the name of democracy, we find a growing protest against the evils of crude democracy. Too many officials have to be elected by popular vote to make it possible for the voters to make an intelligent, independent choice, or to be other than the docile slaves of political "machines." So we get demands for commission government in our cities, and for the short ballot—that is, restricting the number of elective officers and increasing the number of appointive ones. At first sight this appears to be a reactionary and undemocratic demand, and it certainly is opposed to a view of democracy which has largely prevailed. But if the voter is forced to vote for so many officials that he cannot readily acquaint himself with the fitness for office of more than a few of them, and must vote blindly a "slate" prepared

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

by a few experts, the result is more oligarchic than democratic. Certainly it is less democratic than if he could vote for a smaller number of officials, into the fitness and worth of each of whom he could inquire, and leave to the representatives of his choice the selection of the minor officials. Whatever dangers are involved in the latter method could be more easily guarded against than the dangers of the former method.

While the Initiative and Referendum will doubtless hold an important place in the political machinery of the Socialist State, it is not at all likely that they will supplant parliamentary government. It is practically impossible for masses of citizens to initiate and enact a systematic, coherent, and efficient legislative policy. Those devices of popular direct legislation are extremely important as safeguards of democracy. They are valuable as a right rather than as a method. Direct legislation is indeed "the gun in the corner," to be used in case of attack.

Summing up this phase of our discussion, we may confidently predict (1) that the Socialist society of the future will be definitely organized, with a government having legislative, administrative, and judicial func-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

tions very highly developed. In other words, it will be a state in the full sense of the word. (2) That it will be a political democracy, the rights of citizenship and participation in the government being common to all men and women without distinction of class, sex, or possession. (3) That representative parliamentary government, amply safeguarded by the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall, will be the general method of government.

### IV

Industrial democracy is as inseparable from the concept of Socialism as is political democracy. And the attainment of that ideal involves the whole range of the economic problem—the organization of production and distribution, the relation of the state to industry, the rights of property, and the balancing of interests between the citizen as citizen and the citizen as a producer.

It will greatly simplify our task to bear in mind the class *motif* of Socialism, and the important and definite limits which it imposes upon our actual program. The aim of the proletarian struggle is to abolish economic exploitation and all artificial inequalities of opportunity. The aim is not



## THE SOCIALIST STATE

to create a state of equality of character, of attainment, of possession. Such equality may or may not be attainable; it may or may not be desirable. With such questions we are not here and now concerned. The one fact of importance is that the struggle for Socialism is a class movement, the struggle of the producing class to free itself from economic exploitation at the hands of the capitalist class.

It is obvious that attainment of this aim does not of necessity require the denial of all forms of private property rights. It does not require the collectivization of property which is not and cannot be used as capital to exploit the labor of others than its owners. What a relief this gives! What a way of escape from the bothersome tribe of Mrs. Wilfers, who, when they learn that Socialism involves a program of collectivism, at once conclude that the sacred institution of private property is to be ruthlessly destroyed. They conjure up a vision of a vast bureaucracy regimenting the people, herding them in barracks, clothing them in uniforms, feeding them at a communal table, and issuing tooth-brushes for a stated period each day from the communal repository of toilet requisites.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Now, in fairness it must be confessed that our own writers and propagandists are in some degree responsible for this view of Socialism. We have not always been as careful as we might have been in defining our aim. For example, I pick up a book of essays by my friend Bax, and find that, answering the question, "What is vital in Socialism?" he places first and foremost "the collectivization of *all* the instruments of production."<sup>1</sup> Because he is very careful to print the word "all" in italics I take it that its use is not accidental, but that Bax regards it as a vital element in his definition.

But if every means of production, regardless of whether its function is social or individualistic, and whether or not it is or may be used as a means of economic exploitation, is to be taken from private hands and made subject to collective ownership and control, I do not see how we are to escape a bureaucracy as frightful as the worst visions of our opponents. There could be no such a thing as private ownership of a paint-brush, a hammer, a chafing-dish, or even a needle. These things are all "means of production" and would have to be taken,

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Socialism, New and Old*, by Ernest Belfort Bax, London, 1907, p. 101.

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

by permission, from the communal tool-house for temporary use. Perhaps it would be necessary to have and use political "pull" to get that permission to use! How such a system of universal collectivism could be maintained without an intolerable amount of bureaucracy and espionage I, for one, do not see.

For myself, I unhesitatingly reject the definition and claim that it completely misses the point of modern Socialism. Its basis is an arbitrary, utopian conception of society. It fails utterly to comprehend the fact that Socialism has its roots in the class exploitation and oppression of class; that the dynamic force of the movement is not an idealistic passion for collective ownership, as such, but a passion and determination to be free from economic servitude.

### v

We must not make the mistake of forgetting or ignoring the fact that we are evolutionists just as surely as we are revolutionists. While we contemplate and aim at social reorganization of the most comprehensive and fundamental character, we must not lose sight of the fact that the great law

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

of evolution will not and cannot be abrogated. Our philosophy precludes indulgence in the belief that Socialist society will suddenly appear, fully developed, obliterating every trace of the present social order. Social epochs are not thus sharply separated and wholly independent of one another. In the scheme of progress one thread is woven by one age and other threads by other ages. And because through the ages "one unceasing purpose runs," the result is an ordered development, a pattern. This is the simple intricacy of human progress. To change the metaphor: each age inherits from the ages before it forms, institutions, forces, and ideals—all that those ages possessed which perishes not with them simply because it is adaptable to the new order or, it may be, essential to it. Thus, in the building of to-day there are stones which were quarried in the past, and the stones which we are now quarrying and shaping for our present building shall reappear in the great structure of the future. Just as in some old cathedrals we find blended into a gloriously harmonious whole remnants of buildings belonging to many different generations, so it is in the social order.

Many feudal institutions remained after

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

the feudal system itself had disappeared. Indeed, they remain still. They are not mere relics like the ruins of old castles which lend charm to the landscape, but actively function within the present order. In like fashion, though we speak of the domestic system of production as something outlived, replaced by the factory system, we know that there is still a good deal of domestic manufacture, as witness our tenement industries. And in like fashion, we may be sure, remnants of capitalism will be found in the future long after men have accustomed themselves to speak of capitalism as a past epoch and to describe their present age as the Socialist epoch.

It goes without saying that when that stage has been reached there will still remain a limitless future to be conquered. Finality in the human struggle is inconceivable. Man will climb to the heights of his farthest dreams. Just as the mountaineer, when he reaches what he believed to be the top of the mountain, finds that he has but climbed to one peak, and that other and higher peaks challenge him to new efforts, so when the present ideal is attained, instead of finding the land of contentment, the human spirit will be con-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

fronted by the challenge of new and far-off ideals.

What we are to do, or attempt, therefore, is to sketch the conditions essential to the economic life of that stage of society which, because of the collective ownership of the principal sources and methods of production, can be called Socialism, and not the economic life of a perfect human society. And our sketch must not be the result of reasoning from an abstract ideal, but must be the reasoned result of an evaluation and interpretation of the facts and tendencies of economic development.

### VI

The abolition of economic exploitation involves the necessity of the social ownership and control of those productive forces which by reason of their magnitude, or the dependence of the social life and well-being upon their proper administration, cannot be left in the hands of a class without resulting either in economic exploitation by a class or the dependence of society upon the good-will of a class, or both those evils. It is not incompatible with

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

- (a) Private property in consumption goods;
- (b) Private ownership and direction of production which does not involve either the exploitation of labor or the subjection of the community life;
- (c) Collective production by autonomous groups of co-operative workers, which does not involve economic exploitation or imperil the independence and welfare of others than the members of the groups.

It is quite likely that there will be a good deal of private industrial enterprise in the Socialist State for a long time—perhaps permanently. It is quite likely, also, that there will be a good deal of production by voluntary autonomous groups. Of course, these forms of production would necessarily be subject to supervision and regulation by the state; the Socialist State could not, for example, permit an unbalanced individual to maintain an unsanitary workshop and to imperil his own health and that of others besides himself. To do that in the name of personal freedom would be to retrograde to a condition which we have already long outgrown. Yet, within the limits prescribed by prudence for the social welfare and safety, the Socialist State would insure to the individual an inviolable freedom. In the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

maintenance of an individual citizen by his own labor, without injury to society, and without the exploitation of another's labor or needs, it would find no menace to its authority, or to its collective organization of production, but rather the realization by the individual of its own ideal and *raison d'être*.

The place of voluntary industrial enterprise in the Socialist régime and its administration really presents few problems of difficulty. In the first place, the limitations of the scope of such industry are developed automatically, or, rather, are inherent qualities of its own existence. The difference between a tool of such obvious individuality as a hand-saw and the complex machinery of a factory is not more marked than the difference between the production of special bindings for rare books, for example, and the production of coal. The former could be left to individual enterprise with entire safety to the community as a whole, but if the latter industry were left to individual enterprise it would necessarily result in subjecting the collective life to individual domination—that is, to economic despotism and subjection. Nor is there any great difficulty implied by the necessity of regulating



## THE SOCIALIST STATE

such private industrial enterprises. We have already developed not only the philosophy of such regulation, but the practice itself. Even to-day we invade the home, if need be, to prevent work under conditions which imperil the social good.

The real problem lies in the application of the principle of democracy to the administration of industry. Government ownership, *per se*, is not more difficult than ownership by a corporation. And the more despotic it is, the easier the problem of administration. But to make the administration democratic—that is, to secure the determination of wages, hours of labor, and similar matters of vital importance, by democratic methods is a far more difficult problem. It is not an insoluble problem: there are indications of the manner of its probable solution in the life of present industrial society. Here, as elsewhere, we see in the present the germs of the future society. Yet we must not minimize the magnitude and extreme importance of the task.

### VII

There are some, especially among our Syndicalist friends, who believe that the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

administration of the collectively owned industries ought to be, and probably will be, left exclusively to the workers engaged in those industries. This view is motivated by that crude concept of democracy which led to the selection of officers by the soldiers themselves, from their own ranks, in Paris during the Commune of 1871. Never was the method more justified than then, and never was it applied under more favorable conditions, but it was a ghastly failure. That it could be more successfully applied to industry, under normal conditions, without the glamour and consuming enthusiasm of war-stirred patriotism, and made a permanent condition, it is difficult to believe.

Let us ignore the element of skepticism concerning its practicability, however, and consider it from another angle, its desirability. Would the method be desirable if practical difficulties did not exist? Would it be a democratic method? Surely there can be only one answer to the latter question: Such a method is essentially as undemocratic as can well be imagined, as undemocratic as the proposal to exclude the workers altogether from participation.

That this is so a single concrete illustration will show. The workers engaged in the

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

operation of the railroads are not the only persons whose lives are dependent upon the efficient management of the railroads. Every life in the land, practically, depends to a greater or less extent upon the operation of the railways. They are too thoroughly social, too intimately bound up with the vital interests of all the people in the nation, to warrant placing their control in the hands of any group or class. To rest the administration of such a vast social function solely in the hands of the workers engaged in its operation would give those workers the power to tyrannize over the whole of society. To say that they would use their power wisely, that they would be conscientious trustees, and that they would never use their power against the common good will bring no assurance to the Socialist who is not hypnotized by phrases. He will recognize that as the ancient plea of all the despotisms of history. The bald fact remains that it would create a new form of class rule.

Now, let us consider the suggestion from still another angle: Even if we grant that, in the long run, all forms of social labor are equally valuable, that the labor of the sewer-builder is quite as important and valuable to society as the labor of the physician, we

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

must, I think, grant that there are some forms of labor which can be dispensed with for relatively long periods of time without great danger, while to dispense with other forms of labor for relatively short periods of time would be dangerous and disastrous. Furniture factories might close down for months, for example, and create great inconvenience, but we should be able to live somehow. A cessation of work in the coal-mines for half so long would be a thousand times more serious. Or, take a great modern city, dependent for its food-supply upon the rest of the world. A strike of its clothing factories would be a serious inconvenience, but the city could, in some fashion, manage to live for many months without new supplies. Stop its transportation systems, cut off its food-supply, and in a few weeks it would be decimated by famine and disease.

Obviously, therefore, some industries are of more critical importance than others, despite the fact that all may be, in the long run, equally necessary. Obviously, also, the plan of giving exclusive control of industries to the workers engaged in them would give the workers in some industries great strategic advantages, as compared with other

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

workers, enabling them more easily to exert their will regardless of the public will. The method is essentially undemocratic and would result in an economic hierarchy of the most dangerous type.

Equally undemocratic and dangerous is the suggestion that the workers should not participate in the management of the industries in which they are employed, but that all administrative power should be left to "experts." As the method of management for a ruling class, for government ownership by a class state, this is almost ideal. But it is not a democratic method. Democracy is equally imperiled by it as by the other method. Wherein is the worker less than a slave if he has no voice in determining his conditions of labor, his wages and hours of toil and leisure? To give the workers sole control is to make them masters of society; to deny them any power is to make them slaves.

How, then, is the problem to be solved? If our answer depended upon our ideas of right and wrong, and was therefore simply an expression of our desire, we probably would declare for some middle course, avoiding both extremes. It is most probable that we should agree that the administration of

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

industry ought to be jointly shared by the accredited representatives of society as a whole and the workers, as such, through representatives chosen by themselves. Thus, every citizen would, as citizen, be represented in the industrial governing body, and every worker would, as worker, be represented in the directing body of his particular industry. This would involve the creation of joint governing bodies composed of representatives of the state and representatives of the employees, with some provision for the arbitration of matters concerning which the joint bodies could not agree.

There would be little value in this suggestion of a possible solution if it were merely an arbitrary creation of the desire. As a matter of fact, it has the greater value of reality. The beginnings of such a method are already existent and clearly discernible. We have to-day our trade-unions and employers' associations forming joint committees to fix the hours of labor and the rates of pay, and providing for arbitration whenever they fail to agree. May this not be the elementary form of the method of meeting the problem in the Socialist State, the germ of the organism necessary to industrial democracy?

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

### VIII<sup>u</sup>

How will labor be remunerated in the Socialist régime? The question is not to be disposed of by the familiar reply of the soap-box propagandist, "Why, each worker will get the exact value of his product." Even if the answer is modified by adding the words, "minus his share of the social expenditure, including the maintenance of social dependents, those incapable of labor," the reply begs the question. It is quite impossible to separate the contribution of the individual worker from the mass, to determine his exact share in production. For example, how shall we tell the exact contribution to the value of the Chicago-made machine of the switchman on the railway at any given point of its transportation to the place of its use? It would be easy to multiply puzzles of this kind.

On the other hand, suppose we could discover the exact share of each individual in the production of goods, would remuneration upon that basis deserve to be called socialistic? Would it not be, on the contrary, the most unadulterated individualism? Inequalities of capacity are very great and very real. Such a method would pre-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

serve the rule of the strong and the subjection of the weak. It would not socialize advantage.

The ready acceptance of this crude, individualistic project by Socialists is due to a misinterpretation of Marx's theory of value. "Labor is the source of all value and value is justly measured by labor," say the superficial interpreters of Marx, "therefore, to the laborer must go the values which he creates." But if they could be induced to read even the first chapter of Marx's great work, *Capital*, they would soon perceive that the theory of value has no such implications. All that it presumes to offer is an explanation of the mechanism of capitalist production. It refers exclusively to "those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails." It has nothing whatever to do with other methods of production either of the past or of the future, as Engels, Kautsky, and others have shown.<sup>1</sup>

Exactly opposite to the method we have been discussing is the suggestion that there will be absolutely equal remuneration for all, regardless of the nature of their service. This is, of course, the logical application of

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of this whole subject see my *Applied Socialism*, chap. viii.



## THE SOCIALIST STATE

a certain crude conception of communism. It may or may not be the method adopted by the Socialist State, but it is not a necessary corollary of democratic collectivization. It does not obviate inequality and therefore misses the real objective of pure communism. The needs of all workers are not identical, and a rigid equality of payment would still leave inequalities of opportunity in the sense that some would have more than they needed for the full development of their lives and others less than they needed. True communism implies the ideal of Louis Blanc's fine motto, "From each according to his capacity, to each according to his need." But this is not a necessary condition of Socialism.

We appear to have entered a sort of *cul-de-sac*; in turn we have rejected the individualistic method of those who cry, "To each the value of his product," the method of those who cry, "To all an equal reward, for all service is of equal value," and the method of those who cry, "Away with measures to mete and bound service and reward! Take from each all he can give and let each take all he needs." Must we stop here? Are we compelled to rest upon the negative results of our destructive criticism? I think not.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Let us cease thinking of the future Socialist State as a social order quite independent of the present. Let us be true to our evolutionary philosophy and think of the Socialist State as a development of the present state, inheriting from it forms and institutions, some of them already developed and requiring little change, others requiring much modification before they can function in the new social order. Among these forms is the wages system. Now, it may well be that, in some remote future, all attempts to measure service and rewards will be discarded, and society will be content to take whatever the individual worker gives and to give him in return whatever he chooses to ask. Humanity may become so perfect. We do not know. We do know that there will be no sudden leap from capitalism to that blissful state of society.

We are quite safe in saying that the Socialist State will take the method of paying wages, unequal in amount, and modify it to suit its needs. This will not be the same thing as the wages system of to-day, and it is not a contradiction of the avowed aim of the movement to destroy the wages system. That this is so a brief investigation will show. By the "wages system" we do

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

not mean merely the payment of different sums of money for services of different degrees of difficulty, skill, or social importance. That is only the external form, with which we are not vitally concerned. Within the form, expressed through it, there is a social relation which is what we desire to abolish. That relation is that of exploiter and exploited; the wages form of payment is used to extract from the workers a maximum of production in return for a minimum of reward. In a Socialist régime the wages form of remuneration would cease to be the means whereby one class exploits the labor of another class. The class ownership of the means of production having given place to their democratic ownership and control, wages would become a method of giving to the workers a maximum of goods in return for the minimum of service consistent with the social well-being. There is, therefore, no contradiction in saying that the wages system will be abolished and that the wages form of payment will probably prevail in the Socialist State for a long time, if not permanently. It is not likely that the citizens of the Socialist State will bother about the external form of wages payment, or its name. They will be satisfied to destroy the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

system itself, the exploitation of class by class through wages. We recur here, as ever we must, to the class *motif* of Socialism.

It is unlikely that equal remuneration will be arbitrarily decided upon and established. There is no reason for regarding it as incompatible with the Socialist ideal to contemplate superior remuneration for special forms of service which involve greater exertion or risk, or sacrifice of any kind. Occupations which are less attractive than others might well be made more attractive by the payment of higher wages or, what is the same thing in principle, reducing the hours of labor. It is surely not an alarming possibility that those who do work which is in itself unattractive and uninspiring, perhaps dangerous, may be deemed to merit greater material rewards than those whose work is pleasant and gratifying.

That the tendency will be toward approximate equality of income is quite likely. But that is a very different thing from an arbitrary equality decreed by statute and rigidly applied. It will be the natural result of the equalization of opportunity, for with the equal access of all to the advantages of education and training the restriction of the supply of highly skilled labor, which has

## THE SOCIALIST STATE

made possible the striking contrasts of salaries and wages, would be swept away. The free play of supply and demand alone, without legislation of any kind, would inevitably tend to a greater uniformity of reward than the world has ever known. Gradually, we may believe, approximate equality would be attained. A slight and ever diminishing amount of economic inequality might persist for a long time, and probably would do so. Let so much be granted, and let it be granted, too, that it becomes permanent; the prospect is not an alarming one! Such inequality will of necessity be infinitely smaller than we are now accustomed to; the lowest will be secure from want or the fear of want, and, finally, the superior advantages enjoyed by the highest will be based upon merit and actual achievement in the social service.

### IX

So much, I think, we can say of the future Socialist society with full scientific sanction. There are many other problems at which we have not even glanced. Some of these I have dealt with in another place.<sup>1</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Applied Socialism*, by John Spargo.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

within the limits of a single chapter it has hardly been possible for us to do more than consider the great fundamental questions which give rise to so much misunderstanding and difficulty.

Perchance to some Socialists that which they had regarded as a simple thing appears to be very complex and difficult. Even so, if the new knowledge serves as a challenge to profounder thought and study the disillusionment is worth while. And perchance, too, there are others who have through our discussion come to see the Socialist ideal as we conceive it—not as a great bureaucracy, oppressing individuality and imposing a rigid equality of mediocrity upon all, but as a free democracy in whose soil of equal opportunity the roots of a generous individualism are nourished.

## IV

### HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

#### I

**S**Ocialism as we have defined it is a modern movement. It is not akin to the aspiration for perfection which runs like a golden thread through the whole fabric of human history. Except in so far as it shares in the universal longing for "peace on earth and good-will among men," for a world free from pain and strife, an ideal most nobly expressed in some of the great utopias, the Socialism of to-day has no connection with, or likeness to, the utopias of Plato, More, Campanella, Bacon, Harrington, and others. Nor has it any connection with, or likeness to, any of the numerous experiments in religious communism, ancient or modern.

The passion for perfection which inspires

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

utopian visions and experiments is not a product of a particular age or stage of social development. Three centuries before the birth of Christ, in the midst of the most wonderful civilization of antiquity, Plato, outraged by the abuses of Greek politics, wrote his *Republic*. More than eighteen hundred years later, at the opening of a new epoch of industrialism, Sir Thomas More wrote his *Utopia*. A century later than More, amid vastly different surroundings, the Italian monk, Tommaso Campanella, in his prison cell wrote *The City of the Sun*. In England, Campanella's contemporary, Francis Bacon, statesman and philosopher, wrote his *New Atlantis*. Hardly a generation had passed when another great Englishman, James Harrington, friend of the ill-fated Charles I and victim of the hatred of Charles II, published another great utopian romance, *Oceana*.

A century later the great utopian romance came from France. Morelly, the philosopher, contemporary of Voltaire and Rousseau, in his *Basiliade*, keenly exposed the evils of industrial competition and sketched the outlines of an ideal social order based upon communism. Then, in the next century, came the group of utopians whose visions



## HISTORICAL SKETCH

and efforts more or less profoundly influenced the early stages of the development of modern Socialism—Charles Henri Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and Etienne Cabet, in France, and Robert Owen in England. And even when the nineteenth century was far spent, and the movement inspired by the ideas of Marx had acquired considerable strength, the passion for utopia-building prevailed in England and America and gave us Bellamy's ingenious bureaucracy, *Looking Backward*, William Morris's pastoral idyl, *News from Nowhere*, and the charming romance by William Dean Howells, *A Traveller from Altruria*. Utopia-building is not confined to any particular stage of social development.

The same may be said of religious communism. To go no further back, we find it appearing immediately after the death of Christ, a prominent feature of the first Christian Church. Through the writings of all the great Apologists of the early Christian Church we find the idealization of communism and hatred of private property. In the medieval Christian sects communism was preached and practised. Down to the opening of the twentieth century we find similar sects existing, like the Shakers and the Perfectionists and others.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

### II

Socialism, on the other hand, is associated with a certain stage of economic and social development, and nowhere appears until that stage has been reached. It is the product of that system of industry based upon wage-labor and production for profit which we call the capitalist system. It is at once a product of capitalist industrial society and its antithesis. To connect modern Socialism with customs or philosophies of pre-capitalist times is folly of the worst type.

Whether considered as a criticism, as a philosophy, as an ideal, or as a movement, modern Socialism is manifestly inseparable from a particular class division of society—namely, the division into wage-paying and wage-earning classes characteristic of the capitalist mode of production. The Socialist indictment of the existing social order is the protest of the proletariat. The philosophy of Socialism is of dynamic value only because it inspires the proletariat with faith in its revolutionary rôle. The Socialist ideal pictures the emancipation of the proletariat and the destruction of the forces which now oppress and exploit it. The actual movement, therefore, is motivated by the discon-

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

tent of the proletariat with things as they are, and its determination to win for itself a better and nobler estate.

This identity with the interest and struggles of the modern wage-earning class enables us to determine approximately the starting-point of modern Socialism, to trace its progress, and to clearly distinguish it at all times from simple humanitarian movements.

### III

Kautsky selects as the starting-point of modern Socialism the great work of Sir Thomas More. "With the *Utopia* modern Socialism begins," he says.<sup>1</sup>

Written in the England of the sixteenth century, at a time when the agricultural system was being transformed and laborers were being dispossessed from their homes to make room for sheep, and when, moreover, capitalist industry had already made its appearance, the *Utopia* does, to some extent, justify the claim which Kautsky makes for it. There was already in process of formation an industrial proletariat. The capitalist era of world commerce had begun.

<sup>1</sup> Kautsky, *Vorläufer des neueren Sozialismus*, p. 466.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

But we find in More nothing of that philosophy of class formations and conflicts which distinguishes the Socialism of Marx. On the contrary, More turns to the past for inspiration; he would preserve the old order of things and obstruct the new industrial system. Where he does very closely approach modern Socialism is in his conception that the state should be transformed from a mere civil and political power into an economic and industrial organism. The great Tudor minister anticipated by centuries the development of the modern state in that direction. Still, the *Utopia* belongs rather to the category of splendid visions than to the modern Socialist movement.

### IV

The period of unrest and discussion immediately prior to the French Revolution furnishes the first definite examples of Socialist aspirations based on philosophical principles akin to those of modern scientific Socialism. Morelly (1720-) holds an important place, not alone because of his keen and inspiring criticism of the evils of industrial competition, but because of his insistence that all sources of income other than

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

labor must be abolished. He approaches the viewpoint of the Socialism of to-day in holding that changes in the form of government are relatively unimportant; changes in economic structure are of supreme, decisive value. Mably (1709-1785) follows his contemporary Morelly very closely in his reasoning, though his ideal is more concretely stated. Boissel (1728-1807), whose *Catechism of Mankind* appeared in 1789, the year of the French Revolution, approached very close to the doctrine of progress through class struggles, which is a cardinal principle of Marxian Socialism. Other writers before him had noted the existence of "rich" and "poor" classes, but Boissel went much further. But in all else he is far from being a Socialist in the sense in which we use the word. For private property, the private family, religion, and law he has equal hatred and contempt. While he makes a crude attempt to analyze the methods of production and their relation to progress, he never gets a glimpse of the socializing rôle of industry and his ideal is a return to primitive life.

Not until we reach Barnave (1761-1783) do we find a writer whose social theories bear a striking resemblance to those of Marx. Starting his public life as a radical, Barnave

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

later became quite conservative. We are concerned with him only because he was, very definitely, a precursor of Marx. Barnave, almost alone of the writers of the period, treated the Revolution as an economic rather than a political event. He stated the economic causes of the Revolution as clearly as Marx did more than fifty years later. He recognized the principle of social evolution, and pointed out that the chief determining factor in social and political development leading to economic inequalities, upon which distinct economic classes arose, resulted in class struggles.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, this is a decided approach to the fundamental ideas of Marx. Was Marx indebted to Barnave, I wonder? It is at least possible, for an edition of Barnave's works appeared in Paris in 1843, and Marx arrived in Paris with his bride in the autumn of that year. Barnave perished at the guillotine in 1793.

So far we have dealt only with that current of eighteenth-century radical thought which may well be called Socialist, though the Socialism was crude and vague, always utopian, and often mingled with the most contradictory doctrines. Only when we come

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jaurès, *Histoire Socialiste*, vol. i, pp. 97 *et seq.*

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

to Babeuf (1760-1797) do we find any attempt made to translate theory to practice and to inaugurate a revolutionary Socialist movement. With the ideas of Morelly, communism as a natural right and equality as a state of nature, for his mental background, and an intense admiration for Caius Gracchus, the great Roman tribune, Babeuf organized his famous Conspiracy of Equals, whose defeat led to his execution in 1797. We need not linger over Babeuf's ideal of absolute equality. It is dreary and uninspiring enough. He would have absolute uniformity and repress all individuality. All must eat the same kind and quantity of food, and wear the same kind of clothes, the only differences permissible being those made necessary by differences of age and sex. What interests us is the fact that the conspiracy was an attempt to secure an ideal by revolutionary action, and that the methods of this secret conspiracy were frequently copied in later years, even after Karl Marx led the movement out into the open with the *Communist Manifesto*, boasting "the Communists disdain to conceal their aims and views."

Of all these eighteenth-century thinkers it must be said that, in so far as they possessed

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

positive ideals to which the name of Socialism may be applied, their Socialism was purely utopian in character. I use the word "utopian" here in the rather technical sense in which the word is used in Marxian literature. It was utopian not because it was impracticable and doomed to failure, merely, but because it was based upon an abstract ideal and not upon the logic of historical necessity and inevitability. Men said, "Come, let us make a revolution" or "Come, let us build a new society," with never a thought that social forms are developed under pressure of economic needs, not made at will in response to ideals.

### v

The same must be said of the next group of social theorists to claim our attention—the great utopians of the nineteenth century, Charles Henri Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, Robert Owen, Wilhelm Weitling, and Etienne Cabet. These are of much greater importance than any of their predecessors, for several reasons. First of all, they inspired or founded movements of considerable importance which did much to awaken the masses and left considerable remnants which



## HISTORICAL SKETCH

the scientific Socialist movement of the second half of the nineteenth century amalgamated. Secondly, each of them contributed something of value to Socialist thought, and, lastly, their teachings and those of their disciples have profoundly influenced the Socialist movement of our time. We may well say that the social theorists of the eighteenth century, whom we have briefly considered, were the forerunners of modern Socialism, and that these nineteenth-century utopists were the first of the modern Socialists, representing a definite Socialist movement, albeit in a purely utopian stage of development.

Count Henri Saint-Simon (1760-1825), scion of Charlemagne, was born in 1760. He believed the goal of social activity to be "the exploitation of the globe by association," which we may translate as meaning the attainment of a maximum of productive efficiency through scientifically regulated cooperation. His writings show a relentless hostility to hereditary aristocracy, and a passionate belief that the highest honor and the maximum of efficiency must result from a scientific organization of industry upon a collective basis. His first published work appeared in 1802, but it was not until the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

appearance of his book, *L'Industrie*, in 1817, that he began to formulate his Socialist theories. In 1825 he published his best-known work, *Le Nouveau Christianisme*, which contains the most elaborate exposition of his theories. It was this work which profoundly interested Karl Marx, and perhaps led him to devote his life to Socialism.

In his philosophical ideas Saint-Simon follows Barnave so closely that it is almost impossible to believe that he was not directly influenced by that writer. Like Barnave, he treated the Revolution as an economic event, rather than as a political one. Like Barnave, he recognized that social and political development is largely determined by economic factors. He insisted upon treating politics as a struggle of classes with conflicting economic interests. Thus, he regarded the French Revolution as a class war, due to a fundamental antagonism of class interests, and the Reign of Terror as the temporary reign of the non-possessing masses. Like Barnave, Saint-Simon saw that economic development led to distinct economic classes, and he predicted that in the future political struggles would be exclusively concerned with economic interests.

Thus, like Barnave, Saint-Simon closely

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

approached some of the fundamental conceptions of the later Marxian philosophy, though in this respect he is hardly the equal of Barnave. He comes much nearer than Barnave to the Socialism of the present day in one important particular—his passion is for the emancipation of the proletariat, “the class that is the most numerous and the most poor.” What he does not see is the necessary historic rôle of the proletariat to achieve its own emancipation and the destruction of all class rule. His whole system depends upon the acceptance of a moral ideal. He builds his utopia around the idea that the exploiting class can be converted to a nobler ideal; the bankers, manufacturers, and merchants are to be divested of their class feelings and interests and to become the servants of mankind at large.

As the title of his most important work indicates, the religious side of Saint-Simon’s philosophy is highly important. It is a very mystical religion, but essentially humanitarian. All existing religions are to be abolished and a new universal religious order founded upon the teachings of Jesus. The object of this religion of humanism is the amelioration of the social conditions of the poor. The social and political unit is to be

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

the state—a religious state in which pure justice and fraternity prevail.

Saint-Simon had many disciples, and after his death a considerable movement arose with his theories as its inspiration. But vain and fanatical leadership soon led to its disruption, and at the end it was controlled and perverted by a sect whose “free-love” theories and practices, though in no wise due to Saint-Simon’s teachings, but opposed to them, thoroughly discredited Saint-Simonism.

### VI

Charles Fourier (1772–1837) was born in 1772 at Besançon, France, of wealthy parents. A small income inherited from his mother’s estate enabled him to devote the greater part of his life to the study of social problems. His first work, published in 1803, was an essay upon the subject of universal peace, in which Fourier argued that universal peace could only result from the creation of a world empire. His social theories are contained in four important works: *The Theory of the Four Movements and of the General Destinies*, 1808; *Treatise of Domestic and Agricultural Association*, or *Theory of Universal Harmony*, 1822; *New Industrial*

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

*World*, 1829; *False Industry and Its Antidote*, *Natural Attractive Industry*, 1835.

These titles are very suggestive and illuminating. They indicate that their author is most profoundly interested in the material problems of production, rather than in the ethical problems of social relations. And truly Fourier appeals to the material interests of men rather than to their moral sentiments. He is not inspired with Saint-Simon's resentment of the suffering of the poor, but by horror of the wastefulness of the prevailing methods of competitive industry, which he analyzes and exposes with keenness and vigor. He would have been an ideal advocate of our twentieth-century movement for "scientific management," for the waste of industrial effort is the keynote of all his teachings.

Yet, like Saint-Simon, Fourier is above all a religious teacher. His social theories are based upon a conception of religion. It is a very different religion from that of Saint-Simon, and exalts law rather than love. It is not God the Father, loving and compassionate, but God the Creator, perfect and omnipotent, whom he worships. He admires the wonderful harmony of the universe, its perfect order. That harmony and

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

that order man ought to copy in the social and political organization. His passion is for "harmony" and "order," not for "justice" or "fraternity," as was the passion of Saint-Simon. We may compare the two utopians by saying that Saint-Simon was essentially a social prophet, while Fourier was essentially a social engineer. Just as God never wasted effort in the material universe, so He meant every passion and instinct of mankind to be used, argued Fourier. Therefore, a society which does not make use of every human passion and instinct is at fault, and only that society is worthy which gives full opportunity for the free and complete exercise of all human passions.

Upon this philosophical basis Fourier built his utopian scheme, the most elaborate scheme for the reorganization of society ever devised by a human brain. There is no communism in Fourier's scheme, except a communism of opportunity. Its principles are those of the joint-stock company. The unit is not the state, but the phalanx, consisting of four hundred families, or about eighteen hundred persons, living on a square league of land. This phalanx is to be as self-contained and self-supporting as the old

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

feudal estate. It must provide its members with every opportunity to develop their various tastes and capacities. Of course, much attention must be given to the education and training of children. Their passions and desires must be given free expression, only no effort must be wasted. The universal child love of playing in the dirt must be given full freedom, but a use for it must be developed, so that there may be no waste. Accordingly, "little hordes" are to be organized to clean the dirt from the principal public places.

Every detail of the organization of the phalanx is provided for by Fourier with the thoroughness of an engineer. Even the structural details of the buildings are set forth. The property of each phalanx is to be owned by stockholders who need not be members, though members may also be stockholders. Every member must work at rates fixed by the Council. At the end of each year a division of earnings is made: five-twelfths to labor, four-twelfths to capital—the stockholders—and three-twelfths to skill or talent—the managers.

I pass over Fourier's theory of cosmogony, culminating in his forecast of a period of harmony, in which climate becomes equal

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

all over the globe, wild animals disappear or become useful to man, and even the water of the ocean becomes lemonade, and so acquires a new use! It would take us too far from our main purpose to trace this fantasy.

Now, what is the relation of Fourier's theories to modern scientific Socialism? In a sense, he is not a Socialist at all. His aim is not the abolition of capitalism, but the harmonizing of capital and labor through a system of profit-sharing. This is, of course, the very antithesis of modern Socialism. What most entitles Fourier to a place in the history of the Socialist movement is his criticism of the existing social order. He satirizes the capitalist class with rare power and literary charm. He mercilessly assails the economic and political dependence of woman, and shows that the best measure of the general civilization of any society is the degree of economic and political freedom and equality enjoyed by its women. But, above all, his conception of social evolution, and the division of the history of mankind into epochs, closely approaches the evolutionary basis of modern Socialism.

Fourier had some distinguished disciples in France, and, under the leadership of Victor Considerant, there developed a Fourier-



## HISTORICAL SKETCH

ist movement of some importance after Fourier's death. A few attempts were made in France to establish phalanxes for the realization of Fourier's plans. But it was in the United States that Fourierism developed its greatest strength. Something like fifty phalanxes were established, among them the famous, ill-starred Brook Farm, and many of the most brilliant men and women in America joined the movement, including Albert Brisbane, Horace Greeley, Charles A. Dana, Margaret Fuller, and many others.

### VII

Robert Owen (1771-1858) was in many respects the greatest of all the Socialists of the utopian period. He is credited with the origin of the word "Socialism." Born of quite poor parents, Owen became one of the leading capitalists of England. He was barely twenty years old when he became the foremost manufacturer of cotton goods of the time. This remarkable rise to wealth and power is easily enough understood when we consider the industrial conditions which prevailed in England at the end of the eighteenth century. That was the opening period of the great Industrial Revolution.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

In 1770 Hargreaves had patented the spinning-machine worked by water-power, known as the "water frame." Then, in 1779, Crompton's "mule" was invented, combining many of the advantages of both machines. Still, most of the weaving continued to be done by hand until Cartwright's "power loom," invented in 1785, and the general introduction of Watt's steam-engine in that same year, completely revolutionized the cotton industry. Owen was among the very first to use the new machinery, and speedily acquired a fortune.

The birth of the new industrial system was attended by great hardship and distress, of which a sufficient description may be found in *The Industrial History of England*, by Gibbins. The small manufacturers, unable to afford the new machines, were forced into bankruptcy and the ranks of the already too numerous wage-workers; wages went down at an alarming rate; the massing of the workers near the big factories created the most appalling housing conditions. Above all, the new machines made it possible for little children to do many things which had always required the labor of adults, and so the most revolting child-slavery in history was introduced and developed. Poor or-

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

phans and other pauper children—often not more than five years of age—were purchased by the manufacturers from the poor-law authorities, who often made it a condition that a certain proportion of idiots must be taken in each lot. The number of deaths among these poor little slaves was so great that burials took place secretly, at night. Many of the children committed to the factories were driven to suicide.

It did not take Owen long to revolt against the frightful waste of human life and the awful suffering involved by the new methods of industry. He began an agitation for legislation against child labor which led to the passage of the very first factory act by the Peel government, in 1802. The foundations of England's factory legislation were thus laid by Robert Owen.

On the opening day of the nineteenth century, at New Lanark, Scotland, in connection with a large cotton factory of which he was manager and part owner, Owen began a series of social experiments which brought him world-wide fame. Even before he assumed its management the New Lanark factory was said to be the best regulated in the world, yet Owen found conditions absolutely revolting. He at once ad-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

dressed himself to the task of bettering the lot of the unfortunate workers. Infant schools—among the very first in the world—were established, wages were raised, the hours of labor shortened, sanitary reforms were introduced, and in place of the credit stores, at which the workers were shamefully robbed, he established stores at which they could get their goods at cost. In a word, Owen was a pioneer in that form of philanthropy which aims at humanizing the relations of employers and employed. Much of this work was done in face of the opposition of his business partners, who, despite the handsome profits, deplored the waste of money on Owen's "fads." Compelled to change partners often, and to make great personal sacrifices, Owen bravely kept up this work at New Lanark for twenty-nine years.

During the last ten years of his work at New Lanark Owen's heart was elsewhere. Mere philanthropic patching no longer satisfied him. He was interested in more fundamental and comprehensive changes. His work at New Lanark had convinced him that human character is mainly formed by and dependent upon environment. That which is now trite and commonplace was at

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

that time a revolutionary doctrine. Owen preached it with great fervor and drew upon himself the bitterest kind of opposition from those who believed that to deny the freedom of the will, and its corollary, personal responsibility, was to deny all religion.

Having reached such an important conclusion, Owen wanted to provide somewhere ideal material conditions. In 1817, when the British government was considering how to relieve the distress of the period, he proposed that the government should establish communistic villages to be self-governed subject to state supervision. The plan was rejected, of course, but from that time onward Owen gave freely of his money, his time, and his wonderful talents, advocating the establishment of co-operative communities. He formed several, of which the most splendid and influential was New Harmony, in Indiana.

Owen's views are not set forth in a romance after the general fashion of utopians, but in a bewildering array of pamphlets, books, essays, manifestoes, challenges, and controversial letters. His energy was tremendous! When he was a very old man his mental vagaries and eccentric ways brought his work into disrepute; but if we take his

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

life up to that phase over which we would spread the mantle of charity, where his mind weakened, we cannot fail to admire the beautiful simplicity and generous enthusiasm of the man. In his life there was a remarkable blending of pure idealism with hard, practical business sense. He regarded himself as an inspired inventor of an infallible plan for the complete regeneration of the race. Once, when a scheme of his was before Parliament, and its consideration was deferred to another session, he cried out to Lord Brougham, his friend, "What! will you postpone the happiness of the whole human race to the next session of Parliament?"

Thus he was a pure utopian fundamentally with a very practical mind for details. Few men have more profoundly influenced the lives and thoughts of masses than Owen. He laid the foundations of England's factory legislation. He was the direct inspirer of the Rochdale co-operators, founders of a great movement. He was one of the first in the world to establish infant schools. He was an active worker in the trade-union movement, and presided at the first national congress of trade-unionists in 1834. It is interesting to note that, even before that

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

time, Owen was advocating the amalgamation of craft unions into industrial unions, and the world-wide federation of these industrial unions. Indeed, as far back as 1830 he was preaching a doctrine almost identical with our latter-day Syndicalism, the self-sufficiency of a non-political, universal combination of wage-earners to so raise wages, shorten hours, and dictate the management of industry as to achieve the "Social Revolution." Even the language used by Owen is strikingly similar to that used by our Syndicalist friends.

### VIII

With the appearance, on February 24, 1848, of the *Communist Manifesto* modern Socialism entered upon a new phase. By way of contrast to the utopians we speak of Marx (1818-1883) and Engels (1820-1895) as the first of the scientific Socialists. When the *Manifesto* was written the great movements in England, France, and America, of which so much had been expected, were almost completely disbanded. The Saint-Simonians had practically disappeared; what remained was a petty sect, held in general disrepute on account of the sexual teachings

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

and practices which Bazard had fostered. Fourierism had never recovered from the failures of the American experiments, especially the disastrous end of Brook Farm. The Owenite movement was likewise completely disrupted. Its great experiments in England and America had failed, much of the energy of the Owenite agitation had been absorbed by chartism and trade-unionism. Practically there remained of utopian Socialism only a multitude of "social quacks" and a few petty, inconsequential, and warring sects.

From this sweeping condemnation we must exempt two sects of importance, the followers of Wilhelm Weitling (1808-1871) and Etienne Cabet (1788-1856). The agitation of these men served to keep alive the hope of the faithful few. Whatever there was of a Socialist movement was inspired by their propaganda. They were both utopians, but their utopianism differed from that of their predecessors by its class *motif*. It was not based upon appeals to universal principles of justice, order, or brotherhood, but on appeals to the discontent of the workers.

Weitling was a German, and a tailor by trade. He seems to have been mainly in-



## HISTORICAL SKETCH

spired by Fourier's criticism and Saint-Simon's plan for the government of society by scientists. He is truly a utopian, but nevertheless represents utopianism in transition. He is a sort of connecting-link between the movement represented by Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen, and the scientific Socialism of Marx and Engels. While he had no conception of the class-struggle theory of Marx, his instinctive sense of class oppression and the need for proletarian solidarity brought him close to it. He was a strong advocate of trade-unionism, and one of his pet ideals was the formation of a great international labor party. In this, too, he was a precursor of Marx. He came to America in 1846, in connection with the Free Soil movement, but returned to Europe after a year or so to take part in the revolutionary movement of 1848. In 1849 he returned to America and started a vigorous Socialist agitation. He died in Brooklyn in 1871.

Cabet, like Weitling, made his appeal to the working class. In most other respects he was a utopian of the old type. He wrote a romance, *A Voyage to Icaria*, patterned after More's *Utopia*, in which he outlined his ideal state. A disciple of Robert Owen, his ideas are in the main akin to those of his

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

teacher, though he harks back to Babeuf in his rigid insistence upon a mechanical equality. At the time when Marx and Engels were being called upon to write the *Communist Manifesto* Cabet had a tremendous following in France, and it was necessary to win its support. The new tactics could not otherwise succeed. As a first step the faith of the workers in utopian experiments of the sort advocated by Cabet must be destroyed equally with faith in secret conspiratory movements of the Blanquist type. When Cabet learned that a committee representing a number of Socialist groups had called upon Marx and Engels to draft a program as a basis of unity, he made a desperate attempt to have his plans for the establishment of co-operative communities adopted. Thus, even before the *Manifesto* appeared, the issue between the old order and the new was sharply defined.

### IX

It frequently happens that people who come into touch with the Socialist propaganda for the first time are puzzled to find the Socialists declaring that they are not communists, not opposed to private prop-

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

erty, as such, acknowledging the *Communist Manifesto* as a classic statement of their views. "Why 'Communist' and not 'Socialist'?" they ask. The answer is not difficult; in 1847 the word "Socialism" stood for every variety of utopian theory and scheme; for Anarchism and Communism, for the conspiratory movements of the Blanquists no less than for the colonizing schemes of Cabet. It was necessary to provide a name which would distinguish the new movement, and the word "Communism" was chosen. What we now call Communism was then called Socialism; and what we now call Socialism was then called Communism.

The *Communist Manifesto* was intended to be at once a statement of theoretical principles and a working program. A little pamphlet of twenty-five octavo pages, it made a great impression upon a devoted group of German communists living in London exile, but the world at large paid no attention to its appearance. It was born amid the noise and shoutings of revolutionary conflict, for it appeared on the very day of the outbreak of revolution in Paris.

If there seems to be a peculiar fitness in the fact that revolutionary turmoil filled the air on the day of the appearance of the great

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

revolutionary declaration, Marx himself probably deplored it and wished that it might have been otherwise. So keen a student as he was could hardly have failed to perceive that the stress of the strife would of necessity postpone the realization of the immediate object of the *Manifesto*. He wanted to destroy the utopian illusion of sudden transformations of society, and to get the movement away from its dependence upon vain conspiracies of reckless minorities. More than all, he wanted a great international political movement which would conquer the political power of the state, in every country, and use it to end economic exploitation. That was the "revolutionary evolution" of which he so often spoke.

But within a few weeks Europe was seething with actual revolution. In Germany, Austria, France, and England the fires of revolution were burning. Clearly, this was no time for philosophical discussion, or even for political programs. Was this a bitter disappointment, or did he who later wrote that "one movement is worth a dozen programs" feel that, after all, the utopian concept was not so illusory?

Be that as it may, when the revolutionary movement was crushed the condition was

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

not materially different from what it had been before the *Manifesto* was written. Some impetus had been given to the democratic movement, it is true, but the end of the revolution saw capitalism more firmly entrenched than before and most of the leaders of the working-class movement in exile. The old division into petty, warring sects remained, and from 1850 to 1864 there was practically no organized movement. The *Communist Manifesto* seemed to have been lost sight of.

### X

In 1864 the International Workingmen's Association was born. Two years previously there had been a great Universal Exhibition in London, and workingmen from France and Germany had fraternized with English workingmen and planned the congress which was held two years later. Marx was from the first one of the moving spirits of the movement. His heart was still set upon the realization of the aim which inspired the *Communist Manifesto*, the creation of a great, unified, international proletarian party. The International Workingmen's Association was, in a way, a revival of the old Communist League upon a large scale.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Marx was asked to write the declaration of principles and program of the new organization, but not without a good deal of opposition. Just as in 1847 it was necessary to beat down the opposition of Weitling and Cabet, so in 1864 it was necessary to defeat the attempt of Mazzini to control the new movement. The acceptance of the plans of Marx made him the acknowledged leader of the international working-class movement.

The International made rapid progress and did much to develop the sense of working-class solidarity, but its career was almost as brief as it was stormy. While the declaration of principles which Marx wrote for the organization was essentially a Socialist declaration, strongly resembling the old *Communist Manifesto*, there were elements in the organization which did not in good faith accept its principles. The great strength of the International lay in the fact that it brought together many diverse elements. Every phase of the working-class movement was represented. Thus the basis was laid for joint action by the trade-unions and the political parties of the working class. This union of all the forces of the struggling proletariat is still the cherished ideal of most Socialists.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

But the diversity of elements comprised in the International was a source of great weakness and the cause of its failure. Perhaps Marx, who regarded the union of all the forces of the working class as infinitely more important than theoretical agreement, had sacrificed too much to attain that end. Perhaps he was too easily satisfied with formal union, organic unity unsupported by a unity of spirit and understanding. That is a not uncommon mistake.

At all events, in the International there were first of all the Marxists, believers in education and preparation, disbelieving in conspiratory methods, though by no means opposed to the strike as a weapon. Then there were the impatient advocates of "direct action," scorning the slow and unromantic methods of political action. There were the followers of Proudhon, with various utopian schemes, such as a universal language, "paper currency," and the like. The trade-unions, especially those of England, who relied solely upon trade-union methods, held an important place. Finally, there were those to whom the attainment of political democracy was the end, not merely a means to a larger achievement.

Under these conditions, it was inevitable

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

that there should be contradictions of policy and dissensions within the organization. As one reads the reports of the congresses of the organization and notes the glaring contradictions in its policy, it will be easy to understand the reason for them if the character of the movement is remembered. And what at first seems to be a pitiful series of personal squabbles between Marx and other leaders will be seen to have been rather a conflict of opposing principles. The first five years were largely given up to a conflict between the followers of Marx and the followers of Proudhon. The Marxists as a rule won, but the tragic fact was that the strength and energies of the movement were absorbed by the internal conflict. Then, in 1867, Bakunin, the great Russian Anarchist, joined the organization and entered into a contest with Marx for supremacy. Both men were able and both were fearless and relentless fighters. They were both contending for something far more important than personal power or glory, the triumph of the principles and policies which they personified. Finally Marx triumphed. At the Hague, in 1872, Bakunin was expelled from the movement together with several of his supporters, and Marx was vindicated. But the triumph



## HISTORICAL SKETCH

meant the end of the International itself. Marx was sick and weary of the strife, and saw in the rise of the movement inaugurated by Lassalle in Germany a new inspiration. The headquarters of the International was ordered moved to New York, beyond Bakunin's reach. But Marx knew that this was simply a device to hide for the time the fact that the organization was destroyed as the only means of keeping it out of the hands of the Anarchists. In 1876, eleven delegates held a "congress" in Philadelphia and formally declared the dissolution of the International. Pathetically clinging to the old watchword, they ended their declaration with the cry, "Proletarians of all countries, unite!"

### XI

Before the last expiring cry of the old International was uttered in America, the union of the Lassallean and Marxian forces in Germany marked the opening of a new era in the history of the Socialist movement. In 1863 the General Workingmen's Association was formed under the leadership of that incomparable agitator, Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864). Like Marx, Lassalle was a Jew, and in 1848 he was associated with Marx in

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

the Socialist wing of the revolutionary movement of that time, his activities earning for him imprisonment and exclusion from Berlin.

In 1862, when Bismarck became master of Prussia, Lassalle, finding the Liberals half-hearted in their advocacy of democracy, proposed the formation of an independent Socialist party, and the following year saw the General Workingmen's Association launched. Fifteen months later Lassalle fell mortally wounded in a foolish duel. Within that brief space of time the new party under his leadership had made marvelous progress, to which his great gifts and indomitable energy had contributed largely.

Lassalle was a disciple of Marx in his theoretical views, but differed greatly from Marx upon practical matters. Hence, the friends of Marx remained rather aloof from the new party. After the death of Lassalle the movement rapidly declined. Lassalle had been practically a dictator and had not encouraged the development of the capacity and machinery for self-government by the party. But by 1867 the movement had taken on new courage and began once more to make progress, especially in Prussia and North Germany. At the same time, in South Germany, under the leadership of

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Liebknrecht, Bebel, and other Marxists, a rival organization appeared. This party met in convention in 1869 and adopted the name, "Social Democratic Workingmen's Party." Because this convention was held at Eisenach, the Marxists were called Eisenachers to distinguish them from the Lassalleans. Controversies between the rival factions were numerous and bitter, but the oppression of both factions by the police forced them to consider unity as a method of self-preservation. In 1875 the union of the two parties was accomplished at Gotha, largely through the efforts of Wilhelm Liebknrecht and in opposition to the wishes of Marx, who, however, lived to rejoice in the achievements of the united party.

Thus was begun the new phase of the development of the movement. Before his death, in 1883, Marx saw the German Social Democracy represented in the Reichstag by a dozen members, and before his death, in 1895, Engels saw a party with more than a million votes and forty-odd representatives in the Reichstag. Marx did not live to see a strong party in France based upon his teachings. When he died there were only petty sects, bitterly fighting one another. Engels, however, lived to see a strong party

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

polling half a million votes represented in parliament by forty deputies. Marx saw the rise of a definite Socialist movement in England, frankly avowing the principles and practices of Marxian Socialism, but he did not live, as Engels did, to see it emerge from the sectarian stage.

In 1889, six years after the death of Marx, the "New International" appeared. In that year the first of a new series of international Socialist congresses was held in Paris. Thus Engels could rejoice in the rebirth of the ideal for which he and his great friend and co-worker had labored and sacrificed. To-day the Socialist movement is truly international, being organized in practically every civilized country. In most of the great parliaments of the world its representatives hold an honored place, and its total vote is something like ten millions.<sup>1</sup>

With this vast strength come added responsibilities and new problems to test the movement, but its aim is unchanged. To-day, as ever, its aim is the emancipation of the workers from economic exploitation, dependence, and despotism, and the creation of a new world of equal opportunity.

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the period immediately preceding the war.

## V

### THE MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

#### I

WHEN we speak of "Marxian Socialism" we usually have in mind a *corpus* of philosophical and scientific generalizations and theories, a synthesis of social criticism, interpretation, and forecast. That, however, is but one side of the Marxian fabric. The other side, equally important, but frequently lost sight of, consists of certain principles of action, the governing principles of the methods and tactics of the Socialist movement. For Marxian Socialism is a term which relates to the practical movement and its policies, no less than to the philosophy which inspires the movement.

It is not an easy matter to determine which is more important, Marx's contribution to Socialist theory or his contribution

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

to Socialist policy. In reality, it is vain to attempt to separate the two, for they are practically inseparable. The principles of action which Marx laid down for the guidance of the movement in formulating its policies are not the arbitrary dicta of a clever tactician. They are the logical and inevitable result of bringing the philosophical principles to the test of the application to reality, the supreme test, as the pragmatists have taught us.

Unless we bear in mind the fact that the fundamental and characteristic features of the program and tactics of Marxian Socialism are the inevitable fruits of its philosophical and scientific principles, we shall land in a serious dilemma. Either we shall ignore the living movement, and regard Marxian Socialism as a set of rigid dogmas to be learned by heart, or we shall pay attention only to the visible struggle of the present, ignoring the theories. Both mistakes are made all too often. The result in the one case is a barren and futile sectarianism; in the other case despair and mental chaos. To state the same thought in other words: considered apart, without reference to the actual class struggle, the Marxian theories of historical materialism and surplus value are mere

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

dogmas. On the other hand, class warfare, as such, without a conception of social dynamics, and the place of class conflict in social evolution, is simply a distressing fact. Théory without the living movement is vain and impotent, but so is aimless movement.

### II

In order that we may comprehend this Marxian synthesis of theoretical principles and tactical methods, it is necessary to recall to mind the state of Socialism in 1847, when Marx and Engels addressed themselves to the task of formulating a theoretical and practical program for the movement. The Socialism of the time was purely utopian and ideological. Social visionaries with schemes based upon abstract ideas of justice and righteousness contended with one another. The jealousy with which Owen regarded Fourier, for example, was quite common to all the great utopians.

It is characteristic of the utopian mind that it conceives of social relations in terms of abstract ethics. Men are "good" or "bad"; institutions are "good" or "bad." If an institution is bad it is only necessary to devise some good institution to replace

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

it. Social progress becomes essentially a matter of social invention. Thus we find a multitude of contending social inventors, each with his own individual scheme for the reconstruction of society in whole or in part. Mankind has always had a weakness for utopias, and it is not surprising that numerous sects and societies have been organized to attempt the realization of some of the numerous utopian dreams. The story of the utopian Socialist movement in the fifty years prior to Marx is a story of some beautiful literary expressions of the ages-old quest for perfection, with much sublimity of character running like a golden thread through the sorry fabric of a record of squabbling, secret conspiratory movements, cults, and sects. In vain does one look for any recognition of fundamental social law, for any considerable recognition of the fact of social evolution prior to the advent of Marx and Engels.

Marx, the Hegelian and evolutionist, revolutionized Socialism. Henceforth it was to be conceived in terms of evolutionary necessity. The doctrine of economic determination made the triumph of Socialism an inevitable result of an irresistible economic development instead of the outcome of a moral



## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

conviction. Marx was not, indeed, the extreme economic fatalist he has been regarded as being alike by critics and disciples. As a follower of Hegel he believed that "all progress is the result of ideas." This is, of course, not compatible with a rigid fatalism. In some criticisms on Feurbach Marx insisted that man is not a mere automaton, helplessly the creature of blind economic forces. He said: "The materialistic doctrine, that men are the products of conditions and changed education, different men, therefore, the products of other conditions and changed education, *forgets that circumstances may be altered by men, and that the educator has himself to be educated.*"<sup>1</sup> It is quite evident, therefore, that Marx was fully conscious of the importance of idealistic factors in social evolution, or that at any rate he did not ignore them, as is so often charged. By uniting the concept of Socialism to the concept of evolution Marx set Socialism in the main current of the world's thought. He presented it, not as a goal which might be reached if a sufficient number of men and women could be inspired with the necessary faith to struggle

<sup>1</sup> Appendix to F. Engels's *Feurbach—The Roots of the Socialist Philosophy*.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

toward it, but as an inevitable category. We need not here and now consider the truth or error of this view. True or false, the conception of Socialism as inevitable was a great inspiration. It gave to its believers that splendid and indomitable faith which only they can have who are sublimely confident that their triumph is foreordained and writ in the stars. However discouraging the outlook might be at a given moment, however disappointing the outcome of a particular struggle, there could be no resulting pessimism to paralyze the minds and hearts of the believers. What mattered the outcome of a particular battle, of what consequence was the failure of the moment? Inexorable destiny was on their side. Socialism was as inevitable as the operation of the law of gravitation itself.

### III

I have said that Marxian Socialism is a union of certain philosophical and scientific generalizations and theories, with certain principles of action governing the methods and tactics of the Socialist movement. The theoretical side of this synthesis consists of a number of theories and generalizations

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

which are intimately related and interdependent, though they are frequently regarded as separate and unrelated. The basis of the Marxian theoretical superstructure is the theory of social evolution and historical interpretation unfortunately named the materialistic conception of history. The name is unfortunate because it inevitably leads to confusion through association of the theory with philosophical materialism with which, in fact, it has not the remotest connection. The materialist philosophy offers an explanation for the origin of the universe, an answer to the great eternal questions, whence and whither. The historical materialism of Marx attempts nothing of the kind, and is neither more nor less than a theory of social development. Many Socialists have preferred the term, the Economic Interpretation of History, though that is not wholly free from criticism.

According to the Marxian theory, a main factor in social evolution is the economic factor, using that term in its largest sense to include not only the technical processes of production, distribution, and exchange, but also such factors as climate, fauna, and flora, and other natural conditions and resources. As the economic methods and cus-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

toms progress, changes in political forms and social relations and institutions are rendered imperative. That Marx and Engels frequently made the mistake of exaggerating the influence of the economic factor in social evolution, and that their followers have frequently been guilty of even greater exaggerations, is now well recognized. Engels himself with fine candor has admitted this. He scornfully repudiated those who have taught in the name of Marx and Marxism that the economic factor is the sole determinant of historical movements. He specifically acknowledged that ideas, political, legal, philosophical, and religious theories and views, exert an important influence in history, sometimes indeed a determining influence.

No better summary of the theory has ever been made than that made by Marx himself in the preface to his *Critique of Political Economy* in 1859: "In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitute the economic struc-

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

ture of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond different forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.”<sup>1</sup>

The meaning of this paragraph is clear. Social relations are largely independent of men's will; they are also indispensable. It is impossible for men to live in society at all without entering into certain social relations. That these social relations must bear some relation to the economic life is obvious. The production and distribution of wealth are so fundamental and vital that we cannot conceive of a society whose laws and institutions are not largely influenced by the necessities of those important economic functions. Thus we find that in all periods of human history social relations, institutions, and laws bear a very definite relation to the economic processes. The laws and institutions of feudal society, for example,

<sup>1</sup>*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, by Karl Marx. Trans. from the second German edition by N. I. Stone, p. 11.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

were the logical outcome of the economic life of feudal society. The great inventions which inaugurated the era of capitalism could not function within the political, legal, and social forms of feudal society. The new economic processes required and called into being new social and political forms compatible with their nature and suitable to their efficient development. That is the universal and immutable law of history. Not only do great economic changes imply modifications of the social and political forms, but they inevitably give rise to important psychological changes, modifications of the ideas and ideals of men. The mental attitude of the average man in feudal society differed from the mental attitude of the average man of the capitalist era, in a manner corresponding to the differences in political and social forms and institutions.

It is one of the intellectual tragedies of modern life that Socialism has been assailed and opposed by countless thousands of well-meaning men and women, because they believed that this theory of the economic motivation of history was hostile to religion and fundamentally incompatible with a profound belief in a divine Creator and the immortality of the human soul. In reality

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

it has no such implications. It is quite possible to accept the whole Marxian hypothesis while holding fully and reverently to all the essentials of religion. Of course religion is an important part of human history and its development is to be studied by the same methods as other phases of human history. The Marxian theory applies to religion in just the same way as to any other department of human activity. That is to say, the history of religion itself cannot be understood apart from the material conditions surrounding it. Modern students of comparative religion understand this and their explanations of the rise of great religions and their variations are conceived in a spirit essentially Marxian. The bearing of the theory, then, upon religion is purely interpretative. The religions of peoples, like their laws and their politics, bear a marked and definite relation to their material conditions in general and to their economic life in particular.

In the opening chapter of this volume in our definition of Socialism we emphasized the fact that present-day society is characterized by a conflict of class interest, and that Socialism is essentially the movement of a class. The doctrine of class conscious-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

ness and class warfare is part of the materialistic conception of history. It is far too large a subject to be dealt with at this point and must be reserved for a separate chapter. It is sufficient here to note the fact that this most unpopular and least understood of Socialist doctrines is part and parcel of the materialistic conception of history.

### IV

We have thus far dealt with the purely sociological elements of theoretical Marxism. We must now deal with its economics, in particular with the theory of surplus value. It is obviously impossible to do more than sketch the general outlines of this theory here.<sup>1</sup> In the form of industrial society in which we live production for profit prevails. We produce "goods" or "wares" for sale. The whole object of modern industrial enterprise is the production of such wares at a profit. If we are to understand modern capitalist society, and its organization, therefore, we must understand the nature of profit, how it is derived and the

<sup>1</sup> The reader who desires a more exhaustive study of the theory is referred to the *Elements of Socialism*, by Spargo and Arner, chaps. xii and xiii (Macmillan., 1912).



## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

function it performs. The theory of surplus value is an attempt to explain these phenomena.

Economic goods must possess at least two qualities: they must be, as Marx would say, simple utilities which are also social utilities. This somewhat abstract statement means that economic goods must be useful and at the same time exchangeable. The word "useful" is here used in the technical sense in which it is used in economic discussion, to connote the power to satisfy any human needs or desires. Any material object which satisfies human needs or desires of any kind is useful in this sense. It does not matter what the nature of the want nor how it is satisfied by the object in question. If the object merely satisfies a passing whim, as a toy does, it is as much a utility in this sense as though it satisfied a physical need of the highest importance, as food does. The quality of satisfying some human need or desire is called use-value, or utility. All economic goods, or commodities, have this quality.

But a thing may possess this quality without being a commodity—that is to say, without having any economic value. There are some things called "free goods" by some

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY' EXPLAINED

modern economists, which are absolutely indispensable to life, such as air, water, and sunshine, for example, which have no economic value at all: they are not wares or commodities. Only the things which are exchangeable for other things are economic goods. Exchange-value must be added to use-value in order to make an object a commodity.

Now exchange-value, the quality of being saleable, exchangeable for other things, is not a physical property of the object. It is a social estimate. Exchange and sale are terms which refer to human beings and their relations. In this it differs from use-value, which is a quality of the thing itself wholly independent of social relations. For example, I make for myself a tool; it suits my purpose quite well; its use-value is very great. After a time I decide to sell the tool, but find that no one will buy it. The use-value of the tool is very great, but its exchange-value is *nil*. No one desires it. Thus while use-value is a quality that is inherent in the object itself, exchange-value is a social concept. What gives exchange-value to a thing is the quality of being useful to and desired by others. The quality of use-value is what Marx and his disciples have called "simple utility,"

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

while the quality of exchange-value is what they have termed "social utility."

The Socialist propagandist frequently shocks his hearers by declaring that production for use is not the object of modern industry. He assails the capitalist system because under it production is carried on for profit rather than for use. This is an important part of the Socialist indictment and pains should be taken to understand it. "What nonsense!" cries the non-Socialist. "Of course we produce for use! How absurd to claim otherwise!" That practically all industry is devoted to the production of utilities, as that term is used by the economists, is obvious. Nevertheless, the Socialist criticism is just and well-founded. The object of industry to-day is not the production of immense volumes of simple utilities, but of commodities, wares for sale. No matter how great the real utility of a particular object may be, we do not go on manufacturing it after it becomes evident that it has no social utility, that there is no effective demand for it. If there were twenty million tack-hammers, for example, the use-value of each tack-hammer would be equal to that of every other. The twenty-millionth one would be as serviceable as the twentieth. If there was

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

an effective demand for only ten thousand hammers, all over that number would be without social utility and therefore without value. In such circumstances we do not go on making tack-hammers. Production is governed by and conditioned upon exchangeability.

The immediate object of production is exchange, and the immediate object of exchange is profit. Therefore the ultimate object of commercial production is profit. The ten thousand workers in a modern factory are not engaged in making things they or their employers need or desire, but only things which it is assumed that others will need and desire and be willing to pay for. And the makers of things do not engage in direct barter as individuals in primitive society did. The maker of shoes does not any longer go to the maker of hats and barter shoes for hats. We have long outgrown that sort of exchange. The exchange of all commodities is effected through the medium of a particular commodity, money, augmented by credit, which is really an auxiliary of money. We do not say that so many pairs of shoes will exchange for so many hats, but that they will sell for so much money and that the money will purchase so many hats.

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

But what determines the relative exchange-values of things which are different and unequal? What, in other words, determines value? This is the central problem of political economy and all the great political economists have essayed its solution. If a ton of coal and a silk hat happen to be approximately equal exchange-values, as they do at this time, how are we to explain the fact? The two commodities are about as unlike as we can well imagine, both in appearance and functioning, yet they exchange upon an equal basis in the market. If they are similar in value, despite their general dissimilarity, there must be some quality common to both things determining their equal values.

That quality is their common origin as products of labor. Take any number of commodities and examine them, and it will be found that, no matter how numerous and extensive their differences in size, shape, function, color, simple or social utility, and so on, there is one respect in which they are alike—they are all the products of human labor. Every unit of wealth is the result of the application of human energies applied to natural resources. This all economists agree upon. In this fact there is at least

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

the hint of a solution of our problem. The relative values of commodities must in some manner be connected with the quantity of human energy embodied in them. Upon this point there is no disagreement among the economists: they are all agreed that the value of goods is in some manner and some degree dependent upon the amount of labor spent in their production.

That the relative value of economic goods depends entirely upon the amount of labor power consumed in their production was the theory held firmly by all the great economists preceding Marx. This theory was held by Petty, by Franklin, by Adam Smith, by Ricardo, and by John Stuart Mill, among many others. Thus the great author of *The Wealth of Nations* says, "It is natural that what is usually the produce of two days' or two hours' labor should be worth double of what is usually the produce of one day's or one hour's labor."<sup>1</sup> Similar statements could be cited from the works of all the great economists. Now, these great economists were not feeble-minded; they never meant to convey the impression that all labor is of equal value, an hour's labor of

<sup>1</sup> *Wealth of Nations*, vol. i, chap. vi.

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

a bungling and unskilled workman being of equal value to an hour's labor by a clever and highly skilled workman; they never meant their labor-value theory to be taken in an absolutely literal sense as meaning that the value of the individual commodity depended upon the amount of labor actually spent in its production, and that if a poor workman took twice as long to make a coat as it took a good workman to make a coat of exactly the same quality, the two coats made by the good workman would be worth only as much as the one coat made by the poor workman. They never conceived that inefficiency was of such vast economic value! They clearly had in mind an average process, not individual manifestations. They had in mind labor of average skill and productivity and the general average of production.

It is still quite common to encounter the man who thinks that he can "refute Marx" by telling us that it is absurd to think that the labor spent on the production of a thing determines its value—that if a man spends a week making a worthless thing the labor thus expended will not result in a thing of economic value. And we still not infrequently are lectured by the man who solemnly reminds us that if a child finds a diamond

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

on the street that diamond has an exchange-value not proportionate to or determined by the amount of labor expended in picking it up. We are therefore under the necessity of pointing out that the Marxian theory of value is not affected by such reasoning. Marx never taught that the value of commodities is determined by the amount of labor power actually embodied in the individual article. He never claimed that his theory of value applied to scarcity values, to those unique things which cannot be reproduced. For the pen with which King John signed the deed of Magna Charta, or that with which Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence it would be easy to secure a price utterly disproportionate to and independent of the amount of labor actually expended in the production of the relic itself.

The Marxian theory of value can be very briefly summarized: It is concerned only with the present system of capitalist industry; it does not apply to earlier, primitive societies. In this system things are produced in large quantities for sale and exchange. In general the value of things is determined by the amount of labor which is, on an average, necessary for their produc-



## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

tion. The theory does not concern itself with the individual commodity; it relates only to the normal average process of production and exchange. In general, things which on an average require an equal amount of labor-power for their production will exchange upon a basis of equality so long as the normal conditions of free competitive markets prevail. The theory does not apply to monopoly-values.

### v

With this summary of the theory of value as a basis, the law of surplus value formulated by Marx can be easily understood. We have said that the theory of surplus value is an attempt to explain the nature of profit, its origin, and its function: Profit is realized by the exchange of commodities through the instrumentality of money. It is quite obvious, however, that exchange does not create any new values, and that the origin of surplus value must necessarily lie outside the sphere of exchange. If I exchange with another person a commodity of lesser value for one of greater value, and profit by the transaction, it is evident that there has been no addition to the sum of values existing prior to our exchange. None

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

of the sum of existent values is created by exchange. If a carpenter makes a table for which he has no personal use, and which is, therefore, not a use-value to him, finds a farmer who desires the table, and to whom, therefore, it has a use-value, and the farmer consents to give in exchange for the table a pig for which he has no use, and which is therefore not a use-value to him, and the proposition is accepted by the carpenter who desires the pig, to whom therefore it has a use-value, each man has benefited by the transaction, but there has been no additional value created. There are still only a pig and a table.

In general, capitalist exchange is the exchange of equal values. This does not mean that all commodities exchange upon a basis of exact equality of value, but that, as a general rule, through a long and complicated process of higgling, with relatively unimportant variations, commodities which require on an average the same amount of labor for their production, including, of course, the obtaining and preparing of the raw materials used, are of equal value, no matter how much they may differ in size, shape, or function.

It is the essence of the Marxian theory that surplus value is derived from labor-power only. Unlike most other economists,

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

Marx treats of labor-power as a commodity like any other commodity, subject to the same laws but differing from other commodities in some important respects. As Kautsky observes, it is not possible to separate labor-power from human beings, and it is therefore profoundly influenced by the psychological, physiological, and historical conditions which bound the lives of human beings.<sup>1</sup> There is one vitally important difference between labor-power as a commodity and all other commodities—namely, the fact that labor-power creates new values in the process of being used up. This quality is possessed by no other commodity. For example, a capitalist sets out to manufacture shoes for profit. He must provide three things: first, equipment, including buildings and machinery; second, raw materials; third, labor-power. Now what happens? Each day there is a certain amount of wear and tear of machinery and buildings, the cost of which is represented in his accounts by a charge for depreciation. Certainly the equipment in being used up does not become more valuable day by day. The raw materials are used up, but they do

<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Power*, by Karl Kautsky, p. 104.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

not increase in value in the process of being used up. The leather is transformed, but as leather simply it is not more valuable, but less; a thousand pounds of leather do not in the process of being used in the manufacture become one thousand five hundred pounds of leather. But labor-power does, in the course of its consumption, increase its own value. If our capitalist paid for raw materials \$5,000, and for labor-power \$5,000, and repairs, rent, and depreciation on buildings and machinery cost \$500, his total will be \$10,500. Now, if for the total number of shoes manufactured he receives \$13,500, there is a sum of value greater by \$3,000 than the sum of the values of the commodities originally purchased by him. Whence comes this surplus value? There is no other answer than that of the Socialist; it does not come from the buildings or machinery; it does not come from the raw materials; it comes from the human commodity, labor-power. It is the sum of surplus value thus realized through trading in the human commodity, labor-power, which constitutes the entire revenue of the capitalist class. This sum is divided into rent and interest and profit.

Of course, in the actual life of modern industrial society the law of surplus value

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

does not operate with the beautiful simplicity of this statement of it, or of Marx's mathematical formulation of it. Most of the serious criticism of the theory has come from those who have too narrowly interpreted it. They have insisted upon an impossible definition of labor, excluding, for example, managerial labor—that is, the highly specialized intellectual direction and organization of production which Marx definitely includes in the term labor. He meant, and all his intelligent disciples mean, by labor, all the effort and exertion that goes into the transformation of the raw material into the finished product as it reaches the consumer.<sup>1</sup> Marx did not teach, as some of his badly informed disciples and critics have supposed, that the workers are never exploited except directly as producers. This idea, so obviously at variance with the realities of modern life, has been made the basis for a sterile policy which would prevent the Socialist movement from participating in many struggles for the betterment of industrial conditions. So interpreting Marxism, some of the Socialists whose Marxism exceeds that of their master have refused

<sup>1</sup> See, *e. g.*, *Capital*, vol. i, chap. xiii; vol. iii, chap. xxiii.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

to sanction participation in the great cooperative movement, for example. Some of the Syndicalists have made this narrow conception of Marx's teaching their excuse for refusing to join in the political movement of the workers. As a matter of fact, Marx showed very clearly that the worker is exploited as consumer quite as truly as he is exploited as a producer. Doubtless had Marx lived until now he would have recognized that with the increasing monopoly of industry in place of competition, this secondary exploitation becomes more and more important.

This analysis of the secret of surplus value does not involve any ethical theory. It does not lead to a moral condemnation of the profit-taker. While it is true that in the popular literature of Socialism, and in its oral propaganda, it is still more or less common to encounter such statements as "All wealth is produced by labor and therefore ought to belong to labor," that is no part of the Marxian theory, and is in fact utterly foreign to it. Marx did not take the position that capitalism ought to be destroyed and replaced by Socialism, but simply that Socialism must take the place of capitalism through the inexorable law of evolution.

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

The absence of any ethical element from it may fairly be regarded as one of the weaknesses of Marxism.

### VI

Thus far we have considered only the philosophical and theoretical parts of the Marxian synthesis; we must now consider briefly its practical parts. In all human history, since the rise of private property at least, there have been class struggles, and the history of these class struggles forms a large part of the record of the race. Modern society is characterized by a struggle between the employing and the employed classes. The object of the employing class is to get as large an amount of surplus value from the toil of the workers they employ as possible; the object of the employed is to end that exploitation.

The aim and object of Socialism is to do away with that exploitation of labor; to deprive the capitalist of his power to possess himself of the values created by the laborer. In this sense Socialism is a working-class movement, and in this sense only. Upon this point there has been a great deal of misapprehension and misunderstanding, even among Socialists themselves. The Socialist

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

movement never was a proletarian movement in the narrow sense that only proletarians belonged to it or had a rightful place in it. The movement has always drawn to it many of the ablest intellectuals of the world, practically all of them coming from the privileged classes. From time to time little groups of self-styled revolutionists attempt to divide the Socialist ranks by excluding all those who are not actually of the proletariat from responsible positions in the movement. While they do manage to keep active a certain distrust of the so-called intellectuals—which, in moderation, is probably a very good thing—they have, fortunately, never been able to impress the movement with their narrow views. Marx, Engels, Lassalle, Singer, Liebknecht, Kautsky, Longuet, Vaillant, Jaurès, Plechanoff, Vandervelde, Adler, Bax, Hyndman, Morris—how infinitely poorer and weaker the movement must have been without these and many others who came to it from the privileged classes!

I venture to say that Socialism is a proletarian movement in a far deeper and subtler sense than is realized by the short-sighted "Red Revolutionist" in our ranks, whose boast it is that he has no use for any except



## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

the proletariat, and that he refuses to recognize that any others should have a place in our councils. It is a proletarian movement in the deeper sense that its aims, if realized, no matter by whom or by what means, must bring about the emancipation of the working class from economic dependence and exploitation. A movement might well be composed of members of the working class exclusively, and have no sort of an idea of economic class rule. The mere fact that all its members belonged to the proletariat would not make an anti-Socialist movement a working-class movement in the sense I am contending for. It would be a movement to serve the interests of the master class. The fact that it was composed of proletarians would be of small consequence. In a similar way, a movement wholly composed of rich men, if it aimed at the abolition of capitalism, would be essentially a proletarian movement in the sense that it aimed at the realization of the economic interests of the proletariat. Our test, then, is not the status of the man, but his conscious aim. ✓

Of course, it is implicit in the Marxian theory that, because the political activities of men reflect their economic interests, and

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

political parties and movements therefore become the expression of economic classes, the Socialist movement will and must in a very definite manner draw to it the class-conscious proletariat. It was not for purposes of rhetorical effect merely that Marx and Engels called upon the workers to unite; they wanted not merely a movement whose aims would, if realized, liberate the workers, but a movement of the working class consciously pursuing those aims. We must not make the mistake of interpreting too narrowly this term, "the working class," as so many of our friends—youthful romanticists, for the most part—would have us do. It includes the manual workers, the brain workers whose services are not parasitical, the vast body of professionals engaged in useful social service, and even the bulk of the petty traders. At least, all these have common economic interests which far outweigh their separate interests.

### VII

Internationalism is an integral part of what I have termed practical Marxism. Socialism is not only an international movement, but it is a movement of international-

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

ism. It is the greatest single force devoted to the cause of international peace and world solidarity which has yet appeared. So much we may claim without being self-righteous.<sup>1</sup>

It may be doubted, I think, whether our conception of the internationalism we are so eloquent in advocating has yet been defined with sufficient precision. It is not at all certain to my mind that when we unite in songs and shibboleths which avow our internationalist ideals we all mean the same thing. There appear to be some to whom internationalism means a definite antagonism to nationalism, and all that is comprehended in that term. Many of our Syndicalist friends, as well as comrades like Karl Liebknecht and Gustav Hervé, whose opposition to militarism seems to have carried them onward to the point of antagonizing the idea of loyalty to a special nation, apparently give to internationalism a meaning which it has never been generally understood to possess. Hervé especially defines internationalism in a sense which is not justified

<sup>1</sup> The reader is reminded that, as recorded in the Preface, this was written before the outbreak of the war and the betrayal of the cause of Socialist Internationalism by the German Social Democrats in the Reichstag.—J. S.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

by the history of the movement and its policies.<sup>1</sup>

I do not forget the famous declaration by Marx that the working class has no fatherland when I say that Socialist internationalism is not incompatible with a genuine patriotism, by which I mean a special and distinctive loyalty to and love for a particular nation, either that of one's birth or one's adoption. When Bebel declared that he would "shoulder a gun" to defend Germany against an invading army he was not unfaithful to the ideals of internationalism. Marx and Engels very clearly and strongly held that the right of each nation to defend its own existence and independence was fundamental, and they held that to join in such defense was the duty even of the Socialist. I am not here and now arguing the merits of the two conceptions; it is sufficient to recognize them and to direct attention to them. Definition will probably come out of the controversy before long, and we shall find out just how Socialism will serve the cause of international organization. Meantime we may well give some attention to the

<sup>1</sup>When this was written M. Hervé's impassioned diatribes against patriotism were being much discussed. As is well known, when the war broke out M. Hervé became an ardent patriot.

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

international aspects of the Socialist movement which are clear and unmistakable.

Socialism is an international movement in the sense that it has a place in the political life of all those modern nations in which industrialism has developed. Even countries like Turkey and China, whose industrialism is not very far developed, have Socialists in their parliaments. Yet in every country the criticism is heard that Socialism is a "foreign movement." This objection, which is frequently heard in this country, has been raised against the movement in every land. Gladstone scornfully charged that Socialism was of German origin, while Bismarck as scornfully rejected it because it was English. The fact is that it is a wholly indigenous movement wherever the capitalist system of industry prevails.

Socialism is international in a deeper sense also. Its spirit is international. It is fraught with the conscious purpose of uniting the workers of all lands and ultimately bringing about the World Republic. It aims to promote better understanding among all peoples and to realize the great ideal of equal rights and opportunities for all nations. To this end it would federate all the nations, great and small alike, giving

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

to the poorest and least powerful every advantage enjoyed by the richest and most powerful.

This internationalism requires a jealous regard for the principle of nationality. Not only have Socialists always been ready to defend their nations against invasion, but they have at all times espoused the cause of peoples struggling to defend their national independence or to regain it. Furthermore, we have never held that the call, "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" meant that all proletarians should gather in any one country, regardless of the interests and wishes of the people of that country. Just as we have always sanctioned wars of defense, so we have sanctioned the defense of the standard of living against the competition of people of lower orders of civilization.

### VIII

Finally, Socialism is a political movement. True, it has other sources of power; it does not rely upon political action exclusively. It must, however, participate in the political conflict. All other forms of struggle may be indulged in, but they cannot, either separately or together, do away with the

## MARXIAN SOCIALIST SYNTHESIS

political struggle. The old distinction between Socialism and Anarchism still holds good. The Socialist seeks to conquer the power of the state, as the largest and most inclusive social organism yet developed, and to use that power as an instrument for the furtherance of industrial democracy.

Sometimes, indeed, within the Socialist movement little groups arise whose impatience at the slowness of political action, and disgust at the trickery of politics, lead them to renounce the political method and to declare that there is another and a better way. I know of no case in which the holders of this view have managed to maintain for any length of time association with the Socialist movement. Inevitably, soon or late, they cease to be Socialists and become either Anarchists or simple reactionaries. Possession and control of the political organization of society is as essential to Socialism as possession and control of the economic organization.

## VI

### CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

#### I

THE most unpopular doctrine of modern Socialism is the doctrine of the class struggle. The average American is affected by the mere mention of the term very much as the waving of a red flag affects an angry bull. Either he denies that there are any class distinctions in America, or else he accuses the Socialists of destroying social peace and deliberately provoking class hatred. From either point of view it is an "un-American doctrine."

Difficult as it may be for the Socialist to comprehend the fact, the average American is honest and sincere when he denies that there are social classes in America. To the Socialist the class divisions are so obvious, the lines so clearly drawn, that he marvels



## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

at the failure to perceive them, and wonders if it is a real failure to perceive; whether it is not rather a denial of a clearly perceived but unpleasant fact. Still, it is not so wonderful that the average American should fail to perceive the class divisions in American society. Of course, he knows that there are rich and poor. He knows, too, that there are strikes and lockouts and other manifestations of industrial strife. So much is quite obvious. The trouble is that he does not interpret these phenomena as we do. To him they represent evils arising from differences in individuals. Strikes and other forms of class warfare exist because men are not "good" or "just" or "reasonable." They are possible only because there are "bad employers" and "bad workers."

All this comes from his heritage as an American. It has been part of the national tradition that there are no classes in America. It was easy for such a tradition to grow up and become so thoroughly a part of the national consciousness as to remain virile long after the facts which gave it birth passed away. Of course, there never was a time when it was true—never, that is, after the settlement of the country by the white races. Certainly, social classes were

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

clearly defined when the Declaration of Independence was written, and class interests shaped the Constitution of the United States, as Smith,<sup>1</sup> Simons,<sup>2</sup> and others have clearly shown. But there was no legalized caste, with hereditary titles and privileges, corresponding to the nobility of European countries. That fact lent much support to the idea that this was a country without classes. Classes existed, but they were not fixed. Passage from class to class was common and easy, as the numerous examples of "self-made men" proved. The poor boy became a millionaire, the poor rail-splitter became President. What wonder that in such a country the fiction of an entire absence of social-class divisions should prevail!

Even now passage from class to class, from poverty to affluence, is fairly common. The man below still cherishes the hope of acquiring riches and entering the class above. There is no legal barrier separating the classes, but the ruling class is more and more establishing its rule through hereditary channels. Thus we have the anomaly of a hereditary ruling class without legal sanction or titular prestige. To supply this deficiency

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of American Government*, by J. Allen Smith.

<sup>2</sup> *Social Forces in American History*, by A. M. Simons.

## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

the democracy has, with grim humor, issued the patents of nobility which our form of government has failed to provide. We have "kings" of finance and "lords" of industry; "steel kings" and "money kings," "sugar lords" and "coal barons." Thus we give to our plutocracy the necessary gradations of rank and title.

Equally honest and sincere is the American who thinks that the Socialist agitator creates class hatred and sets class against class. Of course, he recognizes that there are class divisions, but he denies that they are based upon antagonistic interests. He asserts, on the contrary, that the interests of the classes are quite identical, and that conflict between them is due to misunderstandings which are brought about and fostered by "paid agitators" who thrive upon the misery they produce, and from which employers and workers equally suffer. He does not readily grasp the fact that the Socialist is no more responsible for the existence of the class conflict to which he directs attention than is the meteorologist for the storms to which he directs attention. Perhaps the most difficult task before the Socialists of America is the task of making the class-struggle theory clear to the mind

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

of the average American with his inherited pride in the freedom of his country from class divisions.

### II

No better brief statement of the theory has ever been made than that which Engels has made for us in his Introduction to the *Communist Manifesto*. It would be well if every American could be induced to learn the summary by heart and to understand it. Popular discussion of the theory would then be free from the misunderstandings and misrepresentations now so unhappily rife. Says Engels:

“In every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch.” This is the theory of social development which Marx and Engels called “the materialistic conception of history” which we have already considered at length. The doctrine of class struggles is an important part of that theory. It explains the manner in which the economic forces bring about great social changes, the

## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

*mechanics* of social development as distinguished from its *dynamics*.

Let us pause and consider the paragraph from the Introduction by Engels already quoted: The basis upon which any historical epoch rests is said to be "the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it." It is not merely the method of production, but the method of exchange and the social organization which these involve which are to be considered. This point is sometimes lost sight of, but it is of primary importance. For the social organization which is made necessary by the prevailing mode of exchange in particular involves the major problem of social relations between producers and consumers; in fact, between all the members of society. With this well in mind, let us continue with the statement of the theory by Engels:

"And, consequently, the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolution in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class—the bourgeoisie—without, at the same time, and once for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions, and class struggles.”

This paragraph is literally crammed with profound meaning. It contains so many important propositions that we are in danger of losing sight of some of them unless we read the passage over and over again. I propose to dissect the statement and separate its propositions:

- (1) Class divisions and class struggles arise out of the economic organization of society—the mode of production and exchange and the social organization which is made necessary thereby.
- (2) There were no class divisions in primitive society, which was communistic in character.
- (3) Ever since the passing of tribal communism and the appearance of private property human society has been divided into classes.
- (4) These classes have fought each other, exploiting and exploited being forever in conflict.
- (5) Each distinct historical epoch has had its own peculiar class conflict and been characterized by that conflict.

## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

- (6) The present historical epoch is characterized by the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or, to translate those terms, between the wage-workers and the capitalists.
- (7) There can be no other class conflict. The next historical epoch will be characterized by an absence of class divisions and class struggles. This is so because the wage-workers can only bring the present exploitation and oppression to an end by completely destroying the possibility of class domination in the future.

This doctrine has been cleverly likened to the old religious doctrine of the Fall of Man and his redemption by faith—the idea of a Paradise lost and regained. Just as according to the old religious conception, sin brought death and pain into the world and eternal life and happiness are to be regained, so private property brought class strife into the world, and social harmony and freedom from class strife are to be regained. Certainly there is small reason for the criticism that Marxian Socialism lacks the element of idealism. It inspires its devotees with a profound faith in the realization of a world free from class strife and bitterness, and imposes upon the proletariat the noble task of bringing about the better day. Surely, never was a nobler ideal set before men!

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Let us consider, briefly, the principles of economic classification. What do we mean by an "economic class"? Unless we have in our minds a clear answer to that question we shall flounder hopelessly in confusion and uncertainty.

First of all, an economic class is composed of a large number of persons grouped according to common economic relation and status. The grouping of any number of persons as a result of choice, either because of the possession of certain ideas or because the individuals are congenial to one another, would not make a class in the sense in which we use the word. Such a grouping might form a church or a club, but not a social class. But the grouping of individuals according to economic relation and status, unless we greatly restrict the meaning of these terms, does not constitute an economic class. We might describe all the persons engaged in coal-mining, for example, from the rich president of the corporation owning the mine down to the poorest "breaker-boy," as holding toward society a common relation and occupying a common status. They are all engaged in a single branch of economic activity. Obviously, however, we do not include the multi-millionaire coal "king"



## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

and the poor boy at the "breaker" in a single class.

Now, take these two types which, though engaged in a single branch of economic activity, cannot belong to the same social class. What is the reason for placing them in separate classes? At first thought the answer appears to be very obvious. One is rich while the other is poor. To divide society into classes according to income seems at first the most logical thing to do, and many writers have classified society according to incomes. But the method is in reality very crude, unscientific, and useless. It does not help us much to divide society into "rich, richer, and richest; poor, poorer, and poorest." After all, the skilled mechanic who earns a hundred dollars a month does not belong to the same "class" as the pensioner who gets a hundred dollars a month from a rich relative and never does any work at all. He does not belong to the same "class," either, as the woman who gets a hundred dollars a month interest on invested capital, even if that is her sole income. He has not the same class interest as the pensioner or as the investor has. *Amount of income is not a satisfactory basis for social classification.*

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

The proper basis is similarity of economic functions and interests in the economic system. The function of the producer is quite different from that of the investor. They may both be engaged in the same branch of economic activity, but their functions are quite different. Now these functions give rise to different interests. The producer and the investor may have important general interests in common, interests as against all the rest of society, or interests in common with all the rest of society. But the producer, *as a producer*, has special interests as against the special interests of the investor *as investor*. The only adequate test of class membership, then, is the *source of income* test. In the statement of the Marxian theory of class conflicts by Engels this is clearly implied; the struggle is always between "exploiting" and "exploited" classes.

An economic class, then, is an aggregation of individuals bound together by the similarity of their specific interests in the economic system and of their functions in it. But *similarity* of functions is not to be narrowly interpreted as *identity* of functions. The coal-miner and the tailor are engaged in doing very different work, but they are both producers and not mere consumers of wealth.

## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

In that sense they perform similar functions, and they have a common class interest against all who are merely consumers of wealth.

In capitalist society there is a class conflict characteristic of that society, just as in every other form of society since the disappearance of tribal communism there has been a class conflict characteristic of that society. It takes the form of a struggle between the employing, wage-paying class, and the employed, wage-receiving class. The former class finds it to be to its interest to purchase labor-power as cheaply as possible and to exploit it as much as possible in order to obtain the maximum of profit. The latter class, on the other hand, desires to be exploited as little as possible, to sell its labor-power as dearly as possible and to obtain the maximum of satisfaction in return for a minimum pain cost. All the sophistry in the world will not avail to hide that fact.

Now, it is obvious that not all the members of society are to be included in the two classes named. There are many who are outside the two main contending classes. You cannot draw a horizontal line across society and say that all on the upper side are capitalists and all on the lower prole-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

tarians. Social problems are never so simple as that. Many Socialist propagandists talk and write of the class-struggle theory as if it involved the assumption that every individual must be arbitrarily assigned to one of two groups, either to the wage-paying or to the wage-receiving class. That is a crude error which has given rise to much misunderstanding. The fact is that you cannot always tell exactly where to place an individual. Take the case of our skilled mechanic earning a hundred dollars a month. Assume that he has saved or acquired five thousand dollars which he has placed in the bank, and for the use of which he receives two hundred and fifty dollars a year. He is still a working-man, but he is also an investor. "Very well," you say, "his major interest determines where to place him. His income is principally derived from his own labor and that fixes his class rank." So far well and good. But suppose that he saves or acquires by gift or otherwise more money and his monthly income from his investment amounts to one hundred dollars. He continues to work at his trade for one hundred dollars a month. Surely he is as much a wage-earner as he ever was. On the other hand, he is quite as surely an in-

## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

vestor as the woman whose sole income is one hundred dollars a month interest on invested capital. He may even derive his income as investor from the same concern as that from which the woman derives her income. How now are we to classify him?

There are many such problems which perplex the minds of those who know the class-struggle theory only in its crude form as a sharp division of society into two all-embracing classes. Most of these problems disappear when the theory is properly delimited and carefully stated. It does not mean that the wage-paying and wage-receiving classes whose interests are in conflict constitute the whole of society, but that the conflict between them is the dominant and characteristic struggle of this epoch.

### III

We must still further delimit the theory and guard against the narrow view of it expressed by the phrase, "the capitalist class and the working class can have no interests in common." As a matter of fact, aside from their special interests, the classes have many interests in common. Both classes have interests in common, not alone

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

with each other, but with the whole of society. For example, both classes are equally interested with the whole of society in preventing disastrous fires, epidemics, and invasions. In a land where racial antagonism is prevalent employers and employees may have a common interest in defending themselves against attack. Thus Jewish employers and Jewish workmen have a common interest in opposing anti-Semitism.

Sometimes capitalists and workers have industrial interests in common. They are equally desirous of "good times" and equally fearful of a period of industrial depression. They are equally opposed to anything which menaces the existence of the industry in which they are engaged. For example, when it is proposed to prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, the workers employed in the various occupations which would be abolished by such legislation make common cause with their employers in fighting the proposed legislation. Nevertheless, their special relations to each other, as classes, involve a conflict of interests. That fact is not in the least degree affected by the community of interests which they may have outside the sphere of those special relations.

Normally, this fundamental antagonism

## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

leads to class warfare. Workers organize to enforce their employers to pay more money for less work. Employers organize to resist the demands made by their employees and to maintain their power of exploitation. But there may arise circumstances which temporarily dwarf the class antagonisms and accentuate other interests. At such times the two classes forget their opposition for the time being and make common cause. In the event of an anti-Semitic outbreak, a *pogrom*, when the lives of all Jews are imperiled, it is easy to understand why Jewish employers and Jewish wage-workers make a common fight for their self-preservation. At such times class interests are engulfed by racial interests. Of course, the same may be said of negroes or any other oppressed race.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, class interests may be completely swept aside by some great common peril or disaster. When the city of San Francisco was stricken by earthquake and fire a few years ago, there was an enormous demand for labor. Had the workers, who were well organized for the most part, chosen

<sup>1</sup> The action of the Socialists in making common cause with other classes in the present war is another illustration of the same thing.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

to take advantage of their unusual position, they could have greatly advanced their interests by demanding high wages and so on. But they refused to do so. More than that, they voluntarily waived rules which in normal times they would have insisted upon with all their organized might. What happened was that a great common calamity temporarily overshadowed their class interests.

Numerous examples of this kind might be cited if necessary. For our present purpose it is quite sufficient to note that the overshadowing of the conflict of the economic interests of the classes by special interests of this kind does not in the slightest degree weaken the class-struggle theory. In normal times each class acts in accordance with its special class interests. The result is class war.

It does not follow that because divergent economic interests give rise to a constant state of warfare between the two classes that each individual in either class will invariably be found fighting on the side of his own class. There will always be found individuals who do not realize their class interests. They lack utterly the consciousness of class. There are working-men who,



## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

quite unconscious of their class interests, refuse to join with their fellows in any aggressive movement against their employers, and boast of their loyalty to their employers. There are other working-men who, even when conscious of their class interest, to the extent of knowing that they are exploited by their employers, subordinate it to some other interest which they regard as of greater importance. Religious and racial interests are sometimes thus exalted above class interests. Working-men of one race or one creed will sometimes refuse to unite with working-men of another race or creed, even though they perceive that they thus play into the hands of the master class.

The master class in general is characterized by a greater development of its class consciousness and a greater degree of class solidarity. But even so, individual capitalists sometimes desert the ranks of their own class and assist the workers in their struggles. Undoubtedly Marx was right in declaring that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself. No exploited class was ever liberated by the exploiting class. It would be foolish and vain for the workers to rely upon the master class. It would be

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

foolish for the Socialist parties of the world to depend upon the master class or any section of it. On the other hand, it would be a supreme folly for the workers to refuse the assistance of those members of the ruling class who in good faith join the movement of the workers. No class in history ever overthrew a ruling and exploited class without the aid of recruits from the class against which it was fighting. I do not say that the thing could not be done, but that it never has been done. In every period of transition some members of the ruling class have made common cause with the class in revolt.

Marx and Engels recognized this important fact and, while insisting upon the need of working-class solidarity and the fact that the working class must determine to achieve its own emancipation, took care, in the *Communist Manifesto*, to warn us against a too narrow interpretation of that great principle. They pointed out that, while the tendency of the middle class, composed of petty merchants and manufacturers, is, on the whole, toward a reactionary view, there are many exceptions to that rule. The average small shopkeeper or manufacturer wants to "roll back the wheel of history."

## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

He wants to retard the inevitable development of industry by means of legislation tending to check combination. But there are many members of this class who see the futility of such reactionary proposals. They see the inevitability of industrial combination and of the extinction of their class, its reduction to that of the proletariat. Seeing so much, they make common cause with the workers. Instead of defending the forlorn hope of their present position, they serve their future interest.

This element has been of immense service to the Socialist movement in every country. Its contribution to the movement is of the highest importance, for it brings with it to the service of the proletariat "fresh elements of enlightenment and progress."<sup>1</sup> Its knowledge of the mechanism of capitalist exploitation, its capacity for organization and administration, have made this element immensely valuable to the Socialist movement.

Finally, in the time of crisis, when the class struggle has become intense, the movement of the proletariat will receive support from a section of the real ruling class. The

<sup>1</sup> *Communist Manifesto.*

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

bitterness of the conflict, the certainty of change, the sense that the future belongs to the proletariat, will combine to induce some members of the ruling class to cut themselves adrift from their own class and join the proletarian struggle. "Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeoisie ideologists who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movements as a whole."<sup>1</sup>

Only a crude and narrow conception of the class struggle, such as Marx ridiculed and condemned, can lead to the demand that the Socialist movement deny a place to all who are not actual proletarians. That silly demand has been put forward by small sectarian groups, but it has never been seriously regarded. If it were to be made the rule in this or any other great modern nation that the movement refused to ask for, or to accept, the support of non-proletarians, it would have, as we shall see, to abandon all hope of political victory.

<sup>1</sup> *Communist Manifesto*.

## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

### IV

The proletariat—using that term in its narrow sense to connote the workers who do not own the tools and implements with which they labor, the wage-working class in general—does not constitute a majority of the population. There is probably not a modern nation in which this class could, without the assistance of the so-called middle class, furnish a majority of the votes—not even with an absolutely democratic universal suffrage and the most perfect class solidarity conceivable.

Now, if this be true, and if it is understood that the next great epoch of social evolution is to be ushered in by the triumph of the proletariat over the present ruling class, it becomes a matter of the highest importance to consider the part in the conflict of those elements in society which are separate and distinct from the principal classes in the strife. What of our great so-called “middle class”—the millions of farmers, retailers, petty manufacturers, professional workers, and so on? Without support from it the proletariat cannot possibly hope to succeed. So much, at least, is certain.

Now if these various elements constituted

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

a homogeneous class with definite interests of its own, it would easily hold the balance of power and be enabled to drive a hard bargain. But in reality it is not a distinct class with homogeneous interests, but a series of groups without a common interest. When we speak of the middle class, therefore, we speak of a rather loose aggregation of social groups. While the interests of each group might be ascertained and set forth with reasonable certainty, that is not possible when we lump the groups and consider them as a single class. So considered, the interests appear rather inchoate, vague, and conflicting. In that which we call the middle class there are members of the actual working class, such as the petty farmers and industrial workers owning their own tools. There are also elements hardly distinguishable from the working class, such as small storekeepers whose incomes are not equal to the average wages of mechanics, and whose labor is hard and exhausting. On the other hand, it includes highly salaried professional workers, such as corporation attorneys, for example. That the former group would be more likely to make common cause with the proletariat than would the latter group is fairly obvious.

Of twenty-four million men and boys en-

## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

gaged in industry in the United States, twelve million are mechanics, laborers, clerks, and servants. About four million are farm laborers. Strictly speaking, these two groups make up the proletariat, the class exclusively employed for wages. Now, this class may be regarded as fairly homogeneous so far as its *interests* are concerned. It is true that in the case of the farm laborers the figures include a very large number who are not mere laborers in the ordinary sense of the word, but the sons of the farm owners, expecting to become the owners in due course. How many such there are we have no means of knowing, so we can only take the group as a whole and include it in the proletariat.

But *psychologically* the class is not so homogeneous. The difference between class interest and the *consciousness* of class interest is very real. The servant class, especially personal servants, such as valets, footmen, coachmen, chauffeurs, and the like, is very apt to be servile and snobbish, to lack the sense of class solidarity, and to ape the wealthy class with which it is so much associated. To a lesser degree, clerks, as a general rule, show the same lack of class consciousness and the same tendency to reflect the point of view of the master class. The typical bank

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

clerk has the mental attitude of the banker, and is slow to recognize any class kinship with the factory worker. Finally, among all rural and isolated workers the consciousness of class interests and the sense of class solidarity develop very slowly. It is evident, therefore, that under the most favorable conditions imaginable a proletarian majority, in the narrow sense, is unthinkable at present.

To an older generation of Socialists this fact would not have presented any difficulty whatever. The speedy disappearance of the middle class was regarded as certain. All the small farms were to be speedily concentrated into a few immense "bonanza" farms, and the small retail stores and industries were likewise certain to be swallowed up. The Marxian theory of capitalist concentration seemed beautifully simple and direct. There has been concentration, of course, but the process has not been nearly so simple as Marx imagined. In agriculture it has taken another direction than the actual amalgamation of many small farms into a single large farm. The small farm remains. The bonanza farms have been split up into farms of small acreage. While the available figures relating to farm ownership and operation in the states of Indiana, Iowa, and



## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

Illinois indicate a very definite tendency during the last decade toward concentration, alike by the increase of the number of large farms requiring machine cultivation and the decrease of small farms, there is no present evidence of the approaching extinction of the small farm. Petty industries and small stores, likewise, persist and flourish. The complete extinction of the middle class can at best only be regarded as an extremely remote event.

To lump all farmers together in a single class is quite absurd. The farmer who owns his farm and the farmer who is a renter occupy very different positions. The farmer whose farm is large and requires costly mechanical equipment and much hired labor is in a very different position from that occupied by the farmer whose farm is small and operated with very little machinery or hired labor. Such a farmer is often compelled to exist upon a smaller income than that of the hired laborer he employs. He is no better off than the proletarian of the city. Often, indeed, he is worse off. That he should sympathize with a proletarian revolt is not strange, especially when it is borne in mind that the great trusts and railroad corporations which exploit the industrial

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

proletariat also exploit the farmers. While it may be difficult to unite the small farmers and the wage-earners in an economic movement, it is natural that they should unite in the political movement to bring about collective ownership of railroads, mines, factories for the manufacture of agriculture implements, storage-plants, grain-elevators, and so on. In point of fact the American farmer is not slow to embrace the principles and program of Socialism. In the nineties American Socialists were still discussing whether the farmer could be a Socialist and whether it was "safe to admit him to membership in the party." In some states attempts were made to exclude him; in other states rules were adopted limiting the number of farmers to a small percentage of the total membership. But that day is gone, never to return. The place of the farmer in the working-class movement is now secure.

Of the other elements of the middle class, and particularly of the petty merchant class, it may be said that their interests vacillate. They suffer from high prices and so blame the "trust." They find it hard to pay high wages, and so blame the unions. They have little sympathy with the efforts of the workers to raise wages and secure a reduction of

## CLASSES AND CLASS CONFLICT

hours by means of their unions, but they are at one with the workers in their opposition to the capitalist monopolists. In general, we may say that that section of the middle class which derives its income principally from rent, interest, or profit will join with the major capitalist class in the fight against an aggressive proletariat. On the other hand, that section of the middle class which depends primarily upon its own labor, and only to a minor extent upon rent, interest, or profit, will join with the proletariat. This is probably by far the larger section of the petty trading and manufacturing class.

The moral is that the Socialist movement can only hope to succeed as the movement of the working class, using that term in its broadest sense to include all the useful workers, rather than as a movement of the actual wage-earners. For, as we have seen, the wage-earners do not constitute the entire working class. The tendency in recent years in all lands has been for Socialists to expand the meaning of the term "working class," not to contract it as formerly, when they meant it to include only the wage-earners. Wilhelm Liebknecht, the great German Socialist leader, declared: "If it is limited to

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

the wage-earners, Socialism cannot conquer. If it includes all the workers and the moral and intellectual *élite* of the nation, its victory is certain." Liebknecht thus reached the conclusion that the Social Democracy of Germany is "the party of all the people with the exception of two hundred thousand great proprietors, small proprietors, and priests."

And still, for all that, Socialism is not merely a movement of the producing class as a whole. It is that, but it is also distinctly a proletarian movement. It is born of the active conflict between the wage-earning class and the wage-paying class. The struggle between these is the most important fact in modern society and affects the whole life of society. To each side gather those elements which are naturally in sympathy with it, united to it by economic interests. To the proletariat are drawn naturally all those elements which are not parasitic—the producing class as a whole. Thus the movement which is proletarian in spirit and aim is also the movement of the entire producing class—the movement of all except those who depend upon economic exploitation.

## VII

### METHODS AND WEAPONS

#### I

IT has often been said that Socialism is strongest considered as a destructive criticism of existing society, and weakest considered as a constructive program. Certainly destructive criticism occupies a large place in the propaganda of the Socialist movement. A very large part of its popular literature is concerned with the indictment of capitalist society, recounting its shortcomings and its ills. Undoubtedly this is one of the principal reasons why this movement draws to it so many whose minds are capable only of negation and destruction, and incapable of affirmation and constructive effort. So many are fitted to criticize, so few fitted to build. The movement has suffered greatly from this psychological fact.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Socialism is not a destructive movement merely. Our aim is not the destruction of capitalism only, but the realization of a positive Socialist ideal. Just as the builder must first clear the ground by destroying the old structure which encumbers the site, so the social builder, in order to make way for his affirmative ideal, must first destroy faith in the existing social order. Criticism of the existing social order is essential, but the social criticism which ends in mere negation is of little value; only that social criticism which has a constructive purpose behind it can be of lasting value.

It is not a criticism of the class-struggle theory of Marx to recognize the fact that there are elements in it which prove very alluring to many persons whose capacity for destructive criticism is abnormally developed. The social iconoclast finds great inspiration for his propaganda in the Marxian doctrine of class warfare. In this connection it is interesting to observe that the doctrine has from time to time been subject to many crude perversions, all of them tending to the same general end—namely, the exaggeration of destructive criticism and minimizing of constructive effort. Practically all of these perversions of the doctrine

## METHODS AND WEAPONS

of class warfare have been characterized by the one idea that anything done to injure the capitalist or the capitalist system is justifiable. The reasoning is in all cases very simple and naïve: there is a class war, the capitalist on one side being ranged against the proletariat on the other. Between the two classes there can be no commonalty of interests. Whatever benefits the capitalist injures the worker, and whatever is advantageous to the worker in the conflict must be disadvantageous to the capitalist. If anything can be done to injure the capitalist system or its beneficiaries so much is to the advantage of the working class.

It was upon the basis of such sophistry as this that many of the leaders of the "Will of the People" movement in Russia, in 1881, in the name of Socialism and the Marxian doctrine of class warfare, justified the most terrible persecution of the Jews and refused to combat that persecution. There were at that time serious manifestations of anti-Semitism. In the main it was a movement of protest against Jewish money-lenders, but, as invariably happens in such cases, the savage passions thus unleashed soon extended to the entire Jewish populace. The *pogrom* appeared; Jews were beaten, robbed and

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

murdered, and Jewish women and girls were raped and murdered. Some of the leaders of the Nihilist movement argued that since the outbreak was primarily against the capitalist money-lenders it ought not to be opposed, because once the people acquired the habit of rising in revolt against Jewish capitalists it would not be so difficult to induce them to revolt later against non-Jewish capitalists also. "The riots show that the Russian peasants are capable of revolution," they said. That meantime many Jewish working people suffered terrible wrongs was merely a regrettable incident in the eyes of these misguided theorists. Strange as it may seem, some of the leading Jewish Nihilists took a similar view of the situation. These men saw only the fact that capitalists, money-lenders, were sometimes attacked, though less often than Jewish working people, and they were blind to the fact that great fundamental social institutions and laws equally valuable to all classes were being jeopardized.

In the eighteen-eighties a group of French Anarchists sought to demoralize the business system of the country by a wholesale forging of checks and counterfeiting of money and postage stamps. Their reasoning, too,



## METHODS AND WEAPONS

was naïve and simple: a class war is going on in society, on one side being ranged the capitalist, and on the other the worker. The very life of capitalism and the capitalist class depends upon the systems of currency and credit and their integrity. If these can be demoralized and deranged the capitalist system will be hit in its most vital spot. Therefore, they argued, the Marxian philosophy was abundant justification for their criminal acts. That simple criminals used this sophistry to cloak their crimes troubled these Anarchists not at all. They were obsessed by a theory and blind to the grim and stern realities of life. The modern Syndicalist advocating sabotage reasons in precisely the same manner. The important question whether the destruction of the integrity of the worker, his candor and courage, whether it does not inevitably destroy his capacity for class solidarity, is always lost sight of. The Syndicalists utterly fail to profit by the lessons of history.

## II

Rationally interpreted, the Socialist philosophy, so far from lending support to such purely destructive movements, leads to their

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

condemnation. Mere destructive assaults upon the capitalist system are never justified. It may be set down as one of the axioms of Socialist policy that no act of workers, either collectively or individually, against any capitalist group or institution is sanctioned unless it is calculated to benefit the working class as a whole. The worker who secretly wastes materials and breaks machinery in order to "get even" with his boss rarely benefits himself or his fellows. Usually he benefits some other capitalist. Who that remembers the indictment of the Standard Oil Company, for example, can forget that one of its practices was to bribe employees of the independent oil-refiners, its competitors, to cripple and destroy the machinery so as to lessen the output? Unscrupulous capitalists have always indulged in the bribery of the employees of their competitors to commit acts of sabotage. Socialists above all people need to contemplate the terrible spectacle presented by Longfellow's lines:

There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,  
Shorn of his strength and bound in bonds of steel,  
Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,  
And smite the pillars of our Commonweal  
Till the vast temple of our liberties  
A shapeless mass of wreck and ruin lies.

## METHODS AND WEAPONS

There is always the danger lest a mistaken conception of the class conflict in society lead impassioned mobs to blind destructive revolt. Much of the loose talk one hears in Socialist circles about "mass action" is so obviously characterized by blind passion that it becomes the duty of every earnest and sincere Socialist to insist upon those great ethical principles which alone can sanction any mass movement, and to oppose to the uttermost the destructive creed of the Anarchist.

It cannot be too often insisted upon that the aim of Socialism is to seize and to hold and enjoy all that is noble and good in civilization. Capitalism has given to the world many great gains which must be preserved at all costs. To destroy all the fruits of capitalism would mean reversion to barbarism. The proletariat has been called "the class that has the future in its hands." Its priceless heritage must inevitably be accompanied by a great and solemn responsibility. The proletariat must preserve all the social values of capitalism and destroy only those anti-social powers which limit its own freedom and development. Unless it takes care to preserve intact all that is worthy in civilization, to cherish all the best that has been

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

achieved by the race in its age-long pilgrimage, then the future which it is to possess will be poor indeed, poorer even than the present.

If I am right in thus interpreting the moral obligation which rests upon the class-conscious proletariat, it must follow that as one of the noblest and best gains of civilization to be preserved we must regard the degree of social consciousness already attained. This is not mere sentimentalism, but hard common sense. Whenever individual consciousness and struggle are substituted for social consciousness and struggle there is a loss to be registered. For example, it is of the utmost importance that the social methods of dealing with individual grievances which have already been developed should be maintained and further developed. That is the essence of Socialism. By no other process can a fully socialized life be attained. By such methods society grows toward the Socialist ideal. There is an interweaving of the social sense of responsibility for the individual and of the individual sense of responsibility for society. It is fairly easy to see that to ignore and abandon the social methods of dealing with grievances which have taken the place of the duel, and to

## METHODS AND WEAPONS

return to that individualistic method of dealing with grievances, would be a very great loss to society. If some part of the proletariat by its actions should bring about this result in the course of its struggles, it would have destroyed a very valuable part of the civilization it should have conserved for its own profit. And what is true of the substitution of community law for the duel is true of the whole body of laws which give security to the citizen and pledge the resources of the community to the maintenance of the rights of the humblest individual. The right of the poorest laborer to a trial by jury, and to protection against would-be lynchers, is only one illustration of thousands of laws developed under capitalism which the proletariat must preserve.

It is the recognition of these things which leads the Socialist to repudiate the "individual struggle" of the Anarchist, including sabotage and all forms of the individualistic "propaganda of the deed," and to insist upon the open collective action of the masses, democratically governed. We must likewise repudiate the view said to have been expressed by a well-known Socialist, that "if the McNamaras had succeeded they would have been right." If such a state-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

ment was made from a Socialist platform it was made by one who had utterly failed to comprehend the fundamental principle governing the whole policy of the Socialist movement. So far from success justifying such deeds as those of the McNamaras, every "successful" deed of the kind is an injury to the civilization which it is the Socialist's mission to defend and preserve. Sabotage and attacks upon property by individuals are essentially the weapons of the slum proletariat described by Marx as that rotting mass whose conditions of existence best fit it for the servile uses of the capitalist class. With this element we Socialists have little in common. We have as little fellowship with the parasites at the bottom of the social structure as with the parasites at the top. True, the slum proletariat is fighting in a way against the existing order which we Socialists are also opposing, but, whereas we fight openly as a mass, the slum proletariat fights secretly and individually. Our weapons are economic and political solidarity; its weapons are lies, furtive tricks, and criminal acts.

It is worthy of notice, I think, that the ruling class never sends its spies and provocative agents to promote legal, open organi-

## METHODS AND WEAPONS

zation of the workers. On the contrary, they strive by all means in their power to prevent this. What they do seek to provoke is the individual deed. Wherever secret and conspiratory methods prevail and individual deeds of violence and cunning are relied upon, spies and provocative agents are always active. The reason for this is not difficult to perceive. Where the movement is open and public there are no secrets to be ferreted out and the informer has nothing to sell. One of the most tragic features of the modern Syndicalist agitation is the fact, that with all the great volume of Socialist and revolutionary experience to guide them, they ignore the lessons of history and propose to revert to the old methods of secret individualistic action which in the past have always been attended by such pernicious ills. In face of the great and heroic struggle of our Russian comrades to get away from the need of secret, conspiratory action, to get their movement out into the open and into the light, in the name of progress the Syndicalists would take the movement in this and other lands into that condition to escape from which our Russian comrades have sacrificed so much.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The reference is, of course, to the old Russia of the Romanoffs.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

The fundamental requisites of Socialist policy are openness as against secrecy, collective effort as against individual effort, systematic action as against spasmodic action. Upon the basis of these principles the Socialist movement of the world rests. Upon no other basis will it ever be possible to build a sound movement.

### III

Foremost among the weapons of the Socialist is political action. Since we are to deal with this matter at length in a subsequent chapter, it will be sufficient to note here the two principal reasons why Socialism must use the weapon of political action. The object of political organization and struggle is to secure control of the state. This control of the state is essential, in the first place, because of its enormous powers. The modern state is vastly more than a mere police power; it is the principal directing power of the economic organization of society. The relation between the political powers of the state and the economic functions upon which the well-being of the nation depends becomes ever more and more intimate. It is one of the most obvious facts



## METHODS AND WEAPONS

of our modern civilization that there can be no effective control of the economic system except through the agency of the state. The state constantly grows stronger and more important than ever.

In the second place, political action looking to the conquest of the state is necessary because the state is the supreme expression of the degree of social solidarity so far developed. In the state we have the most numerous and far-reaching manifestations of that reciprocal social sense of responsibility for the individual and of the individual responsibility for society. The state is the channel through which the greatest achievements of civilization are brought to the enrichment of the individual life. The researches of science which teach us to conquer disease and prolong life, and the infinite cultural gains are by the state brought to the individual. Each decade sees its repressive and coercive functions become relatively less extensive and important, and its beneficent and helpful functions become relatively more extensive and important. In that fact is the *raison d'être* of our hope for the future. Deny the progress made and the hope for progress disappears.

Next to political action, labor-unionism

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

is perhaps the most effective weapon of the proletariat. Socialism and labor-unionism are not synonymous. Frequently, indeed, there is an utter lack of understanding between them. This is especially the case where the Socialist movement is of the doctrinaire type, placing abstractions above realities and dogma above life. In the broadest sense of the term, however, labor-unionism may fairly be described as one of the principal weapons of the Socialist movement, especially if the latter term is used in a liberal sense. While the political movement aims at the possession and use of the powers of the state by the proletariat, the unions aim to continually raise the standards of living by battling for higher wages or better working conditions, and, above all, to develop that sense of class power which alone can make the political struggle effective. If thus far in America Socialism and labor-unionism have been kept apart they are, nevertheless, different phases of the same struggle of the proletariat and must soon be knit together.

Labor-unionism trains the workers in class consciousness and solidarity of action. It gives the individual worker a sense of interdependence with his fellows in the strug-

## METHODS AND WEAPONS

gle for great common ends. It advances the material interests of the workers and strengthens them, giving them that physical and moral stamina which fits them for efficient struggle and prevents their pressure down to the level of the rotting mass, the submerged and unfit. Through the union the individual worker gains a dignity which only a great vision can give.

Unquestionably the unions have improved labor conditions, and to that extent they have advanced the working class toward the goal of emancipation. It is one of the curiosities of history that this very achievement of the unions has been made the basis of vigorous attacks upon them by some of the closet philosophers of Socialism. With a very narrow and rigid interpretation of Marx's Theory of Increasing Misery these critics have contended that the worse the condition of the workers the more certainly and quickly will they rebel. For such persons Marx wrote in vain. Surely he made it abundantly clear that efficiency and success in the proletarian struggle require physical, mental, and moral stamina and strength impossible to those who are crushed and helpless.

The lesson of experience is even more conclusive than the teachings of Marx. We

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

have but to observe the strength of the corrupt political machines in the slum districts of our cities to be made actually aware of the fact that intense poverty, so far from making efficient revolutionists, makes the most servile tools for reactionaries to use. The poorest and wretchedest victims of the human struggle are not found in the Socialist ranks, but in the ranks of the enemies of Socialism. We draw our recruits mostly from among the fairly well paid, educated, organized workers. They alone have the hope and the courage which a successful Socialist movement needs and without which it cannot exist. Some time ago I was curious to find out just what proportion of the members of the Socialist Party belonged to labor unions, and was astonished to discover that, so far as there was any record, something over 60 per cent. of the male members of the party were members of unions.

### IV

Another important weapon of the proletariat is the co-operative society. Co-operation is not so well developed in the United States as in some other countries, though there are signs of improvement in

## METHODS AND WEAPONS

this direction. It is true that there are many more co-operative societies in the United States than is generally supposed. No recent survey of this important field has been made.<sup>1</sup> One reason for the relative failure of the co-operative movement in this country thus far is the cosmopolitan and polyglot composition of our industrial proletariat. The co-operative societies which have succeeded best in this country have been those which have been confined to members of one nationality, speaking a common language. Another reason is the fact that there has been very little systematic propaganda in favor of co-operative societies carried on by the Socialist Party. The party has been rather cool in its attitude toward the co-operatives. It has been too largely dominated by narrow doctrinaires who have feared that the co-operatives would weaken the revolutionary passion of the workers. There are signs of an awakening to the vast importance of this department of proletarian effort, and we may, I think, expect that the next few years will witness a great revival of interest in this phase of our movement.

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written a number of such surveys have been made.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

The co-operative movement in Great Britain has a capital of hundreds of millions of pounds sterling, and it has an annual business of more than \$250,000,000. Germany has over 28,000 co-operative societies, with a total membership of more than 4,000,000, representing nearly a third of the population. In Belgium the co-operative movement is strong. The co-operatives constitute a very important part of the Socialist movement. In Ghent and some other cities most of the bread is produced by the Socialist co-operatives, the annual trade of which amounts to over 40,000,000 francs. In Russia co-operative societies are increasing and becoming a most valuable feature of the movement. Even in India there are a number of co-operative societies with a membership of more than 250,000.

As we have seen, some doctrinaire Socialists have opposed the labor unions because they have feared that any improvement in the condition of the workers, any elevation of their standard of living, must make them conservative. The co-operatives have been opposed on the same grounds. It is unnecessary to repeat the answer to this ancient and unwarranted fear. Co-operation is of inestimable value to the workers, first

## METHODS AND WEAPONS

of all because it is providing them with a training in the organization of industry and commerce which they could not otherwise obtain. One ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory. The experience gained in the management of a single co-operative society does more to fit a man for actual participation in the construction of the Socialist Commonwealth than the knowledge of all the Socialist theories ever advanced could do. In the aggregate there are millions of workers who are thus being trained in the actual administration of industry and business. Some day it will be found that these workers have acquired the technique of economic organization essential to the realization in fact of our great ideals. Great as the service of the agitator has been and will yet be to the proletarian movement, the time must come when he must give way to the builder. Then, too, the co-operative movement is proving the possibility and practicability of the organization and distribution of industry by the workers without the intervention of the capitalist exploiter. To the man or woman who doubts this we can point to the great achievements of the co-operative societies organized and successfully carried on by the workers in many

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

lands. They have shown that it is possible for the workers to eliminate the exploiter. Ferdinand Lassalle proudly boasted that the workers are self-sufficient and "armed with all the knowledge and culture of the centuries." The co-operative societies of the proletariat are making good that boast.

### v

The ideal Socialist movement would blend itself into and perfectly unite these three forms of organization. It would unite all the workers on the economic field through labor-union organization and co-operation, and constantly aim at the progressive improvement of the workers' standard of living. It would adopt an aggressive policy in the labor struggle, being greatly strengthened by the support of the co-operatives and the power of its parliamentary representatives. On the political field it would be aggressive and independent, complementing the efforts of the unions and the co-operatives. It would increasingly socialize the state and enlarge its functions as the great equalizer of economic opportunity. It would build up a strong and virile co-operative movement having for its ideal the organization of every



## METHODS AND WEAPONS

worker into the political party, the co-operatives and the labor unions.

In Germany the unions have something over 2,500,000 members, the vast majority of whom are regarded as Socialist Party members, and who so regard themselves. The workmen's co-operative societies have about 4,000,000 members, and the Socialist vote in 1912 was 4,250,000. The unions, the party, and the co-operatives are interdependent, but independent in management. Some such synthesis must be achieved in this country if we are to have a powerful Socialist movement. There must be a greater sense of interdependence between the political party, the labor unions, and the co-operatives. A union of these three forces aiming at the realization of complete political and industrial democracy would be irresistible. Happily, there are signs that such a union is being achieved.

## VIII

### REVISIONISM

#### I

**I**N every country, from its inception, the Socialist movement has been characterized by a constant conflict of opinion upon important points of theory and practice. It will be sufficiently exact for our immediate purpose to describe the conflict as one between the uncompromising revolutionists on the one hand and the opportunists on the other hand. Every change in party tactics has been the result of a vigorous conflict between these two opposing elements. The points at issue have not been the same in all places at all times. The most radical revolutionist in a controversy upon some point of theory may be the most extreme opportunist in a conflict upon the practical program and political tactics of the party. Extremes

## REVISIONISM

meet. But the conflict is always more or less evident.

It is the fashion to indulge in very arbitrary generalizations concerning these conflicting elements in the movement. The popular method is to describe the revolutionary wing as being concerned only with the final goal and rejecting all efforts to meet the immediate needs of the workers by palliative reforms, and the opportunist wing as caring so much for the palliative reforms, the present amelioration of conditions, as to force their concern for the final goal into the background. In other words, one side is described as rejecting the proverbial "half-loaf" with scorn, clamoring the while for the whole loaf, while the other side is so eager for the half-loaf, so afraid of getting nothing at all, that the original demand for the whole loaf is lost sight of.

Now, this generalization is not true, though it has an element of truth in it. The terms "revolutionary" and "opportunist" are not so easily defined. There are tendencies in the direction of each of the extremes described, and to some extent they characterize the conflict. Yet, often enough, it is the ultra-revolutionists who clamor most loudly for something immediate, some defi-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

nite present gain, even if it is only a half-loaf. How else shall we interpret the revolt against parliamentary methods? Is it not based upon impatience at its slowness, the belief that its indirect methods of conquering the minds of a popular majority and enacting laws are needlessly slow; that gains can be more quickly made by other and more direct methods?

On the whole, it would be better to use the terminology of theological dispute and to say that the conflict is always between the orthodox and the heterodox elements. On the one hand are the believers in and defenders of principles or policies already accepted and established. On the other hand are non-believers in and opponents of those principles or policies, seeking to replace them by others. The orthodox element in one country may be called radical, and the heterodox element conservative or opportunist, as in Germany, or the orthodox element may be called conservative or opportunist, and the heterodox element radical or revolutionary, as in this country at the present time.

### II

Revision may be said to be a theoretical and practical movement in favor of a more

## REVISIONISM

flexible and opportunist policy, an abandonment of the stern, uncompromising attitude generally regarded as orthodox and proper, while Syndicalism is a theoretical and practical movement in favor of a more stern and uncompromising attitude. Both forms of heterodoxy have some beliefs in common, as we shall see, for here, too, extremes meet.

At the congress of the German Social Democratic Party, held at Stuttgart, in 1898, arose a sharp controversy on certain important questions of theory, a controversy which sharply divided the party membership. Eduard Bernstein boldly declared that the time had come to revise the theoretical declarations of the party, partly to conform to the actual policies of the party and partly to conform to the realities of modern social life. Kautsky, naturally, took the leadership in defense of the orthodox position. Early in 1899, Bernstein published a lengthy exposition of his views in a volume entitled *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus*, of which an excellent English translation has been published under the title, *Evolutionary Socialism*.

It is difficult for an American or an Englishman, little used to base his politics upon closely reasoned theories, to comprehend the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

tremendous sensation which Bernstein's book caused in Germany, a sensation which the capitalist press throughout the world exploited to the utmost, hailing it with glee as a certain promise that the great Social Democratic Party of Germany would be split to pieces. To begin with, Bernstein was assailing the theoretical basis of the party, attacking Marxism itself. It was, therefore, not simply a tactical dispute. It was not simply the case of a party comrade declaring that the time had come to change tactics and encountering the usual amount of conservative opposition. Here was a comrade of distinction, highly honored by the party, declaring that the *credo* of the party was antiquated and false.

And the man who was thus daring was the tried and trusted friend of Friederich Engels, the man who during the "exceptional laws" had, in English exile, edited the *Sozial Demokrat*, the party organ, and guarded the most precious documents of the party. That the attack upon the long-accepted principles of the party was sensational cannot be denied. It was the first of its kind. Kautsky, in his reply to it, declared that Bernstein had produced the first sensational work of the German Social Democracy.

## REVISIONISM

It is impossible here to do more than note a few of the outstanding points of Bernstein's critique. The book itself must be studied for a complete statement of Bernstein's position. But a survey of the most important of his criticisms, together with a study of their practical implication, will enable us to understand the essentials of the controversy.

### III

Marx, as is well known, formulated a theory of capitalist development which is known as the Theory of Capitalist Concentration. Briefly stated the theory is as follows: Competition among capitalists tends always in the direction of monopoly, to the extinction of small and inefficient business enterprises, to a progressive increase in the size of business units and a corresponding decrease in the number of capitalists. Thus, the middle class must speedily disappear, most of its members being crushed down to the level of the proletariat. By an almost automatic process, impressive in its inevitability, capitalism must destroy itself. "Capitalism provides its own grave-diggers," said Marx.

With the development of monopoly on the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

one hand, and a tremendous increase of the proletariat on the other hand, Marx argued, capitalism would become intolerable and Socialism would become inevitable: "The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with it and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."<sup>1</sup>

There are two points worthy of note here concerning this theory. The first is that it brings into strong relief the sociological viewpoint of Marx and the distinction between Socialism as he conceived it and the Socialism of the utopians. It presents Socialism not as an ideal, but as an inevitable category; not as a plan to be adopted, but as a stage of social development to be reached regardless of ideal forces, a necessary and inevitable development of capitalist society. The second point is the almost automatic nature of the process. As stated by Marx, in the pas-

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, vol. i, p. 837.



## REVISIONISM

sage I have quoted, it gives little room for the moral factor. It is a process of economic fatalism. It pictures the coming of Socialism without any effort on the part of the people.

It is hardly necessary to say that Marx himself did not so regard the theory. Had he done so, what purpose could he have in attempting to build up a great conscious movement of the proletariat? That the change can be hastened or retarded at will by the mass of the people must be assumed to give rationality to any appeal to the proletariat to agitate, educate, and organize in order to hasten the coming co-operative commonwealth. There have been followers of Marx who have insisted that Socialism is "inevitable" in the narrowest sense of the word, but Marx himself regarded as inevitable the development of conditions which would force the vastly numerous proletariat to rise and throw off the rule of the few capitalists.

Even when so interpreted, Bernstein found himself obliged to reject the doctrine of the "inevitability of Socialism." The coming of Socialism, he argued, will depend upon the moral and intellectual forces demanding it. The change to Socialism will not take

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

place because of any irresistible process inherent in the development of capitalism, but rather because new and nobler ideals are developed in the minds and hearts of men. Here the revisionist and the Syndicalist take a common ground; both feel the necessity of a great moral and intellectual incentive to social change.

But Bernstein's criticism went deeper than that; he argued that the development of capitalism had not proceeded along the lines laid down by Marx. In particular, the middle class is not disappearing and sinking into the proletarian class. Petty industries are not extinct or rapidly becoming so, as Marx thought would be the case; small business establishments persist, and in some cases increase. The small farm is not a thing of the past, absorbed by the great bonanza farm. The great industrial and commercial corporations really diffuse ownership—the number of shareholders is enormous and constantly increasing. There is an increase in the number of taxable incomes in England and Germany, and the greatest increase is shown in the number of moderate incomes.

These facts, according to Bernstein, point with great plainness to the need of a revision of our theoretical position. The middle class

## REVISIONISM

is not disappearing, but actually increasing. There are more expropriators to be expropriated. In support of this position Bernstein and his followers offer an imposing array of figures, and, on the other hand, Kautsky and his followers offer an equally imposing array of figures in support of the orthodox view.

Without attempting any detailed analysis of these figures,<sup>1</sup> a brief résumé of the main conclusions to be drawn from them may be of service. It is obvious that the multitude of shareholders in industrial and commercial corporations means a wide diffusion of ownership. That the number of such shareholders is steadily increasing in all industrial countries is an indisputable fact. Furthermore, the number of persons with taxable incomes in all the principal countries increases faster than population—that is to say, each decade shows that the number of taxable incomes increases more rapidly than the population. Certainly these facts do not warrant belief in the generally accepted Socialist theory that the middle class is becoming less numerous and is inevitably doomed to speedy extinction.

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion of the statistical data on the subject see *Elements of Socialism*, by Spargo and Arner, chap. xiv.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Another fact which militates against acceptance of the theory that the middle class is being eliminated through the inevitable and irresistible concentration of wealth and industry is the fact that small industrial and commercial establishments not only persist, despite the growth of great establishments, but actually flourish. They continue to exist in large numbers and even to increase. In our Socialist propaganda fifteen or twenty years ago we used to talk glibly about the disappearance of the small manufacturer and trader. Our speeches were very largely built upon the assumption and the premise that within a very few years the only factories existing would be the great factories owned by the trusts, and the only stores, the huge department stores, likewise owned by great corporations; or the branches of vast systems of "chain" stores. There are still Socialists who cling to this belief, but for the most part it has been abandoned. We have come to accept the fact that the disappearance of small industrial and commercial establishments, if it takes place at all, will be a very slow and protracted process. We have even reconciled ourselves to the thought that the number of such establishments may yet increase.

## REVISIONISM

That there has been a remarkable amount of industrial concentration cannot be denied. Industrial and commercial concentration is an indisputable fact, not only in the United States, but in every other industrial nation. The outstanding lesson to be drawn from the statistical evidence is that although the number of petty industries is very large their product is relatively insignificant when compared with the total volume of production. They do not produce in proportion to their number. For example, while the number of manufacturing establishments in 1905 with capitals of less than \$5,000 constituted 32.9 per cent. of the total number, they employed only 1.3 per cent. of the total capital employed in manufacturing and only 1.9 per cent. of the workers employed, whereas, the establishments with a capital of over \$1,000,000 constituted .9 per cent. of the total number of establishments, but they employed 37.7 per cent. of the capital and 25.2 per cent. of the workers. More recent figures show the same general results. While numerous small industrial and commercial establishments continue to exist, and in some cases show a tendency to increase in number, the increase of the great industrial and commercial establishments which employ far more capital

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

and many more workers is vastly greater and of more consequence. Thus there is a very marked concentration along the lines of the prediction of Marx though accompanied by a persistence of small enterprises which he believed impossible. Even the most orthodox Socialists have been forced to accept the irrefragable logic of the facts.

Kautsky, for example, with characteristic subtlety and skill attempts to prove that this has always been recognized. Of course, we must make full allowance for the necessities of the apologist. What is of interest to us here and now is Kautsky's argument that after all the persistence of petty industries is a matter of no importance; that every Socialist knows them to be inevitable, and that such small industrial enterprises may even exist under Socialism. The argument is that the readiness of society for democratic collectivism is not dependent upon the number of small industrial and commercial establishments remaining, but rather upon the number and importance of the great establishments which exist. It is impossible, Kautsky argues, to conceive of Socialism except as a result of the development of great industrial organizations and establishments. Where such great establishments have been devel-

## REVISIONISM

oped to a sufficient extent, no matter how many small establishments continue to exist, it will be easy to organize society upon a Socialist basis, to concentrate industry and, if need be, to eliminate most or all of the petty industrial and commercial units.<sup>1</sup>

There is another aspect of this question of concentration which must be seriously regarded—namely, concentration of control. All modern experience and all available statistical evidence points to the fact that concentration of control is quite as important as concentration of ownership. Apparently Marx greatly underestimated the importance of this cardinal factor in the evolution of our economic life. It is one of the commonplaces of our time that, despite the fact that the number of stockholders in our industries is very large, the actual control of the capital which they jointly own is frequently in the hands of a very few men. The power resident in that capital is thus concentrated in the hands of a few men just as effectively as if they owned the capital itself. It may be true, for example, that a great railroad corporation has as many as 50,000 or 60,000 stockholders, but

<sup>1</sup> *The Social Revolution*, Kautsky, p. 144.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

as a rule the influence of the individual stockholder is a negligible quantity, and the total resources of the corporation are absolutely controlled by a very small group of men. Furthermore, we must take into account in this connection the matter of interlocking directorships; the fact that the same men who control the concentrated capital belonging to the stockholders in the railroad corporation reappear as the men who control wholly or in part the capitals of other great corporations. For example, testimony given before the Pujo Committee showed that 180 men held 746 directorships in 134 corporations with a total capitalization of \$25,825,000,000.

### IV

When we turn to agriculture, we find that, however damaging the criticism directed against the Marxian generalization is in the matter of industrial concentration, it is even more important when directed against the theory as applied to agriculture. Undoubtedly Marx himself believed that the process of industrial development, culminating in the more or less rapid complete extinction of small industrial and commercial establish-



## REVISIONISM

ments, would be repeated in agriculture. Just as the small workshop was doomed in his eyes because of its inherent limitations and its inability to meet the requirements of rational production—that is, of production upon the most efficient basis possible—so the small farm seemed to him to be inevitably doomed to extinction. He believed that agriculture would undergo a process of development similar to that undergone by industry, that the invention of power machinery and the development of agricultural chemistry would inevitably lead to the extinction of the small farmer and the placing of agriculture upon a capitalist basis.

It is only a few years since any expression of doubt concerning the validity of this prediction would have been regarded as an unpardonable heresy in the Socialist movement. The rise of great bonanza farms in this country was hailed by all Socialist theorists in every part of the world as the beginning of a rapid fulfilment of the Marxian theory. As a matter of hard cold fact there are at present few signs, if any, of any important movement in that direction. There has been, indeed, a marked tendency in a contrary direction in practically every country.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

The small farm persists and even increases. Instead of small farm acreages being concentrated into vast bonanza farms there has been a marked decentralization. Great farms and plantations in the West and in the South have been broken up into small holdings, and a similar tendency is noticeable in other lands. Great estates have been divided into small farms, and the state in some cases has assisted in the process by granting state credit to the purchasers of the small farms. Thus, the concentration of agriculture, if it is a fact, is not following the lines of Marx's forecast. Machinery plays an ever-increasing part in agricultural production, it is true, but what Marx did not and could not foresee was the fact noted by Kropotkin, among others, that much of the machinery invented is relatively inexpensive, operated by gasolene, or easily accessible electric power, and therefore capable of being acquired and used by the small farmer, thus lending itself to the needs of petty agriculture. We are, apparently, in a stage of transition. It is impossible from the statistical data available to reach positive conclusions upon this subject or to measure with any exactitude the rate and volume of agricultural concentration.

## REVISIONISM

Whereas only a few years ago the tendency was to a smaller farm acreage in this country, the present tendency is toward a larger farm acreage. Once more there would appear to be, then, a movement in the direction of physical concentration. How far this will go, whether it will be permanent or whether it will be universal, are questions which no man can answer with any degree of certainty, and concerning which prophecy would be both foolish and futile. Any day may witness some new invention which will revolutionize agriculture and make the small farm practically impossible.

Much has been written about the subject of farm ownership and its relation to this subject of concentration. We know very little indeed about actual farm ownership. The census figures do not help us very much. We cannot even tell from them how many farms are mortgaged. We are warned by the Census Bureau that "inquiries with reference to mortgage indebtedness at the census of 1910, as at the two preceding censuses, related only to those farms which were operated by their owners. . . . No attempt was made to ascertain the total number of farms in the United States which were mortgaged, or the total amount of

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

mortgage debt. Tenants or hired managers often do not know whether the land they cultivate is mortgaged or not; and often if they know it to be mortgaged they are not likely to have accurate information as to the amount of mortgage debt."<sup>1</sup>

Of course, a mortgage may, as is pointed out by the census authorities, be a sign of prosperity rather than of an opposite condition. A mortgaged farm may indicate either a step in the direction of concentration or away from it. No one can possibly tell this from the figures, hence we have the spectacle of orthodox Socialists and revisionists quoting the same figures with equal plausibility in support of their positions. The proportion of farms mortgaged in 1910 was higher in Iowa and Wisconsin than in any other states, yet these states were and are among the most prosperous of the agricultural states.<sup>2</sup> A very great proportion of the sum included in the mortgage debts is used for improvement and equipment. That the proportion of farmers owning their own farms is diminishing steadily is indicated by the table on the following page.

<sup>1</sup> Thirteenth Census of the United States, vol. v, chap. iii, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

## REVISIONISM

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF FARMS	NUMBER OF FARMS OPERATED BY		PER CENT. OF FARMS OPERATED BY	
		OWNERS	TENANTS	OWNERS	TENANTS
1910 <sup>1</sup>	6,361,502	3,948,722	2,354,676	62.1	37.0
1900	5,739,657	3,713,371	2,026,286	64.7	35.3
1890	4,564,641	3,269,728	1,294,913	71.6	28.4
1880	4,008,907	2,984,306	1,024,601	74.5	25.5

<sup>1</sup> .9 per cent. (nine-tenths of one per cent.) of farms were operated by farm managers.

There is yet another aspect of this subject of agricultural concentration to be taken into account. Many of the agricultural functions are being steadily taken from the farm to the factory. The farmers are more and more dependent upon great capitalist agencies. Creameries, grain-elevators, storage warehouses, packing-plants, fertilizer-factories, and many other vital auxiliaries of agriculture have passed beyond the control of the farmer, who finds himself more and more controlled by the industrial capitalist.

The purpose in calling attention to these facts is not to obscure the issue or avoid the conclusion that the concentration of agriculture, which Marx forecast, is not evidenced by any considerable body of reliable experience or credible data, but to emphasize the fact that concentration undoubtedly exists in subtle forms. We see no con-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

siderable movement toward the realization of Marx's prophecy, but it may be too soon to express an absolute verdict. Probably the small farm is here to stay, and this fact is, as we shall see, of immense practical political consequence.

### v

The concentration of wealth as distinguished from the concentration of capital in industry and in agriculture is likewise a very difficult subject. Many of the leading exponents of the orthodox and revisionist schools of Socialist thought have engaged in labored controversy upon it, and, as in the case of agriculture, the disputants on both sides have generally relied upon the same sets of figures. Concentration of wealth needs to be sharply distinguished from concentration of capital. It is theoretically possible at least to have complete concentration of capital accompanied by a vast diffusion of wealth. Apart from abstract economic theory, as a matter of hard fact, concentration of capital sometimes lends itself to a certain measure of diffusion of wealth. Yet the concentration of wealth is more or less intimately connected with the concentration of capital in Socialist theory.

## REVISIONISM

Through the concentration of capital Marx saw the inevitable disappearance of the great middle class. Society was thus to be divided into two great classes, the capitalist and the proletariat, the former constantly becoming richer, the latter constantly becoming poorer. This process Marx taught must continue to develop until the point of social cataclysm and revolution was reached. How far has this concentration of wealth proceeded, if at all, and at what rate is it proceeding? Obviously the answers to these questions, if they can be answered, must be of very great significance if Marx's theory is correct. Even if the theory is not correct, it must be of enormous importance to demonstrate the fact.

In order to ascertain the concentration of wealth we are forced to rely upon three principal kinds of data—namely, the statistics of income and inheritance taxes, the number of shareholders in industrial and commercial corporations, and the number and amount of savings-bank deposits. The average uncritical reader, unaccustomed to the evaluation of statistical data, is apt to regard these sources of evidence with very great importance and to place altogether too much confidence in them. There are

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

many factors to be considered which do not appear upon the surface, and which indeed cannot be discovered by the most careful and vigilant.

If we take the number of shareholders, for example, we have absolutely no means of knowing what proportion of the total number is made up of small investors owning one or two shares in a single company, and what proportion represents large investors. It is quite impossible to tell how many of the total number are duplications, people owning shares in many corporations, oftentimes many shares in each of many corporations. Take the matter of railroad ownership, for instance; every one knows that a few large stockholders own the bulk of the shares. Mr. Basil Manly is authority for the statement that more than one-fifth of the railroad stock of the nation is owned by fifty stockholders. The twenty-five largest individual stockholders own 3,748,929 shares; the ten largest trust companies own 5,096,233 shares, and the fifteen largest railway companies own 9,328,946 shares. Individuals own hundreds of thousands of shares.<sup>1</sup> Such

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of emphasis I have inserted these recent figures, kindly furnished by Mr. Alexander Trachtenberg, of the Rand School of Social Science. They were not used in the original lectures.



## REVISIONISM

facts are not revealed by the number of shareholders or the number of shares of stock, the figures most generally cited in this discussion.

11 In the same way it is quite impossible to obtain a satisfactory interpretation from the number and amounts of savings-bank deposits. We have no means of knowing what proportion of the total number represents the deposits of children and of the very poor—the petty savings. That the number of these is very large indeed is well known to every student, but how large it is impossible to say. It is likewise impossible to tell what proportion of the total amount on deposit is owned by these small depositors of petty savings. We do know that a great many business men make a practice of depositing relatively large sums of money in savings-banks, as do many rich persons. While these two classes taken together represent a very small proportion of the total number of depositors, they own a very large proportion of the deposits. It was shown a good many years ago that the number of savings-bank deposits in New York City was more than twice the number of families in the city, but that at the same time two-thirds of the families in the city had no savings-bank

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

accounts at all. Finally, the unreliability of the figures relating to income and inheritance taxes is too notorious for comment.

If we think of concentration in absolute rather than in relative terms, that is to say, if we think of the amounts possessed by individuals, the concentration of wealth can hardly be denied. Never in the world's history were such vast sums owned by individuals. We must, however, think of concentration as a relative term. What concerns us is the percentage of the total wealth enjoyed by the respective social groups. Spahr, in 1895, estimated that 44 per cent. of the families in the United States owned practically no property at all, while seven-eighths of the families owned barely one-eighth of the national wealth, and that 1 per cent. of the families owned more than the remaining 99 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

The most recent and the most comprehensive inquiry into this question is that conducted by the Commission on Industrial Relations, appointed by President Wilson to "inquire into the general condition of labor in the principal industries of the United States." The principal report of that com-

<sup>1</sup> *The Present Distribution of Wealth in the United States*, by Charles B. Spahr, p. 57.

## REVISIONISM

mission sets forth the conclusion that 2 per cent. of the population own 60 per cent. of the national wealth; 33 per cent. of the people own 35 per cent., and 65 per cent. of the people own barely 5 per cent. of the national wealth. On the whole these figures do not indicate that the concentration has materially increased since Spahr made his estimate, but it must be remembered that the basis of calculation was not the same in each case. That there is an enormous concentration of wealth in few hands is the most obvious conclusion to be drawn from all the available statistics, but whether that concentration is progressively increasing is not evidenced.

To sum up, then, we are obliged to conclude that while there has been an enormous amount of concentration, it has not been as complete nor as rapid as Marx predicted. We are reminded of the story which Liebknecht tells of the model of an electric railway which Marx saw in a Regent Street shop window in 1850. Marx and his immediate circle believed that within a few years at most capitalism would be ended, thanks to the revolutionizing agency of electricity. He did not believe that the capitalist system could withstand the introduction of electric transportation. More than threescore years

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

have passed by since Marx saw that model of an electric railway, and only an infinitesimal part of the railway systems of the world has been electrified, and the capitalist system still endures. The revolution through the agency of electricity did not fail to appear; it is proceeding now and has been for some time past, and will continue for a good many years to come. The concentration of capital and of wealth is a fact, but the process is much slower and more protracted than Marx believed it would be.

### VI

Bernstein and his followers of the revisionist school have directed some of their most searching criticisms against the Marxian theory of historical development, the so-called materialistic conception of history. They have contended with great force against the mechanistic nature of the Marxian philosophy and urged that it attributed far too little consequence to the play of idealistic factors. It must be acknowledged, however, that in the main their criticisms have been valid only in so far as they have been directed against the rather crude popularizations of the theory so unfortunately com-

## REVISIONISM

mon in the Socialist propaganda. The modifications of the theory contended for by Bernstein are substantially those which were insisted upon by no less an authority than Marx's great associate, Friederich Engels. No word uttered by any of the recognized leaders of the revisionists, in criticism of a too rigid mechanistic conception of economic determinism, exceeds in vigor the scornful criticism of Engels. Some of the would-be interpreters of Marx, aiming to be more Marxian than Marx himself, have narrowed to the point of absurdity a great hypothesis which was already too narrow. They have made it appear that the theory implies that every phenomenon in social evolution can be explained by and traced to definite economic motivation. Many of them have extended this caricature of the theory and claimed that individual conduct is always determined by economic interests. That their own lives as propagandists of an unpopular cause refuted the claims they made was a fact obvious to all except themselves.

The materialistic conception of history has suffered more at the hands of its friends than any philosophical theory of modern times. In the first place, Marx and Engels themselves frequently over-emphasized the in-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

fluence of purely economic factors in social evolution. They did not always in their formulations of the theory, and their arguments in support of it, pay sufficient attention to the other factors concerned. Not infrequently they seemed to deny all influence of ideological factors. In some letters on the subject written in 1890 Engels admitted all this and directed specific attention to the fact that political, legal, and philosophical theories, and even religious beliefs, exert an important influence on historical development, sometimes even a determining influence. The revisionists have amplified Engels's statement and supplied numerous illustrations of the manner in which ideological factors influence social development. They have contended, moreover, that in proportion as man's economic power develops, and especially as the economic functions become subject to an increasing measure of democratic authority and control, the determining force of economic factors is relatively lessened, and the force of ideological and spiritual factors relatively increased.

While the revisionist criticism of the Marxian theory of historical development is of less immediate practical consequence than the criticism of the theory of concentration

## REVISIONISM

and its corollary, the theory of increasing misery, it has nevertheless had important consequences. Not the least of these consequences is the greater attention to ethical considerations manifested in the literature of the movement, and the greater tolerance of religious belief. In the literature of the Socialist movement this fundamental doctrine of Marxism looms large, and undoubtedly it exercises a very considerable influence upon the minds and the opinions of a great many Socialists. It must, however, be borne in mind that in the actual life and struggles of the movement the dogma in its entirety is little observed. No small part of the Socialist propaganda is based upon the assumption that ideals not immediately related to their economic interests inspire the movement and a large portion of mankind. In actual practice the dogma is thus revised so that it might almost be said that the revisionists have simply been engaged in bringing the theoretic formulations of the dogma into harmony with the every-day practice.

If revisionists had no other object than revising the theoretic statement of the principles of the movement to accord with its practices it would be simply the work of

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

school-men, of no more than academic interest. It is, however, very much more important than this: essentially it is an attempt to so revise and broaden the credo of the movement within which its political policies are confined as to make the policy of the movement more flexible, opportunistic, and more accordant with the realities. On its practical side, therefore, revisionism is of the highest importance.

If it is true that the middle class is not disappearing, but holding its own, it is obviously useless for the Socialist propagandist to ignore the members of that class and address himself exclusively to the proletariat. A few years ago in our Socialist propaganda we scornfully declined to make any appeal to the members of the middle class, except the appeal to anticipate their inevitable sinking into the proletariat by joining the ranks of the proletariat. The Socialist propaganda papers of a decade ago teemed with articles written in this spirit. There were numerous discussions upon the question whether a farmer could be a sincere Socialist, for example; and whether farmers and shopkeepers should be admitted to membership in the Socialist Party. In some of the Socialist organizations in our Western states



## REVISIONISM

rules were adopted excluding farmers from membership in the Socialist Party in some cases. Nowadays that sort of thing is remembered with amusement as evidence of juvenile folly. We have come to accept the fact that the middle class is not disappearing and that, as that great revolutionist, Wilhelm Liebknecht, so bravely recognized, if we are to accept the class-struggle theory we must expand instead of contracting it, and realize that Socialism is the movement of all except a numerically small and insignificant part of the people.

The revisionists have made much of the discovery that the working class is not homogeneous and have predicted that with the attainment of Socialism there would be a new set of class divisions instead of the abolition of all classes which Marx and his followers have foretold. The argument runs as follows: Under the existing system of capitalist exploitation the workers as a whole, skilled and unskilled, have more common interests than conflicting ones. They are bound together by these common interests against the employing class. So long as the struggle between employed and employing classes endures, that is to say, so long as the capitalist system itself shall last,

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

this unity of working-class interests will serve to keep the workers together. Abolish capitalism, however, and establish the Socialist organization of industry, and immediately the conflicting elements in the working class, heretofore subordinated, must manifest themselves. The differences in their interests and their needs will divide the workers into separate and conflicting classes.

Plausible as this argument of the revisionists seems, it is based upon a fundamental fallacy not difficult of detection. That it should have escaped the attention of so keen a thinker as Bernstein is quite remarkable. The fallacy in the argument is that it supposes a sudden transformation from capitalism to Socialism without any serious modification of the composition of the proletariat or of the needs and position of its constituent elements and their relation to one another. Curiously, revisionists thus rely, in this argument, upon the hypothesis of a sudden transformation from capitalism to Socialism, the very thing they have declared to be inconceivable. Bernstein himself has vigorously assailed the idea of such a sudden realization of Socialism. Even if we grant the contention that the working class is not homogeneous, there is certainly no reason for

## REVISIONISM

assuming that the differences of interests and needs now characteristic of its constituent parts are to be carried over unmodified into the Socialist society of the future.

### VII

Many of the most thoughtful Socialists in this and other countries have been unduly alarmed by the amount of attention which the revisionists have received. There is no likelihood that the movement will suffer permanently as a result of the work of Bernstein and his followers. To be sure, there are elements of danger in revisionism on its practical side. The mere revision of party dogmas cannot harm, even temporarily, the living movement; what danger there is lies in the practical side of revisionism. Briefly stated, that danger is that we cease to appeal to the workers and make our appeal to bourgeois ideals and sentiments. In a word, the danger is that, in the picturesque phrase of August Bebel, we "lose our teeth" and that we become a reform party merely—a party of empiricism and political opportunism.

The Socialist movement has already suffered too much from political opportunism in its worst form. It is not only those who,

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

by reason of their opposition to revolutionary impossibilists and their insistence upon a constructive program, have been called opportunists who have been the victims of the evils of political opportunism. Many of those who have styled themselves revolutionists and decried and denounced the position of their less romantic comrades have been opportunists of the worst type. This applies to the opportunism of Syndicalism as well as to the opportunism of politics. In one sense the Socialist movement has already had far too much political opportunism for its own good. This is abundantly evidenced by the position of Socialism in the European parliaments, notably in Germany.<sup>1</sup> In the higher sense, of course, the Socialist movement needs a greater degree of wise political opportunism if it is to prevail. If the Socialist movement is to grow and triumph here in America it must get away from its devotion to sterile dogma and address itself to the solution of our great practical problems; it must pay far less attention to theories and construct its program upon the basis of the facts of American life and experience.

<sup>1</sup> This statement was written many months before the outbreak of the European war.

## REVISIONISM

On the whole, revisionism has been of inestimable value to the Socialist movement. All popular movements need to be constantly stirred by searching self-criticism and by the challenge of doubt. Heresy is good for every religion, even the religion of Marxian Socialism. Revisionism has forced the movement to a serious re-examination of its theories and of the practices inspired and governed by those theories. Thus it has prevented the death from stagnation and decay which threatened the intellectual life of the movement. Revisionism is one of the great heresies of Socialism; the other heresy is Syndicalism.

## IX

### SYNDICALISM

#### I

**F**IXED values are full of peril to revolutionary movements. Every great popular movement becomes sluggish and impotent unless from time to time it is swept and stirred to its depths by the storms of self-criticism. All revolutionary movements need to be frequently challenged by doubtful and dissatisfied spirits, and thus forced to that introspection which leads to a revaluation of all the values, intellectual and moral. Only thus can they be saved from the perils of sterile dogmatism. Orthodoxy sacrifices the living soul to the dead dogma in the revolutionary movement of the masses quite as certainly and ruthlessly as in the religious world.

Whatever else we may think of it, Syndi-

## SYNDICALISM

calism has the merit of being a challenge to the orthodoxy of the Socialist movement. It is quite as important considered as a critical assault upon the theories and practices of the Socialist movement as it is when considered as a movement against the capitalist order. Perhaps it is not too much to predict that when the bitterness of the controversy of the hour has spent itself, when we can view it in dispassionate retrospect, we shall realize that the storm of strife between "political actionists" and "direct actionists" served a valuable purpose and saved the movement of the working class from the greatest of all perils—slavery to fixed values.

Mere denunciation of the Syndicalist is a good deal worse than useless. So, too, is ridicule. The challenge of Syndicalism is too serious, too intimately related to the life of the proletariat, to permit the hope that it can be silenced by withering satire or mordant epigram. The intense passionate faith that lies back of the challenge will not be conquered by heresy trials, expulsions, excommunications, or any form of persecution. Moreover, that faith is an infinitely precious quality which the movement of the masses cannot afford to lose. Calm consid-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

eration and a rational, patient answer may achieve the much-to-be-desired result of destroying the error of the Syndicalist and uniting his splendid revolutionary ardor and faith to our own. So much we must as Socialists earnestly desire. Persecution and martyrdom can only serve to keep the error alive and further alienate from the Socialist movement many fine and noble souls.

In this spirit I desire to direct attention to what seems to me to be the salient qualities of Syndicalism and its most important fallacies. For such a discussion to be of value it is necessary to define Syndicalism with precision and a generous measure of sympathy. We must not seize upon the exaggerations and crude excesses which individuals have fastened upon the movement and its propaganda and make these the basis of our estimate. We must in earnest concern ourselves with the common conscious ends and aims of the new movement.

Unfortunately, the utmost caution and most conscientious effort will not make possible such a definition of Syndicalism as will be completely immune from criticism and dissent. Syndicalism is a new movement, rather chaotic as yet, and there are



## · SYNDICALISM

many conflicting voices. It may, I think, be said with complete fairness that thus far there is no voice of authority whose statements are generally accepted by Syndicalists. As a preliminary to a somewhat extensive criticism of the Syndicalist philosophy and program I formulated what I believed to be an accurate and an entirely sympathetic definition of Syndicalism. It was based upon a careful and prolonged study of the writings of representative Syndicalists in various lands. My sole desire was to make such a definition as would satisfy the thoughtful and sincere Syndicalist and it was a matter for special pride on my part that many Syndicalists of standing expressed their approval of that part of my work. Nevertheless, it was vigorously attacked by other Syndicalists.

Attempting to describe the Syndicalist ideal, I wrote: "In the new society the unions of the workers will own and manage all industries, regulate consumption, and administer the general social interests. There will be no other form of government." Reviewing this definition in a well-known journal, a Syndicalist writer of some note charged that I had misrepresented the Syndicalists and that no Syndicalist anywhere had been

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

guilty of stating that the unions of the workers should own all industries. What the Syndicalists say, according to my critic, is that the unions should *control* the industries, not *own* them.

Such criticism as this scarcely merits reply, even when it is advanced by a doctor of philosophy. Property is only intelligible as a jurisdiction over things. Control in the fullest sense, as distinguished from regulation, is not something apart from ownership; it is rather the essence of ownership. If the unions are to have sole control of the industries in the Syndicalist utopia, it is foolish to claim that they will not be the owners. Another Syndicalist writer set before my critic an excellent example of candor in a discussion of this point. Replying to one of his correspondents, Mr. Gaylord Wilshire wrote: "He is worrying over the difference in meaning between the words 'control' and 'ownership,' when, as a matter of fact, they are synonymous from the Syndicalist standpoint."

Unless we are to revolutionize the English language, we must agree that ownership is contemplated by Mr. Arturo Giovannitti when he says: "We industrial unionists are going to take over the industries some

## SYNDICALISM

day—we will lose no time proving title to them beforehand; but we may, if it is necessary, after the thing is done, hire a couple of lawyers and judges to fix up the deed and make the transfer perfectly legal and respectable.”<sup>1</sup> This statement recalls the famous saying of Frederick II of Prussia: “I begin by taking; later I shall find pedants to show that I was quite within my rights.” It appears evident that ownership in the fullest sense is contemplated by Mr. Wilshire, when he says: “Syndicalism is frankly revolutionary in its attitude toward property. It says that when the workers organize industrially they can and will take possession of the machinery of production.” He speaks, furthermore, of “the method of obtaining possession of the machinery of production” and of “the direct possession of industry by themselves.” These statements by American Syndicalists clearly justify that part of my definition which attributed to the Syndicalists the intention and the desire to own and control industry. Similar statements might be quoted from nearly every European Syndicalist of note.

For the purposes of this discussion, then,

<sup>1</sup> Giovannitti, Introduction to *Sabotage*, by Emile Pouget.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

I shall define Syndicalism as follows: Syndicalism is a revolutionary form of labor-unionism which aims to destroy the capitalist system and replace it by a new social system in which the unions of the workers will possess, control, and manage all industries, regulate consumption, and administer the general social interest. There will be no other form of government, for with the abolition of the capitalist system the political state will cease to exist. This social transformation will be brought about, not indirectly, by means of legislation and interference by the state, but directly, that is, as a direct result of economic action by the workers.

### II

Because of its repudiation of political action, using that term in the ordinary and accepted sense, and its insistence upon the superiority of "direct action," which it regards as all-sufficient, Syndicalism claims the attention of the Socialist primarily as a criticism of the accepted policies of the international Socialist movement. As we have seen, the Socialist movement in all lands is a political movement, using the parliamentary method of acquiring control of the state.

## SYNDICALISM

The Syndicalist repudiates this form of working-class action and denounces it as worse than useless. The first important fallacy of Syndicalism is fundamental to this criticism which it makes of the Socialist movement. It is invariably assumed by Syndicalist writers and speakers, so far as I have been able to observe, that Socialism is exclusively a political movement in the sense that it relies wholly and solely upon the parliamentary method to revolutionize the social order.

This is doubtless true of individual Socialists. I have met individual Socialists who believed that we need nothing more than political action. They argued that all we need do in order to bring about Socialism is to convince an effective majority of the voters, capture the state through an election of parliamentary representatives, and bend the power of the state to the service of the proletariat. This naïve belief that Socialism will be brought about almost automatically through the ballot-box is not now and never has been the accepted belief of the Socialist movement. So far as I know, there is not an important Socialist party in the world which has based its tactics upon the assumption that parliamentary

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

action is all-sufficient; that economic struggle is either superfluous or worthless. Practically every Socialist party in the world has been guided in the formulation of its policies by the opposite belief that the struggle on the economic field, maintained by the labor unions and the co-operative societies, is quite as necessary to the working class as the struggle on the political field undertaken by the party itself. Many of the national Socialist parties have gone so far as to make membership in the labor union, for those eligible to such membership, an essential condition of membership in the party.

As a matter of fact, a great deal of nonsense is uttered on both sides of the discussion concerning the respective values of political action and direct action. If to some Socialists the latter term suggests assassination, terrorism, and insurrection, to some Syndicalists it is evidently the name of some talismanic power, a charm to be invoked against all the evils of society. Direct action is not necessarily violent terroristic action. Neither is it necessarily revolutionary and progressive. It may be violent or peaceful, revolutionary or reactionary, just as political action may be violent or peaceful, revolutionary or reactionary. So-

## SYNDICALISM

cialism is no more opposed to direct action as such than it is committed to political action as such. Every Socialist party in the world condemns some forms of political action and approves and supports some forms of direct action. It is, therefore, quite foolish to suppose as many do, that the differences between the Syndicalist and the Socialist can be formulated in such a phrase as "direct action *versus* political action." Outside of the poisoned air of superheated partisanship no such question exists. The line of cleavage between the Syndicalist and the Socialist is not formed by the fact that the former accepts direct action while the latter rejects it, holding that parliamentary action is better. Rather, the line of cleavage is formed by the fact that the Socialist rejects some of the forms of direct action which the Syndicalist accepts, and accepts some forms of political action which the Syndicalist rejects.

That the Socialist parties of the world do not despise or reject direct action is abundantly demonstrated by the consistency with which they support the unions in their conflicts on the economic field. The Socialist Party in this country has rendered moral and financial assistance to striking workers, frequently at the expense of its own political

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

campaigns. The machinery of the party was used to collect funds and food-supplies for the anthracite miners in Pennsylvania and for the copper miners in Michigan, workers affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. It was used with good-will and without reserve to aid the textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and Paterson, New Jersey, though these were affiliated with the I. W. W. In every attempt to use the general strike in European countries, regardless whether the gains ought was political, as in Belgium, or economic, as in Sweden in 1909, the Socialist parties have taken a leading part and their loyalty has never been questioned. The Socialist theory is not that parliamentary action is sufficient by itself and direct action unnecessary, but that the workers must fight with equal determination and solidarity on the economic field through their unions, and on the political field through their parties, if they would succeed.

The class struggle is not an abstraction, but a living reality. It is not an academic theory to be diagrammed and mapped out arbitrarily to correspond to a theory, but a living force which enters into every phase of life. The economic struggle becomes a



## SYNDICALISM

political struggle whether we will or no. Economic interests and political power are inseparable in modern society. As Socialists we have no concern with the academic question of whether political action is superior to direct action, or *vice versa*. Only those who regard the class struggle as a creed to be avowed, an intellectual conception merely, waste their time in such vain discussion. Those who know the class struggle from experience know how impossible it is to measure the two methods against one another. In one time and place the exigencies of the struggle make the economic conflict of supreme importance, while in another time and place political conflict becomes of supreme importance.

The Socialist holds that Labor needs both its fighting arms. The trained boxer does not waste time attempting to determine whether his right arm or his left is of the greater value to him; nor does he consider whether the arm which he finally decides to be inferior shall be used at all or bound to his side and unused. He knows well enough that the efficiency and force of his right arm depends not only upon its own condition, but to a considerable extent upon the efficiency and freedom of the left arm.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Their action is reciprocal. In like manner, the Socialist insists that even if economic action is to be regarded as the right arm and political action as the left arm—a comparison concerning which he is quite indifferent—the efficiency of the right arm in the economic conflict inevitably depends to a very large extent upon the efficiency of the left arm in the political domain. In other words, solidarity on the economic field and victory there can best be assured through solidarity at the ballot-box and victory there. With equal readiness and conviction we can reverse this statement and assert that political solidarity and victory for the proletariat can best be assured through economic solidarity and victory.

Socialists, then, do not condemn direct action, *per se*, but only certain forms of direct action. Neither do they approve of political action, *per se*, but only certain well-defined forms of political action. By way of illustration: If Mr. Gompers were asked whether he believes in working-class political action, the answer would undoubtedly be in the affirmative. He would very probably point to the fact that the American Federation of Labor has a political program to which it is pledged. So far good and well; the

## SYNDICALISM

Socialist and the conservative labor-unionist both believe in working-class political action. If the inquiry is pursued further, however, it will be revealed that the two do not agree very far. The American Federation of Labor thus far has interpreted political action to mean successful lobbying and exacting promises from rival candidates and parties. It sends committees to wait upon the platform-makers of the dominant political parties in our national elections to induce them to adopt its demands. That is certainly political action of a very definite kind. The Socialist repudiates that kind of political action because he believes that it demoralizes the working class and prevents the development of efficient class solidarity on the political field. Thus we have two very distinct but opposing conceptions of political action.

In exactly the same manner, the Syndicalist and the Socialist agree that direct action is essential to a proletarian struggle; but when we get from each a clear statement of the kind of direct action in which he believes, the differences between them become as strongly marked as the political differences which divide the Socialist and the conservative labor-unionist. It is not merely

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

that the Syndicalist would substitute direct action for political action while the Socialist would supplement political action with direct action, but that they differ radically as to the kind of direct action to be used. While the Syndicalist would rely upon sabotage, for example, the Socialist rejects it root and branch. Rightly or wrongly, he rejects it for precisely the same reason as he rejects the political methods of the conservative labor-unionists, namely, because it demoralizes the working class and prevents the development of working-class solidarity.

### III

Perhaps it will assist us to a clear understanding of our subject if we consider briefly the meaning of the term direct action. This term was used by Michael Bakunin and his followers just as it was used by John Most and his followers. To the average man it would seem that the Syndicalists had gone out of their way to invite misunderstanding and opposition by using a term so long associated with terrorism, insurrection, and assassination. It is quite certain, however, that they use the term in a very much more comprehensive and general sense. As it is

## SYNDICALISM

used in the literature of Syndicalism, the term undoubtedly includes terrorism and insurrection, but it includes also many forms of action which are peaceful, legal, and ethical. It includes all forms of action by the workers themselves directly, without the intervention of the state.

The idea is that action through parliamentary channels, electing representatives to legislatures for the purpose of having them enact legislation, is an indirect method. The result might be attained, according to the Syndicalist, by a short and more direct method. For example, instead of passing an eight-hour law, the workers might directly obtain an eight-hour working-day by their own action. A strike for better wages and working conditions is direct action. If a group of workers form themselves into a co-operative society and produce upon their own account, that is direct action. If the workers in a given industry establish an eight-hour day through the power of their organization, without waiting for the enactment of an eight-hour-day law, that is direct action. The boycott and the union label are forms of direct action.

The term direct action, then, must be understood in a sense wholly different from

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

that which it has acquired through its historical associations with the "propaganda of the deed." It includes practically every form of effort to attain economic ends by other than parliamentary methods. It includes the most peaceful and legal forms of action as well as the most violent and illegal.

### IV

The principal forms of direct action are sabotage and the general strike, and of these the former is of the most interest to us at present. Sabotage is a relatively new word. It was first used, I believe, in 1897, at Toulouse, at the congress of the French labor unions. It was "coined" by Emile Pouget and Paul Delassalle, two well-known French Anarchists. They presented a report to the French unions on the method of warfare practised by certain British unions, known as "ca' canny." This Scotch colloquialism means what the slang term "soldiering" means—that is, loafing on the job. The root idea of sabotage is found in the fact that he who walks in sabots, the wooden shoes of the French peasantry, must needs walk slowly. Many an American has been puzzled by the picture of a wooden shoe on the

## SYNDICALISM

literature of the I. W. W. It is simply a symbol for slow and inefficient action.

When the British dock laborers found it impossible to gain an advance in wages through striking, a policy of retaliation was decided upon. Workers were directed to return to their jobs, but to do as little and to make as many mistakes and create as much confusion as possible. They were, in short, to do less work, on the theory of small pay, small performance. By this method the leaders of the unions hoped to succeed where they had failed by striking. They soon discovered that it was not enough to slow up the human worker, that the machine likewise must be slowed up. All sorts of devices for effecting this result appeared. Putting emery dust in the bearings of machinery to cause them to become hot and unworkable, and causing "accidents" which involved delay were simple expedients. Anything which delayed production and lessened the employers' profits was permissible. When the French workers, after the congress of 1897, adopted sabotage as a systematic policy they devised many very interesting and ingenious forms of sabotage, some of them typically clever and a few of them dangerous. The new policy struck terror into the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

hearts of the employing classes and the general public. All sorts of disasters were attributed to the use of the new weapon, probably in most cases without justification. For example, when a great French battle-ship was blown up, with enormous loss of life, it was commonly believed to be due to sabotage.

Of course, fundamentally sabotage is as old as industry itself. It is a very primitive and instinctive thing. Every country lad who ever managed to break his hoe handle in order to have an excuse for failing to hoe the corn and going instead to the circus, practised sabotage. Every cook in the kitchen that ever in a spirit of resentment wasted materials practised sabotage. In the earliest records of the labor movement there are stories of actions against employers which clearly belong to this modern category. Cutting telegraph wires, driving spikes in logs in the lumber-camps in the hope that they will later destroy the saws in the mills, putting cement in railway switches, and dropping monkey-wrenches into machinery, are unfortunately common incidents in the industrial struggle.

It is one of the most remarkable curiosities of revolutionary psychology that this primitive and instinctive weapon, which has



## SYNDICALISM

always been used by the most stupid and least progressive part of the working class in all lands and all ages, has been seized upon by that part of the modern industrial proletariat which is most vehement in its assertion of revolutionary ideas and aims. It is all the more remarkable because the Syndicalists themselves have recognized the primitive nature of the weapon. To the Socialist sabotage is a form of class warfare to be shunned, principally because it destroys the morale of the working class and unfits it for the proletarian struggle. It relies upon individual action and upon secrecy, and these are inherently destructive of that solidarity without which no effective class warfare is possible.

It has been the universal experience of the labor movement that whenever sabotage is extensively used in the struggle against the employing class it appears within the labor movement itself, with disastrous results. Sabotage is not an efficient weapon of class warfare. It destroys the moral fiber of the man who practises it. It takes the struggle back once more into the subterranean and devious channels of secret, conspiratory action. It invites the *agent provocateur* and the spy. It is essentially the weapon of the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

slum proletariat. It is not the instrument whereby a class getting together for its common interest seeks to attain its ends. It is rather the instrument used in the individual struggle against property. Everywhere the organized Socialist movement combats the Syndicalist advocacy of sabotage as a weapon of class warfare.

### v

In considering the general strike as one of the chief weapons of Syndicalism it is necessary to understand first of all the sense in which the term is used. Unfortunately the term "general strike" has been rather loosely used in this country. If in a given locality all the workers in a particular industry go on strike, or even a majority of them, we call that a "general" strike. Likewise, if the workers in a group of related trades—the building trades, for example—go on strike, we call that a "general" strike. If a strike attains national proportions, even though confined to a particular craft or industry, we call that a "general" strike. Obviously there is nothing in any one of these types of labor warfare distinctly characteristic of Syndicalism. They are the es-

## SYNDICALISM

sential and commonplace weapons of ordinary trade-unionism.

What the Syndicalist has in mind is a great social revolution. Syndicalism has taken over the old Anarchist dream of a complete demoralization of capitalist society through the development of the labor strike to the highest conceivable degree. It was, I believe, Mirabeau who first put forth the idea of a general strike as a revolutionary method. That great leader of the French Revolution cried to the bourgeoisie of the time: "Take care! Do not irritate this people that produces everything, and that, to make itself formidable, has only to become motionless." With characteristic genius Mirabeau thus detected the essential idea of the Anarchist and the Syndicalist; labor by the simple act of becoming motionless, and folding its arms, acquires an irresistible might. The whole fabric of organized society is placed at the mercy of the masses. From the days of Mirabeau to the present time the idea of the general strike has constantly fascinated the minds of the most daring spirits in the labor movement. While it is true that the Anarchists have popularized the idea and insisted that the general strike must supplant political action, it

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

should be remembered that the early trade-union movement in England, even before the rise of modern Anarchism, was to a large degree inspired by the thought that the aims of the workers could best be secured through a general cessation of labor in all lines of industry. The effective use of the strike method in individual factories and particular localities naturally led to the belief that an all-inclusive strike, paralyzing the entire economic life of the nation, would be invincible.

The French trade-union congress in 1888 defined the general strike as "the complete stoppage of all work"—that is, the entire working class of the nation must cease working and remain idle until their demands are met. Every industrial plant must be rendered idle and non-productive. Food must not be produced or distributed; trains must not be run; coal must not be mined. In short, no work of any kind must be performed until the demands of the workers are complied with. It is interesting to recall that prior to the general enfranchisement of the working class in England faith in the general strike was widespread. When the agitation of Robert Owen was at its height in the decade of 1825-1835, the general

## SYNDICALISM

strike was advocated by most of the leaders of the trade-union movement, and some attempts were made to carry the idea into practice. Then came the Chartist movement, which in so many ways anticipated the Syndicalism of to-day. The "sacred month" of the Chartists was neither more nor less than a general strike for the purpose of enforcing the political demands of the Chartists. How that attempt at revolution was suppressed and brought to naught is well known. From the time of the "sacred month" fiasco, in 1839 to the end of 1849, advocacy of the general strike was more or less persistent. Every year or two popular agitations arose having for their object the paralysis of industrial society until the ruling classes should surrender their power.

From 1849 to 1864 little was heard of the general strike. When the International Workingmen's Association was formed there was a greatly increased interest in every form of proletarian propaganda and struggle. Very early in the life of the International advocacy of the general strike as one of the principal weapons of class warfare appeared. By 1868 the subject had assumed enormous importance in the life of the International. The British trade-unionists, remembering

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

only too well the tragic experiences of a quarter of a century earlier, manifested little interest in the subject. Some of the leaders strenuously opposed the French and Belgian Socialists when they advocated the general strike.

When Michael Bakunin appeared as the leader of the Anarchist movement, reliance upon the general strike was made the cardinal feature of the propaganda of Anarchism, and from that day to the present time Anarchists have devoted themselves to the advocacy of the general strike as a substitute for parliamentary action. It will not be forgotten that the disastrous movement of May, 1886, which culminated in the Haymarket riots in Chicago, was an attempt to bring about a nation-wide strike in all industries as a method of securing the limitation of the working day to eight hours. That tragic episode, and in particular the brutal repression of the movement resorted to by the authorities, inflamed the passions of Anarchists in all lands, with the result that a world-wide propaganda in favor of the general strike developed. It is interesting to recall that M. Aristide Briand was one of the first to lead this agitation. With stirring eloquence he depicted society held in the

## SYNDICALISM

rigor of death; the army powerless, and the workers with their folded arms exerting a control over the life of the nation such as no government ever knew. He scoffed then at the suggestion made by Guesde that in the event of a general strike the government would simply mobilize the mass of the workers and place them under military direction. By a strange irony of history Briand was Premier of France in 1910, when the railway strike was declared on the 12th of October. Immediately Briand issued a decree mobilizing the railway workers into the military service under the immediate control of the War Minister. Within a few hours the strike was broken, and on October 18th the strike committee publicly acknowledged defeat and ordered the strikers back to work.

Our Syndicalist friends, especially the active leaders of the I. W. W., are fond of boasting of the results attained by general strikes conducted in Belgium, Sweden, Holland, Finland, and Russia. They indulge in much loose and ill-informed talk upon this subject. In particular they do not distinguish between those strikes which were really political demonstrations, aiming at the achievement of certain definite political ends

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

equally desired by the greater part of the middle class, and those strikes which were directed to the attainment of economic ends and in which the class struggle manifested itself. The Belgian general strike of 1893 was for the attainment of manhood suffrage and other political reforms. It was not intended to be a life-and-death struggle between the master class and the proletariat. Rather, it was a political demonstration limited to one day only, and in it the workers had the sympathy and support of almost the entire middle class. Many members of the capitalist class eagerly joined with the workers, and the non-union workers were as eager for the suffrage as the union workers. As a demonstration it was a success. Some concessions were made by the government only to be withdrawn shortly afterward. In 1902 the Belgians once more attempted a general strike as a means of forcing the government to pass a measure granting universal manhood suffrage. This strike, while even more extensive than the first, failed, and all authorities agree that it greatly checked the progress of the working-class movement in Belgium.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See discussion of the strike by Emile Vandervelde, *Revue du Mois*, Paris, May, 1908.



## SYNDICALISM

Almost simultaneously with the Belgian strike of 1902 occurred the much-discussed Swedish general strike, likewise in favor of universal suffrage. The working class as a whole united in its demand for political enfranchisement, and it had the support of a very large section of the middle class. In some of the larger cities industry was more completely paralyzed than even the leaders of the strike had believed to be possible. Conditions were very similar to those which prevailed in Belgium in 1893; the workers gained some concessions, but not the universal suffrage for which they went on strike.

Very similar to these in many respects was the general strike in Finland which was such a complete success. This was essentially a national uprising against the suppression of the Finnish constitution by the government of Czar Nicholas. Class lines were non-existent. As Madame Malmburg has told us, there was absolutely no division among the Finnish people. All, whether rich or poor, were united in their determination to register an effective protest against the suppression of their constitution and to gain for themselves a measure of national self-government. Obviously, such a movement cannot be regarded as an illustration

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

of proletarian warfare and throws little light upon the effectiveness of the general strike as a weapon to be used in the economic struggle. The general strike in Russia, in 1904, belongs to this same category of political struggle with the more or less general obliteration of the lines of class warfare.

When we turn to those occasions on which the general strike has been resorted to for economic reasons, we find that they have uniformly failed. This is a fact of prime significance in the discussion of Syndicalism, for what the Syndicalist is advocating is not joint action by the workers and the enlightened bourgeoisie for the securing of political democracy, but the separate class action of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and against the entire capitalist system. For example, 1908 witnessed a great general strike for economic ends in Italy, which, after lasting a month, ended in a miserable fizzle. The French railway strike of 1910, which was for economic ends, including lowering of the hours of labor and increasing wages, ended in a catastrophic defeat. Never in history was the challenge of the Syndicalist to the state more clearly expressed or more conclusively met. The men went back to work defeated and sullen,

## SYNDICALISM

their faith in the efficacy of the general strike destroyed, and compelled to rely upon that other weapon of Syndicalism, sabotage.

The second Swedish strike of 1909 was likewise for economic ends. For upward of a year the labor world had been in a turmoil, and there had been numerous strikes and lockouts. It was the lockout of something like eighty thousand workers which led to the strike of over two million workmen in August, 1909.<sup>1</sup> As an illustration of effective proletarian organization the Swedish strike is of remarkable interest. There was no violence. From the outset the unions co-operated with the police authorities in maintaining order. The workers insisted upon the temporary prohibition of the liquor traffic in order to remove a possible source of lawlessness and violence. The leaders of the unions expressly disclaimed any intention of doing those things which the Syndicalist advocates. In the first place, they were not seeking to destroy political government, but, on the contrary, were diligently co-operating with it and manifesting in every possible way their intention to be law-abiding citi-

<sup>1</sup> *British Board of Trade Labour Gazette*, 1909, p. 256.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

zens. Theirs was not an attempt at revolution, but a war against the employers for certain specific economic gains. They did not even attempt to paralyze the industrial life of the nation. The workers employed in the public services, for example, were not interfered with. As a strike it was the most complete in history. Yet by the end of the first week its failure was manifest to the world, and before the end of the month the strike was over and the workers acknowledged their complete defeat. Notwithstanding the fact that there was no hostility on the part of the government, which throughout remained neutral, the workers were unable to gain their ends.

Perhaps the most important cause of their failure was the fact that there appeared a great voluntary organization sufficiently extensive and efficient to carry on the essential functions of industrial society. The middle class proved to be a veritable reservoir of potential industrial strength. Just as in some American cities an impromptu organization of automobile transportation has temporarily sufficed to take the place of the street-car system, so in Sweden it was found that the middle class contained enough former artisans and laborers and men with me-

## SYNDICALISM

chanical training to prevent anything like a complete suspension of economic functioning. This, it seems to me, is the most serious flaw of all in the general strike theory. It must be evident to all who will take the trouble to consider the character of our American middle class, composed of farmers, professional men, and shopkeepers, that it contains an enormous number of men who have had actual experience and technical training as workers. Our farming population and our professional class are very largely recruited from the ranks of the manual workers, and most of these would be able to render some service in the event of a general strike. A complete paralysis of society by means of a general strike is more impossible now than ever at any time in history.

### VI

As Socialists we are opposed not only to the methods of Syndicalism, but to its ideal. The Syndicalist utopia is as far removed from the Socialist's conception of society as is the capitalist system itself. Let me give here in the words of one of its founders the aims of the I. W. W. as published and widely distributed by the I. W. W. Daniel De

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Leon, in an address delivered in Minneapolis under the auspices of the I. W. W., said: "As slough shed by the serpent that immediately appears in its new skin, the political state will have been shed and society will simultaneously appear in its new administrative garb. The mining, the railroad, the textile, the building industries, down or up the line, each of these, regardless of former political boundaries, will be the constituencies of that new *central authority . . . where the general executive board of the industrial workers of the world will sit, there will be the nation's capital.* Like the flimsy card houses that children raise, the present political governments of countries, of states, aye, of the city on the Potomac herself, will tumble down, their places taken by the central and subordinate administrative organs of the nation's industrial forces."

The I. W. W. ideal contemplates the control of industries by the workers employed in them, the mines by the miners, the railways by the railway workers, and so on. There is to be a central authority, the general council of the industrial workers of the world. This is not the Socialist ideal. It is very far from the socialization of industry. As Socialists we are as utterly opposed

## SYNDICALISM

to the exclusive control of the means of transportation by the workers who happen to be engaged in transportation as we are to the present system. The transportation system concerns not alone the workers engaged in that branch of service, but all the people of the nation. Moreover, the Syndicalist utopia must inevitably resolve itself into an industrial caste system in which the workers engaged in industries of most vital and primary importance to the life of the nation will rule all the rest of the people through the strategic positions they occupy in the industrial scheme. That Socialists, whose cardinal principle is the ownership and control of the economic functions by organized society, should be so short-sighted as to indentify themselves with a movement so foreign to that principle as Syndicalism, is a lamentable illustration of the superficiality of much of our radical thinking.

## X

### SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

#### I

THERE is no antagonism between Socialism and individualism, notwithstanding a very popular opinion to the contrary. I am not a Socialist because I am opposed to anything that is worthy of being called individualism; rather I am a Socialist because I am an individualist, and because I am unable to see how anything like a worthy individualism is to be attained except in a social democratic state. That I believe to be the position of the vast majority of thoughtful Socialists. They seek not the extinction of individuality, but its fullest realization, and to that end they would establish an equality of economic opportunity.

*Laissez faire*, the doctrine of each man for



## SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

himself and the devil take the hindmost, is not individualism, but its negation. It makes individualism possible for the few and impossible for the many. Obviously a social system characterized by such limitations does not deserve to be called a system of individualism, since individualism is not generally enjoyed by the citizens. In human society the individual cannot live to himself; it is impossible to isolate the life and interest of the individual citizen from the lives and interests of other citizens. Inevitably, therefore, the well-being of the individual depends in large degree upon the well-being of the mass of individuals. Speaking broadly, it may be said with full assurance that history teaches that the largest security and happiness for the greatest number of individuals has been achieved through the increased happiness and security of society as a whole. It is possible to give full and unfettered expression to one individual or a small group of individuals by subjecting the mass of the people to their domination. In that case the individualism of each individual citizen in the subjected mass has been destroyed. If the conditions could be reversed there would be a very obvious extension of individualism.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

The literature of Socialism teems with arguments designed to prove that individualism must perish in the Socialist commonwealth; that the powers of the state must be so extended over the whole area of life as to rob the citizen of individual initiative, independence, and self-expression. Herbert Spencer, in his well-known work, *Man Versus the State*, gives expression to this idea, and the prevalence of the belief is no doubt due in large measure to the influence of that great thinker. A few years ago one of the great Liberals of the nineteenth century, Goldwin Smith, seriously advanced the claim that in a Socialist society it would be absolutely necessary for the government to designate which infants should become inventors, artists, statesmen, mechanics, and so on.

I have often wondered by what mental process such a conclusion could be reached, and whether Professor Smith ever attempted to visualize in his mind the method of making such an arbitrary selection. Imagine a Socialist utopia: the government appoints, or the people elect, a functionary whose task it is to inspect all the nurseries and determine their careers. Before one cradle he stands and says: "Little dark-haired Michael

## SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

Angelo Cellini, you shall be the great poet of your generation; you shall write the epic of the age." Before another cradle: "You, little Thomas Edison Westinghouse Smith, shall be the great inventor." Before a third cradle: "You, Bernard Shaw Shakespeare Brown, shall write the great dramas." Before still another cradle: "You, Richard Wagner Beethoven Murphy, shall compose all the operas needed in a generation." Before a fifth cradle, moved by some chivalrous impulse or uncontrollable whim: "You, Susan Anthony Carrie Nation Jackson, shall be President of the United States."

Seriously, it is difficult to treat such criticism with other than mocking levity. No such arbitrary selection and assignment of individuals to special functions is conceivable in any social order that is in any degree responsive to the people's will. We have moved, as everybody admits, some considerable way in the direction of Socialism. We have socialized many important functions and services. But there has not been the slightest tendency in the direction of such an enslavement of the individual. In fact, development has been in a contrary direction. Modern social life is characterized, in democratic countries, by a greater solici-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

tude for individual development than ever characterized the social life of any other period of history.

### II

The essence of individualism is the self-determination of one's life and labor, the opportunity for self-expression. The greater the domination of life by needs and obligations not of one's choosing, the less opportunity is there for following the pursuits of one's inclination and choice. Every change which requires the individual to do less of the former and enables him to do more of the latter is a gain of individualism. Judged by this test, the contention that the extension of governmental functions lessens individualism falls to the ground. The trouble with most of our discussion of this subject has been the fact that we have indulged in abstract theorizing instead of applying pragmatic tests. After all, it is not a question of philosophy, but of experience, not a matter of theory, but of fact. Suppose we appeal to the facts; time was, in the not very remote past, when the maintenance of order in cities, and the protection of life and property, was left to the individual. The citizen of London who went to the theater in Shake-

## SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

speare's time took with him his personal body-guard, and if his family made a visit to friends he had to provide a guard for them, to be reasonably certain of their safety. This function in our present society is assumed by the municipality and the state. Does any citizen feel that his life is narrowed, his self-expression limited, his individuality lessened, by the change? Surely it is fairly obvious that, on the contrary, freedom from the necessity of providing a personal police force, as it were, has liberated some part of the thought, time, and energy of the individual which he can devote to ends of his own choosing.

Take another illustration: not so very long ago in most communities each individual family had to provide its own water-supply. Each household had its own private well or cistern, and the head of the household had to assume the by no means trifling responsibility of seeing that the water was pure and uncontaminated. Despite all the care which self-interest inspired, typhoid epidemics were dangerously common under this system. Is it possible for any one to seriously contend that, because the supplying of our homes with water is now generally a municipal function, and the individual

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

family has no longer to provide its own supply, or be responsible for insuring its freedom from contamination, the discharge of these duties having become a collective responsibility, there has been a lessening of the individualism of the private citizen? Is it not rather the case that, through the collectivization of the water-supply, the citizen is endowed with a greatly increased individualism, an important extension of the area of his life that is brought under the direction of his own will and conscience?

This method of inquiry can be extended almost indefinitely. The assumption by society of numerous functions hitherto performed by the individual has greatly extended individual freedom and opportunity for self-expression. It would be absurd to contend that the collectivism we have in the organization of the public educational and health services, fire departments, park systems, and so on through the long list, tends to narrow the freedom of the individual to follow pursuits of his own choosing. If the citizen listens to a lecture given in a public building by a lecturer who is paid by the city, or to a symphony concert in a municipal auditorium by a municipal orchestra, or reads a municipally owned book furnished

## SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

by a municipal library, or rides to his office on a municipally owned street-car or ferry-boat, his individuality is not thereby circumscribed any more than it would be if he had to buy these pleasures and services from capitalist corporations. In so far as he can more readily command these services under public ownership, and more easily influence the conduct of them, his opportunity for the extension of his life is increased; he gains in essential individualism. Sending a telegram in America through the agency of a capitalist profit-making corporation does not give the sender any advantage which would be impossible for the sender of a similar telegram in Great Britain through the publicly owned telegraph system of that country to obtain.

Equally unfounded is the common belief that law is the foe of individualism and individual liberty; that extension of the powers of government always lessens the extent of the freedom of the citizen. Absence of government is not freedom. It may be, indeed, and often is, the worst sort of tyranny. Where the government is autocratic and despotic, extension of its powers, even with beneficent intention, is usually at the expense of the individualism of the citizens.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

Benevolent paternalism has this in common with the harshest despotism. But where the government is democratic, the law-making power being directed by and responsive to the popular will, extension of its power and functions almost invariably leads to greater individualism for its citizens. We experience then what Rousseau called "the self-imposed compulsions to be free."

It would be a relatively easy task to show that essential individualism has progressed just as social authority democratically directed has progressed. The law of social progress is inexorable; progress in individual freedom comes through that repression of initiative on low planes of activity which results in a corresponding stimulation of initiative on high planes of activity. Herbert Spencer saw in the education laws and the laws regulating employment in factories, workshops and mines a diminution of individualism, but that is an indefensible position unless we are to confuse and darken counsel by distorting the meaning of the word individualism. Those laws gave to the life of the worker a new dignity and value, opening for millions of working people the rich treasuries of civilization hitherto possessed by the master class alone. We do not lessen



## SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

the essential freedom of any human being when we repress the traffic in women and girls, the saloon or the opium den. Through such repressions of low and sordid initiatives, by collective action, we have made the most important advances in civilization.

Much of the fear that the Socialist ideal involves the destruction of individualism springs from a serious misconception, the belief that the extinction of all private property and industrial enterprise and the arbitrary enforcement of equality is contemplated. Of course, the realization of any such aim as that would require an amount of bureaucracy that would leave no freedom for the individual worth considering. It would of necessity thoroughly enmesh the life of the individual citizen in a vast network of regulations and restrictions. He would indeed be a slave of the state.

If the state must own and operate every six-acre farm, every wayside inn, every garage, and every tailor shop, and these and similar things be prohibited to the individual, then indeed individualism must be banished from life. But this state-directed communism is in nowise related to modern democratic Socialism, which aims only at the progressive elimination of the wastes of

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

competitive capitalism, and the removal of the economic injustices which it causes. Involuntary poverty must be made impossible before we can realize a great and worthy individualism in which all may share. The division of society into warring economic classes must be ended and equality of economic opportunity and right must be assured as the birthright of every child.

Social Democracy would leave subject to private ownership and direction all those things that add to the efficiency of the individual life which can be placed under the direction of the individual without impairing social efficiency. The fundamental reason for its program of public ownership is its desire to promote the private ownership and individual initiative upon which the life of the race and its progress are so largely dependent. Through the extension of the principle of the social ownership of things social in function, Social Democracy would greatly increase the individual ownership and enjoyment of things individualistic in function. The distinction between a railway and an automobile, and the reason for believing that the law and logic of private ownership which properly can be applied in the one case cannot be so applied in the

## SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

other case with propriety, would seem to be fairly obvious.

The Socialist movement has always drawn to itself the leading artists and creative thinkers. There is surely some significance in this fact, that these great individualists have been attracted to the Socialist ideal. They have understood that individualism is necessarily the product of opportunity; that from each extension among the masses of opportunities heretofore confined to the masters is derived a gain in individualism. The nearer we approach the ideal of absolute equality of economic and social opportunity, the more nearly we approach the conditions in which a generous individualism can prevail. Perfect communism of opportunity would provide the ideal conditions for the development of individualism. Fundamentally that is why the civilization of Athens was so resplendent in individual genius. It provided, for the free men, at any rate, a noble equality of access to all the resources and opportunities of culture and civilization as the heritage of every citizen.

It is a fact that the extension of that social responsibility and effort which we broadly designate as state Socialism has everywhere produced a larger degree of individualism as

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

its logical fruitage. The citizen of the United States, possessed of the advantages of our socially provided education, is not less an individualist than the citizen of a backward, Old World nation where no such opportunities are provided. The provision of insurance against old-age poverty through old-age pensions has not robbed the British workman of any initiative or power of self-realization. On the contrary, it is the universal experience that it has stimulated thrift and sobriety and given the life of the average worker a new dignity and meaning. They who contend that Socialism and individualism are irreconcilable, therefore, are contending against the great weight of the universal experience of mankind. There never was any doubt in the mind of any social thinker with claims to serious attention that paternalism is destructive of individuality. Modern democratic Socialism has nothing in common with paternalism either in its theory or in its practice. It is the conscious co-operative effort of the members of the social group, society, to master the economic environment and gain for each a larger and ampler life.

## XI

### SOCIALISM AND THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC

#### I

THE cause of Socialism requires the speedy elimination of the organized liquor traffic from the life of the nation. Prohibition is the logical and necessary outcome of Socialist principles. There can never be a genuine social democracy in America so long as the saloon interests are a source of corruption. This is the plain lesson of all the tragic volume of human experience.

Unfortunately, American Socialists have signally failed to realize the importance of this great question. For the most part they have taken a position which is unsound economically, morally indefensible, and politically suicidal. Far too generally they have set themselves in active opposition to

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

the great movement for the prohibition of the liquor traffic. They have been too ready to accept the specious plea that "personal liberty" was at stake. By a strange and tragic mental process they have reached the same conclusions as the most vicious and corrupt section of the American capitalist class. While preaching the doctrine of "class consciousness," that the interests of the workers led them to intellectual and moral decisions opposed to those reached by the master class, they themselves, with regard to this great problem, have accepted the position of the brewing and saloon interests of the nation.

Of course, there are great historical and other reasons for this attitude. The large and influential part played in the organization and development of our movement by German comrades is a factor not to be overlooked. The influence of German workmen's unions connected with the various branches of the liquor industry had its reaction upon the Socialist organizations to which they belong. Then, too, the ordinary propaganda of the prohibitionist has been especially offensive to Socialist minds. Its insistence upon the economic fallacy that intemperance is the chief cause of poverty,

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

and that prohibition of the liquor traffic will of itself eliminate involuntary poverty and solve the social problem, has outraged many an honest Socialist. The narrow, puritanical cant of much of the prohibition literature has had a most important influence in alienating the sympathies of Socialists from that movement.

Whatever the reasons may be, and it is not pretended that those given above offer a full explanation, the fact remains that, contrary to the experience of most European countries, in this country the Socialists have not generally identified themselves with the movement against alcoholism and the organized liquor traffic. In European countries Socialists have taken a leading part in the fight for the extermination of the liquor traffic. The leaders of the Labor Party in England have been very generally prominently identified with the temperance movement, and we get an idea of their general attitude from the single fact that when in 1908 a licensing bill was introduced in the British Parliament which would have closed over 30,000 public houses and dram-shops, every member of the Labor Party in Parliament voted for the bill. It is true that many of the Labor Party leaders are opposed to

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

prohibition. For the most part they favor municipalization of the liquor traffic. We can leave to a later stage of this discussion consideration of this proposal. It is sufficient here and now to direct attention to the fact that our English comrades have seriously concerned themselves with the great problem which we have so largely ignored. On the Continent we find that in Austria the anti-alcohol movement has been very largely inspired and led by the Socialists under the brilliant leadership of men like Dr. Adler and Dr. Froehlich. The Austrian Socialists have recognized very keenly that alcoholism is a serious impediment to the working-class struggle.

As early as 1903, at the party congress, a resolution was adopted declaring that

The congress recognizes in the drinking habits of the people a serious obstacle in the way of the successful prosecution of the labor struggle and an immense drawback in the way of efficient Socialist organization. No ways should, therefore, be left untried of grappling with the serious drink evil.

The first way of working in this direction is to improve the economic condition of the people, and in order that this may be effective it is necessary to enlighten the people upon the injurious and destructive effects of alcohol.

The congress, therefore, recommends to all its



## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

branches, and to every comrade, to encourage every movement that tends to discourage the drinking habit and to abolish, as an important step toward this result, the sale of drink at all meetings of the party. The comrades who are total abstainers are recommended to take part especially in the agitation of the temperance societies, and its leaders, on their part, ought to take care that every member does not neglect his duty to the political and industrial organizations.

The party leaders in Austria have established and encouraged the development of Socialist total-abstinence societies, and the members of the societies in turn have become, to a very large degree, the backbone of the prohibition movement of Austria. While the party itself has not committed itself to prohibition, the increasingly influential section of the party membership is favoring the agitation for prohibition.

In Germany great organizations of Socialist abstainers have grown up within the past few years, inspired by the conviction that intemperance and the vested interests of the liquor traffic constitute a serious menace to the cause of Social Democracy. A remarkable change had come over the attitude of the leaders of German Social Democracy by 1914. Formerly the leaders of the party scoffed at the idea of devoting any attention

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

to the matter at all. "Abolish the capitalist system," they said, "and the evil of alcoholism will disappear of itself." August Bebel, the brilliant leader of the party, sneered at the anti-alcohol movement in 1899, calling it small business (*Kleinekram*), but seven years later, at the Mannheim Congress, he admitted that he had changed his opinion and that it had become necessary to give the matter very serious consideration. By 1909 the German Social Democracy was actively engaged in the fight against the liquor interests. It is true that their object was not primarily the destruction of the liquor traffic, or the furtherance of the cause of temperance; the government had proposed to greatly increase the taxation on spirits for the purpose of securing the necessary revenue to increase armaments. It was, therefore, as a method to defeat the militarist program of the government, rather than as a step toward prohibition, that the party leaders undertook to combat the legislation. Nevertheless, the views they expressed in their appeal to the German workers at that time are of extreme interest and vital significance. In a manifesto signed by Bebel, Singer, Molkenbuhr, and other eminent party leaders the following passages occurred:

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

In one place, German workmen, your opponents are vulnerable; there a blow can be given the exploiters, heavy and crushing, yet without danger to ourselves. That blow is spirits, the most *dangerous of the poisons of the peoples*.

Away with spirits!

Away with the aid of the junkers!

Out of the pennies of the drinkers the aristocrat gets his wealth. *In the tears and deprivations of women are laid the foundations of his pride and luxury.* With every drop of brandy which goes through your throats you pay tribute to your worst enemy.

Throughout Germany have been created numerous Socialist abstinence societies similar to those existing in Austria and in Switzerland. These societies have formed a loose federation with those of the latter two countries and have adopted a common program, which provides for the prohibition by popular vote of the manufacture, sale, and transportation of all intoxicants. While these societies constitute only a minority of the German movement, it is a growing and influential minority. The Socialists of Switzerland have been very aggressive in their attack upon alcoholism. They are divided into two groups: the majority of the party has not declared for absolute prohibition, but has consistently favored a policy of education against intemperance. They have

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

recognized the fact that alcoholism destroys the physical, mental, and moral strength of the workers and unfits them for the proletarian struggle. They have demanded that the government give a tenth of the revenue received from the licensing of the liquor traffic to the support of workmen's societies which aim to make them independent of the saloon. This is, of course, not to be regarded as a solution, but it indicates the keen and serious interest which the Swiss Socialists have taken in this great question.

A strong and growing minority in the party stands for complete prohibition, and in the national fight for the prohibition of the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicants these Socialists take a leading part. They have rendered a distinct service to the cause by insisting upon the fact that alcoholism means low wages and inefficiency in the struggle for social democracy.

When we turn to the Scandinavian countries, we find that the Socialist movement is the prohibition movement; at least it is a recognized, active, efficient, fighting organization. The Socialist party of Norway has placed in its national platform a demand for progressive legislation against the liquor traffic to culminate in complete national

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

prohibition. The great leaders of the movement in Norway are nearly all of them engaged in the fight for prohibition. The position of the party was reached as a result of several years of earnest and conscientious study. Would that our American political parties gave such patient and scholarly study and investigation to the matters dealt with in their platforms! The study of the problems of intemperance and of liquor legislation by the Norwegian Socialists is one of the most complete and illuminating ever made. In 1900, at the party congress, a resolution was proposed favoring local option, but it secured very scant support. The attitude taken at that time was that it was not a subject with which Socialists need concern themselves. Three years later, at the party congress, a strong resolution was adopted setting forth the evils of intemperance and calling on the workers to fight alcoholism, which, it was declared, unfitted the wage-earners for the successful prosecution of their struggle for better conditions. By 1909 the change in sentiment had become so pronounced that there was a vigorous agitation in the party for national prohibition, and at the party congress a resolution favoring the inclusion of a prohibition plank

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

in the platform received 80 votes as against 121 in opposition. In 1911 the fight was renewed in the party congress and prohibition was again defeated, this time by a vote of 175 to 204. A year later this decision was reversed, and the inclusion of a prohibition plank in the party platform was effected by the congress.

The greatest single factor in bringing about this change in the attitude of Norwegian Socialists was their experience in connection with a series of great strikes of national importance. The leaders of the unions soon discovered that the successful prosecution of the strikes required that the strikers remain steady and sober. On their own initiative the labor leaders urged the government to close the drinking-places during the strikes. Surely these experiences carry with them a lesson of profound importance to the working class. If the successful carrying on of a strike for better conditions requires the closing of the saloons there can be no stronger argument in favor of keeping the saloons closed if we consider the matter from the point of view of the militant proletariat.

In Sweden the party is likewise committed to national prohibition. In the case of the great general strike of 1909, the workmen's

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

leaders demanded that the government temporarily enforce absolute prohibition. Every place in which intoxicating beverages were sold was summarily closed, and severe penalties provided for any infringement of the prohibitory order. So profoundly impressed were the Socialists by the results of this temporary experiment that the demand for national prohibition became irresistible. Outside of Stockholm a large demonstration of twenty-five thousand laborers, who had been in the general strike, voted by practically unanimous vote in favor of national prohibition. All over the country in the large cities similar meetings were held by the Socialist and labor organizations, and when the Socialist Party held its annual convention in 1911 a motion in favor of placing the demand for national prohibition in the party platform was carried, 95 voting in favor of the proposal, and only 2 against it.

The Socialist Party in Finland likewise stands for absolute prohibition. It is significant that here, too, the attitude of the party in favor of complete national prohibition is the outcome of the experience of the unions in connection with great strikes. In 1898 serious labor disturbances took place, and, as part of their fight, the workers in-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

augurated a strike against alcohol with a view to making themselves more efficient in the fight against their employers. The following year, as a result of the experience gained during the strike, the Labor Party adopted a plank demanding a national prohibitory law. This demand remained in the program of the Labor Party of Finland for some years, and when, in 1903, the Social Democratic Party took the place of the Labor Party the demand for prohibition was continued in the program.

The leaders of the Finnish movement have led the fight for national prohibition. On two or three occasions they have succeeded in getting pretty drastic prohibitory laws passed by the Finnish parliament. These laws were not accepted by the Russian government, which, as is well known, exercised a rigid supervision over Finland. With the attainment of Finnish independence this menace has been destroyed. Finnish Socialists have encouraged the formation of total abstinence societies, they have refused to permit the insertion of liquor advertisements in any of the party papers, and have done all that lies in their power to combat the liquor traffic as one of the greatest enemies of the working class. The Finnish Socialists



## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

in this country have vigorously agitated in favor of the insertion of a prohibition plank in the national platform of the Socialist Party, and have in general followed the example of the movement in Finland.

In Holland the cause of temperance and prohibition is very generally supported by the most influential leaders of the party. For a very long time the Dutch Socialists, like those of every other country, refused to even give the matter of alcoholism and prohibition serious attention. It was regarded as a matter which would right itself with the adoption of the economic program of Socialism. The point of view is that expressed in 1892 by Domela Nieuwenhuis, in a discussion on the subject at the party convention. Nieuwenhuis called out: "If you give the laborer enough food he will not want spirits." A few years later Nieuwenhuis was one of the first to become identified with the new Socialist temperance agitation. The Dutch party does not officially stand for national prohibition, the party platform favoring local option. Many of the leading members of the party, however, are convinced prohibitionists. The extent to which the movement in Holland has grown among the Socialists is attested by the most com-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

petent witnesses. As far back as 1901 the central organization of the temperance societies officially reported that "more than any other party the Social Democratic Party has comprehended its duty to the state in this regard. It is the only party from which the abstinence principles have anything to expect. In the labor unions there is a live activity. The best organized and largest attack drink in their trade journals."

The Socialist party organ *Het Volk* has always maintained a special writer for writing anti-alcohol propaganda articles in its columns. They have printed the most effective propaganda articles used in the prohibition fight.

Among the labor unions, which are largely dominated by Socialists, the increase of prohibition sentiment and of personal abstinence has been quite phenomenal. The largest union meeting-places forbid the use or sale of intoxicants. The union journals refuse all liquor advertisements. The temperance societies and the labor unions frequently hold joint festivals, so close is the co-operation. Some of the trade unions even vote funds in support of the local temperance organizations. There is hardly a labor leader of eminence in the country who

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

has not been actively engaged in the fight against the liquor traffic.

### II

In the United States we have a very different record. With notable and honored exceptions, the leaders of organized labor have set themselves against every movement for prohibition or for extensive legislative restriction of the liquor traffic. A recent despatch stated that the president of the American Federation of Labor has sent out from his office during the year over two million pieces of literature against prohibition. If true, this is a disgraceful fact. The use of the machinery of Labor's movement to bolster up a business which more than any other degrades and injures Labor is not to be lightly regarded. When we turn to the labor press of the country, and see the extent of the advertising of liquor interests, it becomes evident that we are far from attaining the moral dignity of the best European labor movements. The close co-operation of the Brewery Worker's Union with the employers in combating the prohibition movement is easily understandable. It is a notable illustration of the fact that

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

class consciousness is not the dependable thing many Socialists have believed it to be.

Nor is the record of our Socialist movement one to cause especial pride. There are, to be sure, great exceptions to the general rule. Such an example was the refusal of the *New York Call*, at a time when it sorely needed the money, to accept some thousands of dollars' worth of advertising from the brewing interests. The strong and unequivocal position taken by the Socialists of Arizona is another instance of American Socialist action which must give joy to every one who believes that the cause of Social Democracy requires the extermination of the liquor traffic. The state platform of Arizona, in 1914, included the following plank:

The abolition of the liquor traffic; and we indorse, as a step thereto, the measure now being initiated to amend the state constitution so as to prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicants.

In the fight for the prohibitory laws the Socialists of Arizona have taken an honored and conspicuous part.

As a rule, however, American Socialists have been content to dodge the issue where they have not actively opposed the anti-liquor movement. In 1908 the Socialist Party of

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

the United States first considered the subject at a national convention. It adopted a resolution which did not commit the party to any action whatever. This resolution was somewhat amplified in 1912 and was again adopted. In its amended form it reads:

The manufacture and sale for profit of intoxicating and adulterated liquors lead directly to many social evils. Intemperance and the use of alcoholic liquors weaken the physical, mental, and moral powers.

We hold, therefore, that any excessive indulgence in intoxicating liquors by members of the working class is a serious obstacle to the triumph of our cause, since it impairs the vigor of the fighters in the political and economic struggle, and we urge the members of the working class to avoid any indulgence which might impair their ability to wage a successful political and economic struggle, and so hinder the progress of the movement for their emancipation.

We do not believe that the evils of alcoholism can be eradicated by repressive measures or any extension of the police powers of the capitalist state. Alcoholism is a disease of which capitalism is the chief cause. Poverty, overwork, and overworry necessarily result in intemperance on the part of the victims. To abolish the wage system with all its evils is the surest way to eliminate the evils of alcoholism and the traffic in intoxicating liquors.

In Wisconsin, where the Socialists have been very ably represented in both branches

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

of the state Legislature, the Socialist representatives, some years ago, introduced a notable resolution on the subject of alcoholism and the liquor traffic. This resolution constitutes the one serious contribution to the discussion of the subject made by any elected representatives of the Socialist Party. It is so important that I quote it in full:

Whereas, The liquor traffic constitutes a social and economic problem that requires the most careful study on the part of all who are interested in the common welfare, and especially on the part of those who are attempting to legislate with reference to the matter; and

Whereas, Practically every measure so far advanced upon the subject has entirely overlooked the tremendous effect of economic conditions upon the working class, the poor wages, the long hours, the unsanitary and physically depressing conditions in the places of employment, the cheap adulterated food, and above all the housing of the working class in unhealthy, cheerless, comfortless hovels; and

Whereas, These conditions, taken together, constitute, according to all scientific students of the subject, the most constant and powerful influence in creating and extending the evils of intemperance; and

Whereas, It has been proven that where these conditions have been bettered by the increase of wages, shortening of hours and improvement of conditions of labor, intemperance and the evil of the saloon have been lessened in that proportion; and

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

Whereas, Under the present economic conditions it is admitted and emphasized by every scientific and legislative investigation made that the saloon serves a very important and vital social function in our present society, especially in the cities, by offering to the working class a center of sociability, of warmth and cheer, of music and games, where they may read the papers and join in discussion, where they may even secure free food and some of the conveniences denied them in their homes, all at a price within their reach; and

Whereas, This social function constitutes an absolute necessity and a positive right of the common people, which cannot, and ought not to be destroyed until either the municipality or the state shall find some way of separating this function from the private control of the saloon and establishing other centers of social life and amusement for the people that shall be in every way equal to, and, if possible, superior in value and attractiveness; and

Whereas, It is conceded that the adulteration of liquors and the excessive use of strongly alcoholic drinks constitute the most serious evil of the liquor traffic; and

Whereas, Several methods of dealing with the liquor traffic are being urged in different directions, all of which fail in one or another respect to go to the root of the matter—for example, the public ownership and control of the wholesale and manufacturing part of the business by the government in Switzerland fails to properly regulate the retailing of liquor, thus leaving the evil effects of private management at that point; or again, the state dispensary system in South Carolina, which is urged by some, provided that the 384

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

officials of the system in that state should all be appointed, thus creating a most dangerous political machine in connection with one of the most dangerous monopolies; or again, the Gothenburg system of Norway and Sweden provides for the assumption of the retail or distributing business of the saloon by private companies, which in itself is objectionable, and besides, leaves the wholesale and manufacturing business in the hands of a great monopoly, whose evil influence is constantly operating against the good purposes of the system; therefore be it

Resolved, By the assembly, the senate concurring, that a special committee, consisting of two senators, appointed by the president of the senate, and three assemblymen, appointed by the speaker of the house, shall be selected for the purpose of investigating all the different forms of public ownership, control, and regulation now in use in any part of the world, and report to the next Legislature some method of public ownership and regulation that will be best adapted to the social conditions and needs of the people of our state.

At a meeting of the national committee of the Socialist Party held in Chicago in May, 1914, the following resolution was adopted:

Whereas, The problem of the liquor traffic has become an issue of vital importance in state and nation; and

Whereas, The international Socialist movement is now giving careful study and consideration to this question, it being placed on the agenda at the International Socialist Congress at Vienna, this year; and



## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

Whereas, The Socialist Party should take a definite and scientific position on this issue, therefore

Be it Resolved: That a special committee of five shall be elected by the national committee to study the liquor problem in all its aspects, and particularly to gather all available statistics and information concerning the relation of the liquor traffic to the welfare of the working class;

That this special committee report upon the attitude of the Socialist Party in the various countries of the world, on the liquor traffic, and an outline of their experiments and policies on the subject;

That this special committee shall prepare a detailed report of its findings for the next meeting of the national committee, the same to be sent to the members of that committee at least one month before the opening of the session.

The committee consisted of some of the ablest men in the party. It was composed of J. Stitt Wilson, former Mayor of Berkeley, California; Carl D. Thompson, director of the Information Bureau of the party; W. R. Gaylord, formerly a member of the state senate in Wisconsin; Santeri Nuorteva, one of the Finnish Socialist leaders, formerly a member of the parliament of Finland, and John C. Kennedy, of Illinois. This committee presented its report to the national committee in May, 1915. Three of the five members of the committee agreed upon a report, Mr. Gaylord presenting a minority

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

report. The principal features of the majority report were as follows:

1. Alcohol is a narcotic poison like opium, arsenic, morphine, cocaine, etc. Its poisoning power depends upon the strength and quantity of drink taken and varies with individuals and conditions.

2. Alcohol does not strengthen the body, but weakens it. Alcoholic drinks contain nourishment only in so far as they contain, in addition to alcohol, some nutriment such as sugar and albumen.

3. Alcohol weakens the intellectual powers. The very inhibitory soothing or deadening influence which alcohol exercises upon both mind and body, by which it enables the user to forget hunger, worry, sorrow, and pain, constitutes its danger when viewed from the standpoint of those who wish the workers keen, capable of sustained effort and resistance to capitalistic oppression.

4. It is universally agreed that excessive drinking of alcoholic liquors is disastrous. There is an ever-increasing volume of evidence and a growing conviction, both among men of science and among the people in general, backed by common observation and widespread experience, that even moderate drinking is somewhat harmful and dangerous, and that therefore total abstinence is the only absolutely safe and wise course to pursue.

5. The chief danger in the moderate use of alcoholic liquors is its tendency to create an ever-increasing desire for the stimulant, together with a progressive weakening of the will if the appetite is increasingly indulged.

6. Although the wages in the liquor industry are

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

among the best, yet the degree of exploitation is greater than in any other phase of the capitalist system. The exploitation in all the industries of the United States averages 48.83 per cent.; in the liquor business it goes up to 70 per cent.

7. In addition to the exploitation of labor in the production of alcoholic liquors, which is the highest of all capitalist industries, the liquor traffic still further exploits labor in excessive charge (compared to the cost of production) for the liquor when retailed to the consumer, and, what is worst of all, exploits the working class through the evil effects resulting from the use and abuse of alcoholic drinks.

8. The problem presented by the liquor traffic is one of such widespread and vital interest and concern, not only to the working classes, but also to the people at large, both in this and all nations, that the Socialist Party cannot remain indifferent or inactive, but should take a definite position and active part in combating the evils of alcoholism.

9. Education of the members of the Socialist Party and the entire working class regarding the effect of alcohol on body and mind, upon the physiological and psychological, as well as the sociological and economic aspects of alcoholism, is the first step in combating the evils of the liquor traffic.

In this connection your committee would urge the necessity of maintaining our unity and solidarity. Important as the subject of alcoholism may be, it is nevertheless, from the Socialist standpoint, a subsidiary question, and should not on that account be permitted to divide or seriously disturb the Socialist Party organization. Whatever happens, no action should be taken by the party that would sacrifice its

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

solidarity and usefulness on the economic and political field to a temporary and less fundamental and subsidiary issue. Neither the propaganda of those whose interests lie with the maintenance of the liquor traffic, whether wage-earners or capitalists, both of whom are likely to be more or less blinded by their immediate economic interests, nor the zeal of those who seek the immediate prohibition of the liquor traffic, should be permitted to prejudice the minds of the Socialists or lead the party into hasty or ill-advised action. In this matter, as in all others, the unity and solidarity of the Socialist Party, and especially its steady progress, are of more importance to the welfare of the working class and of humanity at large than any single issue involved.

The improvement of the economic, social, and industrial conditions of the working class; which is the main object and fundamental purpose of Socialism, must everywhere be emphasized as the most essential and important consideration in combating the evils of alcoholism. These conditions—excessive toil, long hours, meager wages, underfeeding, insanitary working conditions, improper housing, monotony, dreariness and lack of opportunities and facilities for proper recreation and social intercourse—*these constitute the most constant and underlying cause of the evils of intemperance and the dangers of alcoholism among the working classes. And any effort to eradicate the evils of intemperance that stops short of the economic reforms that would correct these conditions deals only with effects, and leaves the fundamental causes still operating. It is, therefore, incomplete, ineffective, and futile.* And while it may suppress some forms of the

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

evils attacked, it will almost certainly give rise to other forms. There is no cure for the miseries of the working classes that does not correct the economic conditions out of which they rise.

The Socialist Party the world over is therefore right in emphasizing the necessity of the economic and social transformation as the most important step in combating the evils of alcohol, and as the only means of finally elevating the working classes and ridding the world of the curse of abnormal appetites. It is also right in refusing to be drawn away from its main mission or allowing the economic and social aspects of the question to be forgotten or overlooked in the excitement of campaigns over temporary or partial issues.

The majority report then proceeds to the discussion of various suggested remedies for the evils of intemperance, as follows:

(a) Regulation and restriction. This involves the exercise of the police power of the city or state in holding the operations of the liquor business within certain limits. It may take the form of limiting the houses of business, prohibiting the sale of liquors to minors, limiting the number of saloons per thousand of inhabitants, separating the liquor business from the vice district, and other restrictions.

This is a matter which, in the judgment of your committee, does not need to concern the national organization of the party, since for the most part it is a question of the enforcement of laws or ordinances already in operation, in which case the Socialist posi-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

tion is sufficiently clear, while on the passage of additional restrictive measures the matter will in any case have been decided by the Socialists in each locality in accordance with the conditions and the state of public sentiment there prevailing at the time. These matters, therefore, may be safely left to the local organizations.

(b) Licensing. This is a partial recognition of the responsibility of public authority to regulate the saloon business and gives the city a certain control over it by reason of the power to stop the business for cause by revoking the license. On this matter the Socialists are not particularly concerned, inasmuch as the matter of license, high and low, has been tried extensively and seems to have had no appreciable effect upon the system one way or the other. Moreover, it is not an issue at the present time.

(c) Public ownership. It is urged that if the principle of public ownership of both the production and distribution of liquor, and of both the wholesale and retail phase of the business were established, this would remove the private profit from the business and thus remove the serious element from the problem, and go a long way towards the elimination of the evils of the traffic and the solution of the whole problem. At any rate, the socialization of industry being a part of the Socialist program, the socialization of the liquor traffic will be the most logical position for the party to take unless meanwhile it be decided that the evils of the traffic are such as to require its entire suppression.

(d) Local option. This gives a certain district the right to decide by popular vote whether the saloons shall be excluded from their territory or not. It may

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

be *district option*, which means a certain community as small as a few blocks of a city; or *local option*, which applies the test to a whole village or city; or *county option*, which applies it to the whole of a county. Similarly the question of the suppression of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors throughout an entire state may be made the subject of a state-wide referendum. Upon this matter the party is at once concerned, and whether it will or not is sooner or later involved in the issue. Either in local campaigns, where the question is made an issue in spite of us; or in city councils, state legislatures, or congress, where the party has representatives, some stand must be taken. It is desirable, therefore, that the party's position be determined and defined. We shall make our recommendations later.

(e) Prohibition. This is the most radical measure proposed for combating alcoholism. Those who advocate it seek to put it into effect in every possible degree and as far and as fast as they can. The real purpose of local option is to secure the vote of the people within the district to authorize the prohibition of the traffic within the district, whether it be a community, a county or a state. The ultimate aim of the prohibitionist is, of course, to prohibit the manufacture, sale, and importation of alcoholic liquors throughout the nation, except, of course, for medical and scientific purposes.

As to the position that the Socialist Party is to take upon the various forms of local option and prohibition, the committee feels that these are matters of too much importance, and matters on which there is too much difference of opinion within the party, to warrant us in attempting to lay down a suggested

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

rule of action. Whatever position the party is to take upon these questions should be decided only after careful, thorough, and earnest consideration, and then only by referendum of the entire membership. If this method is followed the party will be most likely to reach a wise decision. Moreover, such a course will insure the greatest degree of unanimity and will command the support of every loyal Socialist, even though the decision may not accord with his personal views upon this particular matter.

We therefore recommend that the following questions be submitted to the membership of the party for study, consideration, and discussion throughout the year; that the matter be again taken up at the national convention in 1916, and that the questions be then referred to the entire membership for final decision:

1. Shall the Socialist Party declare for district option?
2. Shall the Socialist Party declare for local option?
3. Shall the Socialist Party declare for county option?
4. Shall the Socialist Party declare for state-wide prohibition?
5. Shall the Socialist Party declare for national prohibition?

Mr. Gaylord's minority report consisted principally of an objection to the three initial paragraphs of the majority report which deal with the physiological effects of alcohol. The text of his report follows:

1. Not having had opportunity to make a first-hand study of the scientific data relating to the effect



## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

of alcohol upon the human body, I do not feel justified in supporting the first three paragraphs of the recommendations of the majority of the committee. It may be that the last word has been spoken, and a final conclusion arrived at, which a concensus of opinion among scientists would support. I do not deny that this may be the case, but I have not been in a position to satisfy myself that this is the case, and hence do not care to sign this statement.

2. I would recommend that the national committee appoint another sub-committee to take charge of this question during the coming year, to report at the national convention in 1916. This sub-committee to have among its members a representation of those industries more immediately connected with the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors; this to the end that the report finally submitted may come before our party without the suspicion of previous prejudice of any kind having undue influence on either side of the question.

Perhaps the most interesting feature in the majority report, outside of the clear recognition of the serious evils which arise from the liquor traffic, is the position taken by the committee that the unity and solidarity of the party must be placed above every other consideration. "Important as the subject of alcoholism may be," it is declared, "it is nevertheless, from the Socialist standpoint, a subsidiary question and should not, on that account, be permitted to divide or seriously

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

disturb the Socialist Party organization. Whatever happens, no action should be taken by the party that would sacrifice its solidarity and usefulness on the economic and political field to a temporary and less fundamental and subsidiary issue."

Herein we have, doubtless, the reason why so many very ardent believers in prohibition among leading and influential Socialists in this country have preserved silence on the subject and kept it out of their propaganda. They have wanted to preserve the unity of the party and its efficiency as a fighting force. To this, of course, there can be no serious objection, from the point of view of the Socialist, however much those whose primary interest is prohibition may object to it. This reason will doubtless long be effective in preventing the Socialist Party, as such, from placing absolute prohibition among the demands in its platform. It will be observed that in section (e) of the majority report the issue is evaded. The committee did not feel that it could make a definite and specific recommendation upon the subject.

Possibly the only practicable solution at this time would be for the party to instigate a somewhat aggressive general anti-alcohol campaign, encourage the formation of local

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

Socialist abstinence societies, similar to those formed with party sanction and encouragement in the principal European countries, and permit individual members and local organizations full and complete freedom of action, so far as the advocacy of absolute prohibition is concerned. This would permit Socialist candidates to be nominated in one community who would represent the prohibition sentiments of the Socialists of that community, while permitting an opposition course to be taken in other parts of the country. It would also permit the legislative representatives, elected on the party ticket, to exercise an independence of judgment upon this question which, so long as the party is apparently bound by the terms of the resolution adopted in 1912, is not possible. Certainly we are confronted with a situation that must become intolerable before long. There are thousands of earnest and sincere American Socialists who cannot consciously withhold their support from the prohibition fight.

In section (c) of the majority report the subject of public ownership of the liquor traffic as a possible solution is very gingerly touched upon. The authors of the report apparently did not want to commit them-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

selves upon this matter. They contented themselves with the statement that "the socialization of industry being a part of the Socialist program, the socialization of the liquor traffic will be the most logical position for the party to take, *unless meanwhile it be decided that the evils of the traffic are such as to require its entire suppression.*" This, of course, begs the entire question, for the whole contention of the advocates of prohibition is that the fruits of the traffic are so uniformly evil and dangerous to society that it must be suppressed.

### III

It is inconceivable that a Socialist society would permit the continuance of the traffic in alcoholic beverages. Socialism requires, as the fundamental law of its own life, as it were, the elimination of all anti-social forces. All those things which tend to degrade men, to breed disease, and to lower the physical, mental, and moral health of the people, Socialism must of necessity eliminate, in so far as that can be attained by any exercise of social authority. Socialism likewise requires the prevention of all economic waste. To conserve human energy and to

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

secure the maximum of efficiency from industrial organization and effort is a necessity of Socialism. Unless these principles are logically applied to the life of society, the Socialist ideal cannot be attained.

Tested by these criteria, the liquor traffic must be definitely outlawed. It imperils the whole life of the people. We do not need to go farther for support of this indictment than the text of the majority report of the Socialist Party committee. If alcohol does not strengthen the body, but weakens it, if it weakens likewise the intellectual powers and makes the workers less keen, less capable of sustained resistance to capitalist oppression; and if its moderate use is always accompanied by a tendency to create an ever-increasing desire for it, no further reason for regarding it as an enemy of Socialism need be advanced.

There are, of course, other reasons than these why Socialists especially should desire to get rid of the liquor traffic. In the first place, the organized liquor traffic constitutes a very influential part of the entire system of capitalism and one of its greatest bulwarks. The liquor business is highly concentrated. It is, in fact, perhaps the most concentrated of all our industries. The

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

whole business is in the hands of a very small group of men. It is also the most profitable of all our industries, as it is likewise the most unproductive. The industry employs fewer people, in proportion to the amount of capital invested, or in proportion to the value of the products, than any other. In round figures we spend annually just as much for intoxicants as we spend for bread and clothing combined—two billion dollars per annum. In the manufacture of intoxicating liquors, for which we pay this enormous sum of two billion dollars per annum, there were employed, in the last census year, 62,920 persons. In the manufacture of bread and clothing combined, there were employed 493,655 persons; that is to say, that the expenditure of two billions of dollars for bread and clothing furnished employment to nearly eight times as many wage-earners as the expenditure of a like sum for intoxicants.

If we proceed further in our analysis, and take the sum total of the wages paid in each of the instances we are considering, we find that, for the manufacture of the intoxicants which cost the nation two billion dollars, the sum of \$45,252,000 was paid in wages, but of the two billion dollars spent for bread

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

and clothing the sum of \$244,196,000 represents wages. Dollar for dollar, the manufacturers of bread and clothing paid five and a half times as much in wages as did the manufacturers of intoxicating liquors.

This is a very vital consideration to the workers. It points to the fact that capitalist exploitation has reached its highest development in the liquor traffic. The liquor industry employs only one-fourth as many persons per thousand dollars of invested capital as the average of all industries. According to the census figures, the amount of capital per worker is \$2,400 for all industries. In the case of the manufacture of intoxicants, the average is \$9,918, or four times as much. If we consider the value added to raw materials in the process of manufacture, it is highest in the liquor industry, amounting to the enormous sum of 72.4 per cent. It has been computed by very competent statisticians that, whereas the workers in all industries receive on an average wages representing 51 per cent. of the values created by them, the workers engaged in the liquor traffic receive only 29 per cent. of the values created by them. From the point of view of the warfare of the Socialist on the capitalist system, therefore, the destruction of the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

liquor traffic, as now constituted, would be an enormous gain.

Nor must we forget that, in addition to its strength as a capitalist institution, the liquor business is a source of corruption of our political life, which must be rooted out if we are to have a safe and stable democracy. The greatest source of power of the exploiters in this country comes from the servitude of the workers to the bondage of alcoholism and the saloon. To those who say that they prefer the nation free rather than sober, the answer is that it will never be free until it is sober. The inertia of the masses, their lack of resistance to the system by which they are exploited, must be counted among the most vicious and sinister products of the solution.

Let the thoughtful Socialist ask himself: Is it consistent with that economic efficiency which must be the foundation of a Socialist state, that the amount spent on a traffic which gives no good result, should be as great as that spent upon the fundamental necessities of life—food and clothing? Surely, it is not less than a shameful thing that, counting the cost of our national government at the pre-war figure of one billion dollars a year, twice as much should be spent



## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

for liquor as for the entire governmental functions of the nation. No Socialist can justify the expenditure upon liquor of three times as much as we spend upon our public schools—an amount nearly equal to the total earnings of all the labor-unionists in the country. Viewed from the simple viewpoint of economic sanity, the liquor traffic represents a colossal, indefensible waste!

### IV

Let us consider, briefly, the general arguments offered by the opponents of prohibition, who are likewise Socialists. First among these arguments let us choose that of the advocates of public ownership. The advocates of this method of dealing with the problem urge that the evils of alcoholism and the saloon are due to the fact that the liquor business is conducted for profit. "Take the profits out of the business," they say, "and the evils will all disappear. The remedy is to abolish private ownership and socialize the industry." This has a very plausible sound and attracts many Socialists who are not accustomed to careful investigation and deep thinking. Actually, it runs contrary to the very basis of Socialist philos-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

ophy. Socialism means the organization, on the basis of social ownership, of all necessary, useful, and desirable forms of industrial and commercial enterprise. It does not mean social ownership and control of parasitic industries. For example, prostitution is a very extensive business in this country, but no Socialist has dared or been foolish enough to suggest that the establishment of the business upon the basis of public ownership and operation is a necessary part of the Socialist program. Undoubtedly, prostitution is conducted as an organized business for profit, but the Socialist remedy is not to municipalize brothels, but to eliminate them. Similarly, the traffic in girls and women, which is an adjunct to prostitution, is a highly lucrative business carried on for private profit, but no Socialist would ever suggest that the method of dealing with that evil is to have the cities and towns become traffickers in girls and women. We never would demand public ownership of the white-slave traffic. It is necessary for Socialists to apply their formulæ about public ownership with some intelligence and sincerity of mind.

If the fruits of this traffic are desirable and good for society, then the business ought to

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

be socialized. There can, however, be no justification for society deliberately perpetuating that which is subversive of its well-being. The greatest objection to public ownership of the liquor traffic, however, is the extent to which it would complicate and corrupt our political life and the inevitability that it would give whole communities a direct interest in the maintenance of the traffic. Furthermore, if on the basis of public ownership and operation without profit the industry should be municipalized, the first result would be a great cheapening in the price of intoxicants. It is impossible to manufacture the stuff and sell it at cost without making it dangerously cheap, for all the long experience of nations in dealing with the problem leads to the conclusion that to make the supply of liquor cheap and easily available is to add to the amount of intemperance and alcoholism. Far better let the traffic continue as it is than invite that disastrous result.

Another favorite objection to the proposal to prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicants is that it would throw a large number of men out of employment. Of course, no Socialist and no intelligent labor-unionist can ignore this aspect of the problem. But

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

it is just as well to be a little bit careful and to make certain that our views are based upon a sound understanding of the problem. In the first place, what are the facts? There are employed in the manufacture of intoxicants about 63,000 wage-earners. In addition, there are the bartenders, the waiters, the teamsters—in short, all those engaged in the distribution of liquor, numbering nearly 300,000 more. In all, then, we have, in round figures, 360,000 persons employed in the business of manufacturing and distributing intoxicants. This is less than the number of professional prostitutes in the United States, for example, and the suppression of prostitution would bring about the greater displacement of labor. Yet, there are few persons, probably, ready to argue in favor of the continuance of prostitution, for that reason.

Of course, society must make adequate provision for the protection of its workers against unemployment. It does not matter whether they are prostitutes thrown out of employment, as a result of state action, brewers, or bartenders. From the Socialist point of view, adequate provision should and must be made to protect the worker against involuntary poverty, as the result of unem-

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

ployment. Such a provision is quite compatible with a prohibition law. Clearly, the logic of the situation leads one to the conclusion that Socialists should not oppose prohibition; but that, while favoring it, they should insist that proper measures be taken to protect the workers who may be displaced as a result of suppression of the traffic.

As a matter of fact, this whole question has been very skilfully confused by the exaggerated claims of the defenders of the liquor interests. If every man and woman connected with the production or distribution and sale of intoxicants should be thrown out of employment, the number would be far less than the number of those who are thrown out of employment every now and then by the introduction of new industrial processes or inventions. In actual fact, however, there is not the slightest reason to believe that the unemployment caused by prohibition would be either extensive or long enduring. When the average man hears about the thousands of people employed in the brewing industry he does not generally pause to consider that three-fourths of such employees are not brewers or malsters, distillers or rectifiers, but mechanics whose skill

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

could just as well be applied to other industries. Of the 62,920 wage-earners employed in the manufacture of intoxicants only about 15,000, less than 25 per cent., were engaged in performing functions peculiar to the production of drink. More than 75 per cent. of the total number were blacksmiths, carpenters, electricians, machinists, engineers, painters, plumbers, coopers, firemen, and so on, through a long list of occupations.

Obviously, it makes no difference to an electrician whether he is employed as an electrician in a brewery or in a church. The nature of his work remains the same. For the greater part of the past three years there has been a dearth of labor in most of the mechanical trades named. If every mechanic employed in the breweries of the country had been thrown out of employment, he could have found other employment almost immediately. There are something over 100,000 bartenders, but it is impossible to argue that bartending is an occupation which, once pursued, unfits a man for any other. If that contention should be advanced by the defenders of the trade, it would be a very strong reason for advocating prohibition. The same thing may be said with respect to the teamsters and others

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

employed in connection with the trade. The fact is that our industrial society is quite capable of absorbing nearly all of the labor now employed in the production and distribution of intoxicating liquor without any special effort.

It has been shown over and over again that when a state goes "dry" and breweries, distilleries, and saloons are closed down, the displaced workers are very soon provided with other and better occupations. A few years ago, the labor-unionists of Denver, Colorado, were greatly agitated by the fear that the proposed prohibitory law would throw many of their members out of employment and cause great hardship. They feared too, that the effect upon the labor organizations would be disastrous. What happened was this: before the time for closing the breweries was reached arrangements for utilizing the plants for other purposes had been made; the largest brewery in Colorado became a malted-milk factory, employing practically all those formerly employed by the brewery, and many others, for it is the universal experience that when some other industry takes the place of a brewery or distillery, the number of persons employed is greatly increased. Many of the

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

leaders of organized labor have recognized this, with the result that there has been an enormous growth of prohibition sentiment in the ranks of labor-unionism.

It is a favorite argument with many Socialists and labor-unionists that prohibition is an infringement of personal liberty. This argument has been advanced in defense of every reactionary interest, and against every proposal for progress and democracy since democratic governments began to function. Socialists and labor-unionists, of all people, ought to understand how shallow the argument is. In a sense, it is true, of course, that every bit of social legislation interferes with some persons' liberty of action. Our laws preventing the employment of children of tender age were denounced for exactly the same reasons: so were the public-health laws, education laws, and all the laws designed to improve the conditions of the wage-earners. Labor-unionism itself is constantly being denounced because its methods interfere with the "personal liberty" of people who work under vile conditions and for wages which will not enable them to maintain the standards of civilization.

We must interfere with that sort of personal liberty the exercise of which is in-



## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

jurious to our social liberty and well-being. There cannot be in civilized society an admission of the liberty of an individual to live in a hovel unfit for human habitation, for example, nor for him to expose himself and others to certain disasters, nor for him to mutilate his body. Guided by the universal experience that the highest liberty of the individual results always from the highest liberty of society, we rightly insist, as Socialists, upon legislation restricting the conduct of individuals to those bounds which are compatible with the social well-being.

One very common fallacy of the defenders of the saloon has found great support among the Socialist opponents of prohibition—namely, that if we prohibit the liquor traffic we shall cause some new evil habit to appear; that if people cannot get alcoholic beverages with which to stupefy themselves, they will resort to opium, cocaine, heroin, and other similar drugs. No person who is at all familiar with the facts of this problem of drug-taking believes for a moment that it results from the deprivation of alcohol. As a matter of strict fact, well known to students of the problem, drug-taking is not at all peculiar to prohibition territories. It

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

is, on the contrary, intimately associated with the saloon. The best authorities on the subject agree that most of the drug-taking in our large cities and the illicit traffic in drugs are connected with the saloon. Certainly there is no difficulty about obtaining intoxicants in the city of New York at any time, week-day or Sunday, day or night, yet it is known that drug-taking is on the increase, and that there are as many drug addicts in New York as in any city in the world. If people only resorted to the drug habit as an alternative to drinking New York would be free from drug-taking and the traffic in drugs.

When we examine the problem in this matter-of-fact fashion, putting theories and speculations aside, and resting exclusively upon the solid ground of actual experience, we find that the arguments against prohibition are all of them academic at best, and of little or no practical weight. The reasons for prohibition far outweigh the reasons for maintaining the present system or any modification of it. It is not necessary for the Socialist to adopt the narrow viewpoint of the average prohibitionist to see the need of removing from our midst this great menace to our social welfare. It is only

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC

necessary that he face candidly the problem of the emancipation of the working class and the difficulties of attaining the social democratic ideal to realize that these things cannot be done until we have destroyed the liquor industry by prohibiting the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicant beverages.

We must not permit ourselves to be deceived by the claim that harm only comes from spirituous liquors; that if we only encourage the use of light beers and wines the problem of intemperance will cease to exist. Nothing could be more misleading than the statement frequently made that the German does not receive any injury from his beer-drinking, nor the French and Italian peoples from their wine-drinking. The fact is that the deplorable results of beer-drinking, the widespread alcoholism, and the extent of physical degeneration which results from alcoholism, have given the German people great concern. In the wine-drinking countries, likewise, the same evils have been distressingly manifest.

For Social Democracy there is only one sound policy—it must unite with the great moral movements against alcohol and the liquor traffic, and, while insisting energeti-

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

cally upon the need for such social reforms as will lessen the temptation to indulge in the use of intoxicants, work for the entire elimination of the evil by prohibitory legislation.

**THE END**







