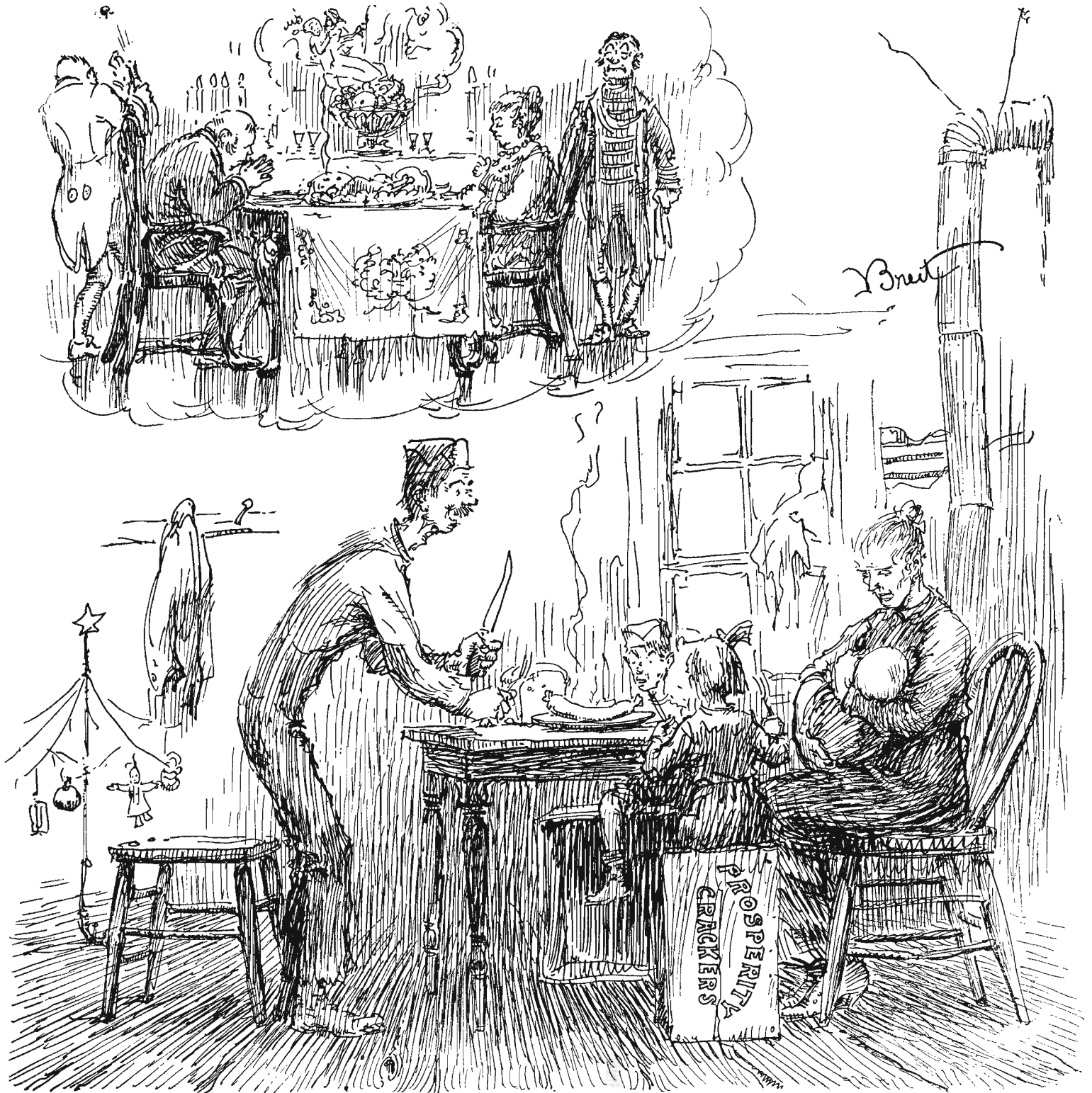




# THE PROLETARIAN

*A Journal of International Socialism.*



**MERRY CHRISTMAS, COMRADES!**

# SPARTACAN SPARKS

Senator Poindexter of Washington, in announcing his candidacy for President, says, that he is opposed to Bolshevism because it is inconsistent with the worker's vested right to his wages. Since the senator is so solicitous about the vested rights of the workers, he surely ought to receive the endorsement of the A. F. of L. This reminds us so much of the time when the State of New York prohibited bakers from working more than ten hours a day, and the Supreme Court decided that it was depriving the workers of their vested right to work as long as they pleased.

\* \* \*

In the minutes of the N. E. C. sub-committee meeting of October 9, 1919, published on p. 6 of the Weekly People, November 8, 1919 issue, we find the following:

"Preface sent by H. Richter for a German translation of the pamphlet 'Socialist Reconstruction of Society' was presented. Motion that the National Secretary write Comrade Richter that the sub-committee refuses its consent to having article written by Dannenberg published with this pamphlet, nor to have that individual's name associated with that of DeLeon's in any publication authorized by the S. L. P. Carried."

This shows how industrial unionism achieves political unity.

\* \* \*

Vice-President Marshall believes in the gospel of love and force. By that he means that if the people fall for his bunk, then he will love them. If they don't, then shoot them.

\* \* \*

Our old friend William J. Bryan says that it is a mistake for the workers to organize their own party. All the workers ever got in this country was given to them by the Democratic Party.

You sure are right, Bill. The Democratic Party certainly did give the workers many things, such as injunctions.

\* \* \*

At their convention the Episcopalians decided that they will no longer pray for the dead, because if they did, they would have to include the 'orrible 'uns,—and themselves, too, perhaps.

\* \* \*

In whichever direction we go, we are marching into a fog, says Lloyd George in speaking of the Russian situation. What do you

march at all for, Mr. George? Are the French bondholders playing the tune?

\* \* \*

The Press reports that during his illness, President Wilson is reading all the detective stories he can find in Washington. Maybe, the next book he writes will be "The Mystery of the Lost Fourteen Points."

\* \* \*

The Literary Digest is now being published without the help of typesetters. This is quite a novelty, but the fact that newspapers are being published without the help of brains is quite commonplace.

\* \* \*

These are lonesome days for the "peaceful citizen."

\* \* \*

"There is no doubt, pigs caused the war" says an Austrian count. The whole thing grew out of a quarrel between Austria and Serbia over the pig business, it seems. Well, those who claimed the war was a quarrel between trade hogs were not so far off, after all.

\* \* \*

Two members of the Irish "parliament" were given thirty days for refusing to recognize the authority of the British government. Lucky thing for them that this did not happen in the land of the free; it would have been thirty years instead of thirty days.

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## The Proletarian

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Make checks and money orders payable to The Proletarian.



Now that trouble has arisen between the coal miners and the operators, we discover the startling fact that a coal mine operator is a person who does not and cannot operate a mine.

\* \* \*

A correspondent asks for a definition of Mass Action. We're sorry to say we can't give the desired information. However, we understand that this wonderful discovery is more important to the human race than Nuxated Iron and more necessary than Pinkham's Pills.

\* \* \*

It is reported that our former "comrade" George Creel spent over six million dollars informing the public as to what was going on during the war. In spite of his wonderful work the people are just beginning to understand what it was all about.

\* \* \*

### That Astor Baby

Smith—I see by the papers that this here Astor baby is only seven years old, and has got \$30,000,000. It says that when he gets to be 21 he'll have \$80,000,000.

Jones—Some wages! I'd like to get a job in the place that baby works.

Brown—Aw, g'wan! How d'ye mean, "works"? He don't get no wages like that for straight work; he must do piece-work, or perhaps he piles up a lot of overtime.

Jones—Perhaps he saved his wages—went without eating or something like that. The Boss give us a speech yesterday, where he said that any workin' man that saved his wages could get to be Rockefeller in a short time.

Smith—Why, a baby like that wouldn't have to work. I guess he's got brains—he's probably got somebody workin' for him.

Brown—Yet they talk about Child Labor! Why, it's the only kind of labor that pays, according to this. If I'd gone into a factory when I was a baby I'd be on Easy Street now.

Jones—Well, I don't understand it. I got three kids—all of 'em over seven, and not one has made a cent yet. I'm going home and put 'em to work.—From The Voice of Labor.

# THE PROLETARIAN

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No. 8

## Storm Clouds Gather

By DENNIS E. BATT

IN the past it has been generally accepted that America was the one country wherein all men were the possessors of certain inalienable rights, where liberty, fraternity and equality ruled supreme. These ideas have been inoculated into our minds from infancy; press and platform and pulpit have extolled the inestimable ebentfis flowing from American institutions. We have been told times without end that the will of the people was at all times supreme; that the constitution guaranteed freedom of expression to all and provided ample means for any changes that the sovereign people might ordain, and that the congress was forbidden to pass any laws abridging the rights of free speech, free press and public assemblage.

But actual facts have shown that these fine words are but a snare and a delusion; liberty and equality have turned out to be a means whereby a powerful minority is enabled to oppress and dominate a majority. In the eyes of the ruling class the "sacred" constitution has about the standing of a Hun treaty. To the intelligent and conscious worker the boasted freedom has become but a sorry joke; the freedom of the press exists only so long as papers sing the song of industrial and financial overlords. Prison terms have effectively gagged those who raised their voices to protest the ravishing of the workers; the rights of free assemblage have vanished into thin air before the effective swinging of the policeman's club. The forces of oppression, in the control of the capitalist class, have been used to break any opposition to their will. Any movement that threatened their right to rob and rule the workers has been branded as un-American, seditious, disloyal. Vituperation and slander has been heaped upon those who would not bow the head and bend the knee before the idols of capitalism. Playing upon the sentiments of the unthinking masses by painting horrible word-pictures of wild-eyed "Bolshevists" planning a regime of rapine and terror, the press has succeeded in dividing the workers into two hostile camps. Under the guise of patriotism mobs have set upon individuals and inflicted injuries which in many cases resulted in death. Headquarters and offices have been raided and wrecked; armed bands have dispersed meetings and so intimidated the workers that in many cities it is impossible to hold any meeting of a radical nature. All this has been condoned and often commended by the ribald press. Public officials, guardians of the public weal, have proven pliant tools of the capitalists.

To maintain the constitution and enforce law and order, lawlessness is encouraged; to vindicate the integrity of American institutions the country has been turned over to the gentle mercies of mob rule. Public meetings, free press and free speech have become dangerous to the welfare of the capitalist system and therefore must go.

### Labor and the Class Struggle

Organized labor has always maintained that its struggle was with the employer only as an owner of economic resources, and has ignored the class nature of the conflict. The recent action of the government in the coal strike should be sufficient to correct this error, and may result in a fundamental change in tactics. The American Federation of Labor has long followed the rule of "no politics in the union." Reliance has been placed upon the belief that government officials were impartial agents. Apparently, no one has ever questioned the principle of collective bargaining and the right to strike. During the war, Labor meekly submitted to many infringements on its "rights," evidently unaware of the fact that the shackles then being forged would remain longer than they expected. They quite naively took President Wilson at his word when, at the Buffalo convention of the A. F. of L., he said: "While we are fighting for freedom, we must see among other things that labor is free, and that means a number of interesting things. It means that we must do not only what we have declared our purpose to do, see that the conditions of labor are not rendered more onerous by the war, but also that we shall see to it that the instrumentalities by which the conditions of labor are improved are not blocked or checked. That we must do." Recent happenings have been the reward for their trustfulness.

Among the most "loyal" of the organizations affiliated with the A. F. of L. were the United Mine Workers. During the period of the war the miners remained steadfastly at work, doing their bit to make democracy safe at Shantung—and elsewhere. With the actual cessation of hostilities the miners concluded that they had a right to expect some reward for their loyalty, and at a convention of 2,200 delegates, representing more than four hundred thousand miners, demands for increased wages and shorter hours were agreed upon. In the event of the refusal of the mine owners to grant the demands, November 1st was set as the date for a strike. Being well organized the miners felt that should a strike prove necessary they would win easily. But the owners had a trick up their sleeve upon which the men had not figured.

In due course the strike was called, and the Government immediately applied for an injunction in the interests of "the public." A temporary injunction, which later became permanent, was issued by federal Judge A. B. Anderson, at Indianapolis. The miners' officials were instructed by the court to rescind the strike order, and to perform no acts tending to continue the strike. The strike was held to be a violation of the Lever act, passed to cover war-time needs, and the miners were brought to realize that the war is

not over. Incidentally, other measures have already been prepared which will serve just as effectively to break strikes when the Lever Act becomes inoperative. According to the ruling of Judge Anderson, if two workers agree to cease work, this constitutes conspiracy, and is in violation of the Lever Act. Apparently, this law is a "lever" act in more ways than one, for it has effectively pried the workers from their former position. Although the action of the government was in the interest of "the public," it does not seem to occur to many that production could have been carried on just as well had the owners been compelled to accede to the demands of the miners, pending the results of a conference. But perhaps this would be "class legislation."

If the denial of the workers right to cease work in order to enforce their demands is persisted in, the future of the labor movement is anything but bright. This action is a direct challenge to the workers and it remains to be seen what they will do.

It is possible that redress will be sought in the courts and legislative bodies, but in this they are doomed to almost certain disappointment for the country is completely dominated by the forces of reaction. Constitutional guarantees have been negated at every point; the capitalists are determined to maintain their domination at all hazards, and will brook no opposition. An excellent illustration of the respect of adherents of capitalism for "constitutional methods" was given in the recent municipal elections in Toledo, Ohio. The methods employed to control the elections were so openly fraudulent that the workers can hardly fail to recognize the tacit conspiracy which exists against them. The socialist (C. L. P.) candidate undoubtedly received a majority of the votes cast; in order to defeat him it was necessary to steal the election and this was done in the most brazen manner.

### The White Terror in America

Not satisfied with the suppression of the workers through the use of the machinery of the government, direct and brutal attacks are made upon the workers by mobs incited to do the dirty work of the capitalists. Under the excuse that certain individuals and organizations are advocating the overthrow of the government by violence, the minds of the people are poisoned against them. Some of these incitements are so open that were they used by the labor or radical press, wholesale arrests would follow.

An excellent example of poisoning the minds of the people is an editorial in the Detroit Journal of November 10th. Under the title "Our Own Soviets" the editorial says:

"That Detroit yields a generous quota in the round-up of fiery fanatics by federal agents is not surprising. This city has had more than its share of yapping madmen, when have been rhapsodizing these many months publicly and privately and it has been only a question of time until the heavy hand of authority would put sudden end to their zealous ravings and their irrational adhesion to a program of outright revolution. \* \* \* \* \*

"In Detroit these bedlamites have been bold. Concealment has been practiced but little. A recent copy of a magazine published at 174 Michigan avenue and called 'The Proletarian' shows the fearlessness with which these American bolsheviki work, the extent of their plan of destruction and the ruthless sweep of their designs far beyond the boundaries of ordinary Socialism. 'The Proletarian' assails Samuel Gompers and union labor, mocks the Socialist party, advocates the introduction of the soviet form of government in the United States, lauds revolutionary steps and in delineating the value of mass action says, 'It took the workers of England forty years to get a share in the franchise and not until Chartists WERT PERSECUTED

AND SOMETIMES KILLED did the long, painful struggle end.' Throughout the publication the threat of violence is so thinly veiled that the desirability of violence in the mind of the editors is emphasized."

In order to support his lying insinuations it was necessary for this writer to use just a few words from an article. Had the entire sentence been given it would not have served his purpose. Note the clever manner in which the meaning of the following sentence was garbled in the above editorial: "It took the workers of England forty years to get a share in the franchise and not until Chartists were persecuted and sometimes killed did the long and painful struggle end IN THE PASSING OF LEGISLATION BY CONSERVATIVES TO GIVE THE WORKERS THE VOTE." The writer of the article was endeavoring to prove the value of the franchise.

Another case in point is the riot that took place during the Armistice Day parade at Centralia, Washington. The papers have printed column after column of vituperation against the I. W. W., playing up in large type the "unprovoked attack" upon returned soldiers. Tucked away in an obscure corner of one of the papers we learn that Dr. Frank Bickford, himself a marcher in the parade, testified at the inquest that some one near him in the line suggested a raid upon the I. W. W. hall. Several took up the suggestion, he declared, and one man put his foot against the door and "forced it open" BEFORE a shower of bullets poured over and into the marchers. In the opinion of Dr. Herbert Hall, another former soldier, the firing of the shots and the movement of the American Legion men toward the hall were "as nearly simultaneous as any human acts could be." From this one would be justified in assuming that the I. W. W. men shot only in self-defense. These facts are given little prominence, while the shooting of four returned soldiers, members of the American Legion, is played up. We have searched in vain for any condemnation of the lynching of Ernest Everetts. In many cases the act meets only with approval, the editors insinuating that the lynchers did their duty as American citizens.

This deplorable incident at Centralia, and others of a like nature, was the result of the campaign of incitement to violence carried on persistently by the press. Those who so much as question the acts of the Government or any official are at once branded as disloyalists, un-American, Bolsheviks, by these vicious and perverted writers, who while professing their respect and adherence to constitutional and legal methods, encourage, foster and incite their readers to acts of violence in order to intimidate and suppress all opposition to the present ruling class. Patriotism has indeed become the last resort of scoundrels.

The net result of these activities has been to effectively block every avenue of expression. To protest against industrial conditions is treason, to strike is equivalent to a declaration of war. It appears that "Smile, Damn You, Smile," is the dominant note in the present policy. Industrial unrest is to be squelched with bayonets if necessary. Carried to its logical conclusion this attitude can result only in a military dictatorship and terrorism.

All of this bodes ill for the future. There is a point beyond which even the "loyal citizen" will not go. Suppression and terrorism will temporarily have the desired effect, but can only stave off the final reckoning. The re-action that is certain to follow will be more intense in proportion to the degree of suppression.

# That Labor Conference

By MURRAY MURPHY

**N**OW for a Genuine Conference ON Labor"—such is the title of an article in *The Review* of November 1. (Emphasis mine). This capitalist magazine has unintentionally thrown a flood of white light on the great weakness of the Labor Conference called by President Wilson, which met on October 6. It was a Conference ON Labor—not BY Labor nor even WITH Labor. The real interests of Labor were not represented, either by Gary and Spargo for the "public," or by Gompers for "labor." It was simply a Conference on the "labor problem" (something with which socialists have nothing to do), or, in other words, an attempt by the powers of bourgeoisdom to soothe "industrial unrest" so that the path of princely Profit might be made smooth.

This calling of labor conferences has become quite a fad with our modern statesmen. They are holding them now in London and in Australia. A labor conference was held in Ottawa, Canada, from September 15 to 20, and, too, Governor Smith of New York state was not far behind with his Albany gathering of one hundred fifty representatives, the "public" and "labor" being well (!) represented. At present, finally, we have the International Labor Congress meeting at Washington, with an accompanying congress of working-women, met to "solve" the industrial problems of the world—in the interests of privately owned industry. It is scarcely necessary to mention, by way of proof that it is NOT in the interests of the WORKERS, that this World's Labor Congress was created by and with the League of Nations, which continues to war incessantly against the only Workers' Republic ever established.

All or most of these conferences result in amicable discussions of the "eight-hour day" (with exceptions), prohibition of night work (with exceptions), and so forth. Besides having much oratory, there are many "unanimous" reports—except when, as was the case with Gompers, an insistent and radical element in the labor group compels at least the appearance of a scrap.

Briefly, the facts of the case relative to the Labor Conference are as follows: The Steel strike brought to a head an acute, slumbering discontent on the part of workers in all the basic industries, and the Conference, supposed to be representative of Capital, Labor, and the Public, was called with the aim, ostensibly, of bringing all concerned to such a speedy agreement as would least hinder production. Gompers and his associates brought in a resolution the adoption of which would have meant complete recognition of the principle of dealing with the labor unions in all matters relative to hours, wages, and conditions of employment. The employers' group flatly rejected it, and, since a unanimous decision was necessary to the adoption of any measure, this meant either surrender or withdrawal for the labor group. Gompers withdrew—singing his "swan song."

## The Personnel of the Conferees

A detailed inspection of the list of men called to the Conference confirms the opinion set forth above. Although *The Review* of October 25 states that "Outright socialism and the most orthodox conservatism

are represented in its membership," it is only fair to add that *The Review's* idea of "outright socialism" is downright nonsense. According to *The Survey* of October 4, the fifteen members representing the interests of the Public (we need not deal with the obvious prejudices of the Employer group) consisted almost entirely of large and small capitalists. There were two bankers, three manufacturers, two attorneys, one "business man," an "agriculturalist," two editors, and two members who don't seem to have any regular occupation. Besides these there are Chas. D. Eliot, the college president who calls the scab a "hero;" Charles Edward Russell and John Spargo, the renegade "Socialists;" Thomas D. Jones, member of the International Harvester Corporation; John D. Rockefeller, the hero of Ludlow; Judge Elbert H. Gary of the United States Steel Corporation, the strike of whose employes was largely the cause of the conference itself. Such were the men who strove for the public weal!

As for the labor group, all fifteen were from the American Federation of Labor, and all but two were of the very inner circle, under the protecting skirts of the prophet Samuel. There were John Lewis and Frank Morrison—but why go through the list? No "radicals" were among them, although the troubles necessitating the conference were largely due to strikes contrary to the wishes of A. F. of L. leaders.

There is ample evidence to show that the labor group in the conference demanded as little as they dared, fearing to lose their positions of power and profit in the unions. Witness the fact that Gompers is asking in the International Labor Congress for a 48-hour week, while the miners are striking for a 30-hour week!

"The authority and the leadership of Mr. Gompers are at stake in this strike," says the *New York Times* (quoted by the *Literary Digest* of October 11), which adds: "He has no liking for the revolutionary element in labor; for years he has fought against it; he has known that the radicals were all the time seeking to destroy him."

But aside from the grandstand hypocrisy of the Gompers crowd, the conference presents features and issues of intense interest to the socialist, which will well repay close observation and study.

## The Bone of Contention

The *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* of October 25 expresses disgust because the Labor Conference did not at once take up "the urgent question of keeping up the volume of production necessary in this economic crisis of the whole world," rather than waste its time discussing labor problems. "Instead," it says, "the steel strike was instantly dragged in, as if the Conference had been bound to express its judgment on the merits of any pending labor controversy." This is practical logic for you! Labor conferences should carefully avoid labor controversies!

But the steel strike WAS brought before the Conference, in the following indirect way, by the wording of the Gompers resolution before mentioned: "The right of wage earners to organize without discrimination, to bargain collectively, to be represented by representatives of their own choosing in negotiations and

adjustments with employers in respect to wages, hours of labor, and relations and conditions of employment is recognized."

Now this was interpreted to mean that the employers would have to deal with the union officials concerning the matters spoken of, hence the Steel Corporation would have been obliged, if the resolution had been adopted, to deal direct with the striking steel workers' union. But Judge Gary, speaking for the Steel Corporation, had publicly declared that he would not meet with Mr. Fitzpatrick to arbitrate the issues involved in the strike. Such a concession to labor was unthinkable. A "moral issue," according to Judge Gary, was at stake.

Of course Gary is in favor of "collective bargaining"—that is, the workers of any shop may appoint one of their own number to represent them in arranging for wages; they must not, however, band together with workers in other shops of the same or a different industry. Such "collective bargaining" in the Gary sense means an "employers' union," cowed by the immediate domination of the boss and powerless from lack of numbers—just what employers want.

The workers, however, seem little inclined to give up the fruits of years of growth in organization, and, forced on by economic pressure, are boldly though naively insisting on "recognition" by a class whose government has haughtily refused to recognize the one existing workers' government on the globe.

#### Some Pertinent Considerations

Not the least significant development in the situation is the injunction of Federal Judge A. B. Anderson restraining all strike activities of the United Mine Workers of America—an injunction which was immediately and cheerfully defied by the strike of near half a million coal miners. A. F. of L. officials are of course already dickering for a chance to crawl out with safety to themselves, but, regardless of the later outcome of the affair, the unanimous action of so large a body of laborers cannot fail to set up a precedent of the utmost importance to the growing class-consciousness of the masses.

Cool-headed workers in the American Federation of Labor who do not yet, perhaps, understand the class nature of capitalist society, and the exploitation upon which it is based, should ponder well the fact that the senate committee which investigated the situation had no recommendations except to exclude "alien agitators" and "educate" foreign born workers! Thus does the worker's condition improve under Capitalism.

Federation men should also figure out, if possible, just why troops are protecting property in the regions where striking miners are now struggling for a better wage, and for the principle of effective collective bargaining. Perhaps some information might be gleaned from Premier Clemenceau's recent address in France, in which, according to The Iron Trade Review of October 30, he calls for more "work" as "the world's only salvation." "As for the Bolsheviki," he said, "there can be no discussion between them and the public. It is a simple question of force."

However, President Stone of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers also wants more work for the workers. "The solution of the wage-problem," he said, "not only on railroads but in all other lines of business, lies in a reduction of the living costs, not in increased wages." Do Federation of Labor union men endorse this kind of petty bourgeois kind of philosophy?

The Iron Trade Review also describes a banquet of the steel barons, at which King Albert of Belgium, Prince Leopold, his son, and Eugene Schneider, president of the Iron and Steel Institute of Europe, were honored guests. "The moment Judge Gary appeared in the hall," according to the account, "every man in the room sprang to his feet with cheers and applause." Doesn't this hint at a class-consciousness among our American capitalists?

Following the ovation to Judge Gary, the meeting passed the following resolution:

"Whereas: Elbert H. Gary, president of the American Iron and Steel Institute, has rendered to the American people and the AMERICAN IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRIES a service of inestimable value by his course as a representative of the PUBLIC in the industrial conference at Washington; there, be it,

"Resolved, That the American Iron and Steel Institute, assembled in its semi-annual meeting, hereby records its unqualified approval of Mr. Gary's firm stand against any infringement of the rights of the individual in labor or in BUSINESS, rights fundamental to American INDUSTRIAL SUPREMACY as well as to American liberty. That it admires the vision and courage enabling him to discern and effectively oppose the radicalism injected into trade unionism by unscrupulous leaders, an element especially dangerous under present conditions, when world wide unrest has created an opportunity for agitation aimed at the perpetuity of institutions under which our country has achieved its strength and OUR INDUSTRIES attained their efficiency and PROSPERITY." (Emphasis mine).

Will someone please show how this accords with the often repeated statement that there are no classes in America, and that the interests of capital and labor are identical? But The Review of November 1 tells us that the President's Cabinet plans to call together a new Conference "representing the body of the public and not divided into groups"—a conference of about fifteen Americans. But, continues The Review, working conditions, wages, profit-sharing, etc., will give no trouble. "It is the questions of the rights and POWERS of organized labor that will put both the wisdom and the COURAGE of the Conference to the test."—"At the same time it (the public) realized that a civilization which may be broadly defined as 'capitalistic' is the only one that can supply it with life that a human being would find tolerable . . . in the PURSUIT of happiness." (Emphasis mine).

But perhaps the POWERS of labor will extend soon to the political realm, and begin to foster a civilization where not merely the PURSUIT but the ATTAINMENT of happiness will be possible.

## Journalism--From the Inside

THE true character of the public press has been pointed out by socialists time and again. In fact, any close observer with the common sense of an infant ostrich should have no difficulty in discovering the utter unreliability of capitalist newspapers. Yet not only do thousands continue to be gulled by all sorts of editorial nonsense and journalistic infamy, but many even say that those socialists who call attention to the facts are mere "liars and agitators."

Now, however, we have witnessed the Journalists' Convention, which met in Ann Arbor, Mich., Oct. 16-18

inclusive. This gathering of editors, reporters, foreign correspondents, teachers and students of journalism met to discuss various matters of professional interest—the relation of the press to business and the church, methods in advertising, the training of young journalists, newspaper salaries, etc.—but the most significant matter of all was discussed privately before a small group of students, and never a word of this got into the published reports. This matter concerned the fine art of FOOLING THE PEOPLE.

Paul Scott Mowrer, European war correspondent for the Chicago News, gave the talk—a talk on “Qualifications of a Foreign Newspaper Correspondent.”

“You can’t govern a modern country,” he said, in the course of his remarks, “without using the press.”

Regarding the printing of so-called “news,” he said, “The papers were always patriotic. If the government asked them to print anything they generally did. President Wilson felt very bad at some of the things the French papers said about him, not because the French papers said it but because he knew the French government wanted them to say it.”

“Do you mean the press MANUFACTURES public opinion?” he was asked.

“Yes, absolutely,” he answered, without hesitation.

“Would that condition carry over into peace times?”

“Oh, yes,” he replied, significantly.

One questioner asked if the press could not manu-

facture public opinion easier in Germany than in the United States, and Mr. Mowrer replied that he did not think there was much difference.

Regarding labor controversies, Mr. Mowrer stated that labor “was on the wrong side of the government,” and so generally did not get their side printed as well as the capitalists. “Of course,” he added, hastily, “I don’t mean that the labor men are right. I think they are wrong. But I’m simply giving the facts.”

In discussing the Peace Conference he made a very significant remark, as an apology for not remembering many of the technical details of a war correspondent’s business:

“At first,” he said, “I thought it was no use to remember the different duties of a war correspondent, and I didn’t try, because I thought this would be the last war, anyway, but since the Peace Conference I’ve changed my mind. I think the profession will be permanent.”

When one notes the increased appropriations for the army and navy, the proposal for compulsory military training, the continued war against Russia, the rumors about trouble with Japan, the commercial competition against Great Britain, and, above all, the newspaper campaign for intervention in Mexico, he will understand what that last remark means.

Such is the function of the press under “Democracy.” Long let the people rule—and be fooled.

M. M.

## Can the Workers Understand

THE assertion has many times been made that workingmen, as a class, lack the necessary intelligence to understand social matters; that they are totally incapable of extricating themselves from their present miserable condition, and that their case is hopeless unless some “Moses” leads them out.

This statement has been made by men who themselves know little or nothing about social questions and it has also been made by men who have given considerable attention to the subject.

No less a famous writer than Jack London, just prior to his death, wrote thus:

“Will the proletariat save itself? If it won’t it is unsavable. . . . I am not bitter; I am only sad, in that within itself the proletariat seems to perpetuate the seed of its proletarianess.”

By which London meant that the working class seems to perpetuate itself as a working class. And yet London saw clearly that if the workers are to be saved they must do it themselves. He did not entertain the illusion that some great man would take the workers by the collar and drag them into a condition of freedom.

The march of the human race from the lowest period of savagery to present day civilization is too majestic to be regarded as the product of a few individuals; it is the march of the mass. The more minutely we study this development, the more certain it is that we can safely put aside all idea that the progress of the race depends upon “great” men. The question that remains for us to answer is not: will some one save the working class?, but: will the working class free itself?

Notwithstanding that so studious a man as London was despondent about the seeming lack of mental

progress on the part of the workers, we, who adhere to what we term “Scientific Socialism,” are prepared to assert that not only **must** the working class save itself, but also that it **will** save itself.

We make no claim to being prophets, but we consider ourselves in a position to predict the outcome with reasonable certainty. In this respect we are in much the same position as an astronomer who sees certain heavenly bodies moving in certain directions at certain rates of speed and who predicts an eclipse at a certain time. We see certain “movements” or tendencies in the development of society and we predict certain results, the only difference being that we cannot state the exact time, but only approximate it, because social evolution does not take place at an even rate of speed as do planetary movements.

It is not the purpose of this article to deal in detail with the social movements referred to, but it may be briefly mentioned that the extreme concentration of wealth, the increasingly sharp division between the capitalist class and the working class, and the crescendo of working class unrest are among the chief factors and indications of coming change.

It is this unrest among the workers which is immediately responsible for the interest displayed at the present time in social matters. For many years it has been remarked by persons who have observed the working class in both Europe and America that the American workingman was the slowest to take an interest in political and economic questions. But this is gradually changing. Workingmen who formerly were indifferent are beginning to show a keen interest in these topics. This interest is no longer confined to a few isolated individuals but is becoming general.

Of course this does not mean that all workingmen

are now ready to take up the serious study of Socialism, but there are more such today than ever before in this country, and those who have not reached this point are showing other forms of mental activity which are preliminary to an interest in Socialism.

Workingmen see immense fortunes being piled up which by no stretch of the imagination can be the result of "thrift" and "brains" but which must be accounted for in some other way. This and various other conditions force them to think, just as a theft of chickens prompts a farmer to oil up his shotgun.

We now come to another phase of the question. Granted that the workers are mentally alert just at present, will anything come of it? Will their present mental activity be permanent enough to bring good results or is it a mere temporary condition? It is, of course logical that the recent historical events should have done much to stir up the mass of the people to extraordinary mental activity and we might be inclined to expect that when conditions become more settled they will sink back to their former mental apathy.

No doubt this will happen to a certain extent, nevertheless, there is good reason to expect that from now on the American workingman will be subject to continuous mental agitation. The conditions which have brought this about, and which we briefly mentioned above, have been developing for decades and the Great War is but one incident in a long series of events which mark the growth and decay of the present social system, Capitalism. These events have been working up to a climax and it is this approach to the culminating point which compels workingmen to think, even against their own will. No doubt most of them would rather be thinking about some more trivial matter, but the "high cost of living" forces itself upon their attention and gives them no peace.

Society is approaching a point where a profound change in the social structure is absolutely essential, if society is to continue evolving, and we know from past history that we cannot expect society to stand still. The ownership by a few men of the great industrial system, which is necessary to social life is a condition which must eventually give way to social ownership of industry.

Now if we accept such a change as inevitable, we may ask how it is to come about? Who will make the change? Past history has shown that when any radical change became necessary in social institutions, that change was initiated by the class of men who would benefit most by the change, that is, by the men who saw the necessity for and wanted such a change. It was never made by a class of men who were satisfied with the existing conditions and did not want a change.

There is one class of men in society today who do not want a change. That class is the class that own the mills, mines, factories, etc. They are the capitalist class. They want to retain their private ownership of these things, no matter how detrimental it may be to society as a whole, because their ownership has brought them such riches as were never possessed by men before. They will not make the change. They will resist it.

It is the working class that bears the heavy burden of present unbearable conditions. It is the working class that will benefit most by the change. If there is to be a change, and there is to be, it must be made by the workers. The workers, therefore, have a task to perform—a historic task. It is their peculiar historical position as the class that needs a change, which forces

upon them the task of making the change. Mankind has met and conquered its problems in the past. There is no good reason to suppose that it will fail at this juncture.

A word as to the actual mental capacity of the workingman. So-called educated people generally under-rate the mental ability of the worker. There are perhaps several reasons for this, not the least of which is the tremendous egotism of these "educated" persons. But any workingman of ordinary intelligence who will devote some time to consistent study of fundamental economic and sociological laws can show up the narrowness, the bigotry, the dense ignorance and the callous brutality of these "intellectuals."

Another cause for the supposed low intelligence of the workingman is that he has been denied an opportunity to know anything. Even when he tries to get knowledge he is met at every turn with the mental slop of the average newspaper editorial, the nonsense of magazine writers or the utter idiocy of the papers published by industrial concerns.

The editors and writers of such publications always speak in the interest of the capitalist class. They do not understand society themselves and they are not trying to find out about it. They are simply trying to influence the workers to accept their ideas. They do not encourage the worker to study, they discourage it; they want him to accept blindly what they teach. No wonder the worker shows up badly under such adverse conditions.

The worker is in a better position to understand society than the capitalist because he is more in contact with the actual conditions, but this must be supplemented by education. And he can only obtain such education through his own institutions. He must have his own lectures, his own papers, his own classes. He must do his own thinking.

The working class must not only save itself, but it must also make its own preparations. It must educate itself, so that with a clear understanding of the nature of the disease which is threatening its existence it may intelligently apply the remedy. It has been amply demonstrated that workingmen can understand whenever they apply themselves to study. There is no element lacking in the workingman's mind. His brain is as good as the "educated" man's, but he needs training. Perhaps his greatest deficiency is his slowness to realize the need of study. But he is waking up.

We may hope for better things.

L. B.

## The Abolition of Capital

THIS phrase, "the abolition of capital," frequently occurs in Socialist literature. The reader who thinks of capital as consisting of THINGS, such as machinery, materials of production, money, and so on, finds the phrase bewildering. He wonders how it is conceivable that production should go on if these things were done away with. But the student who fully understands the sociological principle outlined above comprehends at once that it is not proposed to do away with the THINGS, but with CERTAIN SOCIAL RELATIONS EXPRESSED THROUGH THEM. He understands that the "abolition of capital" no more involves the destruction of the physical things than the abolition of slavery involved the destruction of the slave himself. What is aimed at is the social relation which is established through the medium of the things commonly called capital.



# Sartor Resartus

By DENNIS E. BATT

IT is quite the fashion these days for the great and the near-great to take issue with the "Michigan group," or the "Proletarian crowd"—in fact a paper that does not contain some open or covert criticism of this publication is not complete. The latest to come into prominence in via this route is Gale's Magazine, a monthly periodical published in Mexico. Although supposedly a communist publication it seems unable to dispense with the name and personality of its editor.

In the November issue appears an article by Mary E. Marcy, who has something of a reputation based upon several rather clever little pamphlets. This article is a thinly veiled attack upon the educational methods which we have long advocated for the purpose of preparing the workers for the coming revolution. The attack takes the form of jabs at a certain "group which formerly called itself a part of the Left Wing." Of course, we are not supposed to know to whom this vague phrase refers—though it is perfectly clear to those familiar with the controversies within the movement. It is regrettable that our critic's "broad-mindedness" would not allow her to be a trifle more specific. As a criticism the article lacks merit, and withal shows a woeful misunderstanding of even the simpler propositions which we have advanced.

The very first mention of this "group" shows this lack of comprehension. We quote "Another group which formerly called itself a part of the Left Wing, seems to be so enamored with its own narrow, incorrect interpretation of political action that it seems about to cut off those branches of this form of activity which are counted most essential in the Left Wing programs of Europe. Of late several writers in this group have been denouncing mass action, under the mistaken notion that we can get nowhere by following the working class and in the evident belief that leaders alone will be able to guide the workers into the New Society. They forget that Lenine and Trotsky followed the workers straight into the revolution." In this paragraph our critic advances ideas common to those whom we have found it necessary to oppose. Likewise there is a similarity of method. They merely assert their objections; their followers it appears think them infallible and accept their denunciations as established fact. Forsooth, our interpretation of political action is "narrow" and "incorrect." But Mrs. Marcy not only fails to inform her readers of our interpretation of political action, but also neglects to show wherein it is incorrect. This is an unpardonable oversight in a criticism, but seems to be quite popular in certain quarters. So, in order that our readers and Mrs. Marcy may understand our views on this point, we will quote from the platform adopted by Michigan in 1919, and printed in our March issue. "The politics of the working class are comprised within the confines of the class struggle; and, conversely, the class struggle is necessarily waged on the political field. By this statement we do not imply that the political action of the working class is always confined within the bounds of parliamentary procedure; nor that the means employed in waging the class struggle must everywhere be the same. Political action we define, as any action taken by the exploited against their exploiters to obtain control of the powers of state; or by the masters to re-

tain control, using these powers to secure the means of life." This, then, is "narrow" and "incorrect;" still, no one has as yet demonstrated its incorrectness. We patiently challenge them to do so.

We are also charged with denouncing the activities of the so-called mass action groups throughout the country. In so doing it appears that we are guilty of sacrilege—or perhaps lese majeste. Mass action is something before which we must all fall down and worship in humble spirit. The fact of the matter is that no international socialist of repute can be found who would endorse the silly tactics that are being propagated in this country as "mass action." There must be something more definite in the minds of the great mass of the workers than mere enthusiasm created by oratory and ranting before they are in a position to emancipate themselves. The leading high priests of "mass action" still continue their mouthings, but have consciously ignored the demand contained in our August issue for an explanation of the term. Will it result in anything more than the "spontaneous upsurge of the proletariat" into mob action? If so, what? We have refused to be led astray by our old friend, "direct action" toggged out in a new suit of clothes. These things are but phases of political action, and alone, without the guiding star of socialist information, can but lead to disaster for the working class. The problem has not changed—ignorance is today, as in the past, the arch-enemy of the workers.

To quote further: "The group is not advocating the election of socialists on reform platforms, it evidently does intend to overthrow capitalism by one grand political coup. Since they disapprove of mass action they must mean by the election of socialists to office." Mrs. Marcy here betrays that her own idea of political action is so narrow that it includes only voting. A political coup is to her a voting coup. Because we do not place a blind faith in this vague thing called "mass action" we must be vote catchers!

After depreciatingly giving us credit for being "tolerably well informed," she says, "Some of the comrades in this group are discouraging strikes and telling the workers that all strikes are failures. Covertly, they are disparaging all forms of unionism." This shot goes wide of the mark indeed, and we venture to suggest that before writing a criticism our critics should make an effort to understand our position—if they are capable. We have a much closer connection with labor unions than most of the mass actionists throughout the country, and have for years been carrying on socialist education within them. Most of our active comrades are connected with some union. But because we refuse to fool ourselves—and the workers—with the idea that the struggle "on the job" alone is the only sure road to emancipation, therefore we are "discouraging strikes" and "covertly disparaging all forms of unionism." No one has yet attempted to refute the statements we have made in past issues in regard to the function and value of strikes. True, we have forgotten "that Lenine and Trotsky followed the Russian workers straight into the revolution." They haven't as yet found any evidence

that they did. What really happened was that the Bolsheviks succeeded in convincing the majority of the workers and peasants of Russia that the Bolshevik program was correct. And we are trying to convince the workers of America that our program is correct. This cannot be done by "following" them, but by teaching them.

Mrs. Marcy sums up her platform in the slogan "Abolition of the Wages System". Very explicit! As much so as mass action. Every party that has every pretended to represent the working class as a class has been content to use that slogan. But how are we going to do it? That is the question. She qualifies this by adding "By the working class; using political action, which includes mass action, and revolutionary unionism." To which we can subscribe. But just a little back we find Mrs. Marcy objecting to a "political coup." So where are we at? We must think that she has in mind revolutionary unionism. But one of the conditions for the existence of a revolutionary union, Mrs. Marcy, is a sufficient number of revolutionary unionists. And that is what we are trying to make. Not mere industrial unionists.

We are quite ready to acknowledge that general unrest and strikes are grist for the mill of the revolutionary movement; but it is our task to organize this unrest and give it intelligence. Unrest in itself will not accomplish the transition from capitalism to the co-operative commonwealth, or even transfer the control of society from the hands of the capitalists to that of the workers. We are a part of the working class and must work as a part of it, not as an intelligentsia which is leading the working class. Our task as workers who understand the nature of the struggle is to relay that understanding to the working class as a whole, and this can not be done by concealing the mistakes of our activities.

We can agree with Mrs. Marcy when she says: "If we are to have 'education' opposing strikes, mass action and industrial unionism, I am sure we can dispense with such 'education' to the advantage of the Class Struggle" but we must differ with her in the belief that "every one who calls himself a revolutionist is a strong advocate of education". In fact many of the people throughout the country who are loudest in

protestations of their revolutionary character are opposed to educational work. This, however, does not alter the fact that we must oppose the idea that mass action, strikes and industrial unionism are in themselves revolutionary.

The whole idea of the opposition is summed up by her as follows: "But the RANK and FILE, The HENERY DUBBS, if you please, are going to do what Necessity makes them do, and Necessity is heading them straight for revolution. The more they strike and suffer, and suffer and learn and raise Cain generally, the sooner will the capitalist system progress far enough in the process of disintegration to enable the workers to throw off the burden of wage slavery.

"Then will come the big job for wise heads. And if we are in close touch with the working class, if we know the job and the needs of the job and the MEN ON IT, if we are trusted by the workers and are OF the workers then we can more easily help bring order out of chaos and help build the New World." So, we are to gain the confidence and trust of the workers by concealing from them the short-comings of strikes and mass action, and when we have helped to increase their misery sufficiently, they, in their despair will turn to us, the wise heads, to lead them out of the wilderness. No, we don't think it will work. We prefer to plod along with our work of spreading an understanding of Marxism. The work is dull and the results are sometimes discouraging, but we intend to keep at it. Not because we want just a few who clearly understand but because we are confident that Mrs. Marcy is incorrect when she says "a social revolutionist cannot be right if his group numbers only ten." Numbers are no criterion altho they are very desirable. There was a time when the masses thought the earth was flat. We are confident that ultimately we will succeed in convincing the mass that we are correct. There is nothing spectacular about the carrying on of educational work and we don't expect to have with us those who thrive on the emotional jags that are the result of over-sentimental activities; but steady and persistent educational work will eventually win the day, of this WE ARE CONFIDENT. By the way, Mrs. Marcy, to what mass action political party do you belong?

## International Notes

By John Keracher

**Russia** About the middle of October the hopes of the counter-revolutionists ran high. "Petrograd is about to fall" . . . "Food supplies are on hand to feed the starving population" . . . "If the city is not captured soon thousands will die of starvation and disease"—so said the leading papers of Christendom. But the women and children are being left to starve, due to the continued blockade of Christian Capitalism, for the armies of democracy and civilization and human progress have not only failed to reach the "stricken city," but evidently have been badly defeated and driven back by the Red army defending Petrograd.

The main reason for the advance of General Yudenitch, in fact for the whole forward movement and the attempt to capture Petrograd, was a desperate effort to defeat the plans for a general peace in the Baltic

states. Such a peace was to be negotiated between the Bolsheviks and the Esthonians, Letts and Lithuanians on or about October 25th. The Soviet policy of self-determination is a genuine one, yet the Bourgeoisie in the countries in question, however much they desired independence, feared to make peace with Red Russia. They preferred to intrigue with the Allies for support for their feeble armies so as to continue to oppose the Soviet forces, hoping to see bourgeois government re-established.

The czaristic attitude of the anti-Red generals, Kolchak, Denikine and Yudenitch, has thoroughly disillusioned them as to the stand of these gentlemen on the question of Baltic independence. Added to this was the sudden onslaught of the Baltic barons under the leadership of the junker general Von der Goltz. Finland, too, has come to realize that these feudalistic mil-

itarists are out to revive the regime of the czars, for these saviors of Russia have steadfastly refused to recognize the independence of the Finnish republic. This failure to recognize the Finns counted against Yudenitch in his drive on Petrograd. In dire need of assistance, he called upon the Finns to attack the city from the north while he assailed it from the south, promising recognition in return for such assistance. But the offer came too late; the Finns refused to assist him.

Poland, too, is up against a hard proposition. They have been engaged in what looks like an endless war against the Bolsheviki, with the result, according to reports, that the young republic faces bankruptcy. Not powerful enough to conquer Russia, they were at best aiding Denikine, who is endeavoring to re-establish a regime under which Poland suffered for centuries. "They have no money, and they have realized that they will not be allowed to keep the territory which they have been so obligingly capturing for their old enemies, the reactionaries of Russia," says the Manchester Guardian. This is why the Polish advance in the direction of Kiev has suddenly stopped, and Denikine finds himself in possession of more territory than his forces can hold.

The Polish government is proposing a conference with the Baltic States and Finland, to be held at Warsaw, for the purpose of coming to an understanding on policy if not an actual alliance, and to consider peace with the Soviet government. Will Allied intrigue succeed in preventing them from arriving at a settlement with Russia?

Meantime, Denikine has met with a severe check in the south and is on the defensive, and in some instances forced to retreat. Only through considerable assistance from the Allies will he be able again to assume the offensive. Will he get it?

Kolchak has been making a steady rear-ward movement for some time, due as much to Bolshevik uprisings in Siberia as to the pressure of the Red armies which have captured his capital and freed the greater portion of Siberia of the reactionaries.

On the whole the Soviet government is in a stronger position than ever before. If the blockade could be broken and the Allied governments forced to acknowledge the supremacy of the Soviet power, the victory of the proletariat dictatorship would be permanent.

**Finland** In our August issue we mentioned that General Mannerheim, the famous White Guard butcher of Finland, was grooming himself for the presidency. He then announced that he would accept the nomination only if the election were conducted through a special assembly, independent of the Landtag. His scheme evidently did not work, for we now learn that a president has been elected by the Diet. Out of a total of two hundred votes, Mannerheim received only fifty. A progressive, Judge Stolbert, being elected, with the eighty "socialist" members voting for him. The newly elected president, like a true "progressive," endeavored to compromise with the militarists, many of whom make up his governmental support, by offering the post of commander-in-chief to the reactionary Mannerheim. The post was refused because it did not carry with it complete control of the army, and permission to launch an offensive against Petrograd.

Finland's former military dictator is a typical autocrat, clumsy and domineering; incidentally, he is a

friend of British imperialism, Russian imperialism or any other imperialism that he can conveniently cooperate with. He sought and secured the assistance of the Junkers in crushing the workers government in butchering the Red Guard of Finland. After the defeat of his friend the Kaiser, he hastened to England to square himself with the British imperialists and to secure their support for Finnish imperialism. In this he was successful, and for this reason the Finnish government has been prevented from accepting the peace proposals of the Soviets. At the time the peace terms were under discussion in the Diet, the report of the fall of Petrograd was issued from Helsingfors and spread like wild-fire. This report, together with a note from the Allies threatening Finland with an economic blockade, had the desired effect. It is reported that while the socialist representatives voted en bloc for peace with Russia the issue was lost, and no reply has been made to the peace overtures of the Soviet government.

The British policy of "ruling the waves" makes the blockade threat a real terror. The London Times and the sword-rattling press in general has been calling loudly for a Finnish advance on Petrograd. Although refusing to accept the Soviet peace terms, the Finnish government has thus far abstained from an actual advance upon Russia—much to the disgust of Generals Yudenitch, Denikine and Mannerheim, the London Times and all other enemies of the working class.

The British policy of aiding all and sundry who could be induced to attack the Bolsheviki has led to some queer situations. The support first of the "independent" Baltic republics, and upon failing to meet with success in that direction, the support of the reactionary Yudenitch, who has overrun and squatted an army of cut-throats and adventurers upon these States, has created a state of thorough confusion in the Baltic district—all of which has worked out rather to the advantage of the Bolsheviki.

**England** Proletarian progress is the outstanding feature of the political situation in Great Britain. The outcome of the railroad strike, although not a brilliant victory for the workers from the standpoint of actual gains, was far from being a defeat. The Government was compelled to resort to a policy of yielding and compromise in order to hold power. This leaves the organized forces of labor in a stronger position to attack the political entrenchments of capitalism than ever before.

A reflection of the general economic condition and the growing consciousness of labor may be seen in the recent municipal election returns, the labor forces making great gains. In London out of 30 seats in the Council 15 were captured by Labor representatives. No doubt most of those elected were of the ordinary type of social reformers, still it is an indication that the workers are breaking away from the old-line politicians and electing men from their own ranks.

The government is continually under fire from the socialist and radical publications for its attitude toward Russia, while nationalization of the mines seems to be the latest Labor stunt. A deputation of Labor representatives recently called upon the Government to urge the nationalization of the mines, but was met with a flat refusal. This deputation was introduced by the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, acting under instructions from the meeting of the Congress held recently in Glasgow.

This body also instructed a deputation to approach the Government to learn just what policy it intends to pursue on the question of conscription and also its policy toward Russia and the economic blockade. It is understood that if the answers to any of these questions prove unsatisfactory to the Parliamentary Committee, a special Trades Union Congress is to be called to deal with these questions.

Meantime, the Government leaders, through the press, is calling loudly for greater production as a "solution" for the labor problem. Like their prototypes in this country, it is their own problem which they are trying to solve, and not labor's. To meet the burden of armaments and war indebtedness it is necessary to wring a greater surplus out of the workers. The aim is to speed-up and force an increased production from the individual worker, and by thus lowering the cost of production, to be in a better position in the fierce battle of competition in the world's market. The "war after the war" is on, and in the respective industrial armies the workers are unconscious conscripts, forced by economic necessity to take their place in the trenches of modern industry.

At the Cutler's Feast at Sheffield, Mr. Lloyd-George made "increased production" the burden of an impassioned plea. "The burden the country (meaning the capitalists) is faced with is a heavier burden than ever—shorter hours, increased wages, better standards of living for men and women." Truly a sad state of af-

fairs for David and his capitalistic Jonathans; it is a serious problem indeed, for the workers are combining to cut into the profits of capitalism. "Can we solve it?" he asked, and, amid cheers, replied, "We can solve it only in one way, and that is by increased production!" Continuing, this friend of the common people said: "Another question where the Government can assist is in the development of power in this country. The best cure for low wages is more motive power—more from the manufacturers' point of view. The only offset against the increasing cost of labor is more intensive use of motive power. This is the solution of the workmen's problem and also that of the employer. Wherever you find four men doing the work of one it means low wages."

So more power is wanted "to offset the increasing cost of labor"; in other words the commodity Motive Power is cheaper than human Labor Power. It is indeed criminal that four men should be doing the work of one, but, under capitalism, what is to become of the other three? Is there not sufficient unemployment in England now? This may be the solution of the employers' problem (but only temporarily at best) but it certainly does not help the worker. The solution of their problem lies in POWER also—not motive power, nor "economic power"—but POLITICAL POWER. Therein lies the solution of their problem; the conquest of the State powers to be used in expropriating the exploiters of labor.

# Revolutionary Political Action

## The Road to Socialism

(Seventh Installment)

### Dictatorship and the State

The teachings of Marx and Engels as to the policy for the workers to pursue, have been the subject of much controversy. Whether in Russia or in America all sections of the working class movement affirm that they are Marxians. The problems of the class struggle which rivet the attention of socialists all over the world were dealt with in such a masterly manner by the founders of modern Socialism that their writings are considered an invaluable guide for the working class. In the past the reform and pseudo-socialist bodies repudiated Marx, but now they are claiming Marx as the promoter of their ideas. It is an indication of the importance of Marx and Engels' teachings at the present time.

We have shown that the material conditions of society form the basis upon which all of the social institutions rest. The development in the material conditions cause changes in the institutions which exist and which eventually have to be adapted to suit the new material foundation of society. The political forms and methods which society has used in its development have reflected the changes in methods of wealth production and the resulting property distinctions. Some workers argue that as the economic conditions are basic we must therefore ignore the political institutions. This is a misrepresentation of historical materialism as stated by Marx and Engels. All through the history of political society, the political organs of society have

been the lever whereby different sections and classes have risen to power. The material conditions bring a new class into prominence and they establish themselves as masters by control of the political machinery arising from the conditions of the time. The first step in the English Revolution was the control of Parliament by the Cromwellians; in France in 1789 the capture of the States General; in America by the election of a revolutionary Continental Congress and in other countries it has been the same.

The state is the name given to the machinery of government and this has changed in accordance with the material conditions. "At a certain stage of economic development, which was of necessity accompanied by a division of society into classes, the state became the inevitable result of this division." Thus writes Engels in the Origin of the Family. He points out that the state "is by no means a power forced upon society from the outside." The growing social division of labor of agriculture, handicraft and commerce divided society into classes. This class division gave rise to a public power to keep "order" and more and more to coerce the subject classes in favor of the privileged owners of wealth. "The antique State was therefore the state of the slave owners for the purpose of holding the slaves in check. The feudal was the organ of nobility for the oppression of the serfs and dependent farmers. The modern representative state is the tool of the capitalist exploiters of wage labor."

What will happen to the state when the working class become socialists and use the political machinery to transform the privately owned wealth of society to

the common ownership of the whole people? Engels states:

"As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule and the individual struggle for existence, based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed and a special repressive force, a State, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—that is, at the same time its last independent act as State. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The State is not 'abolished.' **It dies out.**"

Engels here shows clearly that the State is necessary until classes are abolished. In the meantime the working class will have need of the powers of the State to repress possible counter-revolutions.

Lenin has defined the State as follows (*The Soviet World* Feb. 15, 1919):

"The machinery of the State is the usual governmental apparatus consisting of a standing army, police, and an officialdom practically unchanging, privileged and raised above the masses of the people.

"But the revolutionary epoch beginning with the end of the nineteenth century has generated the highest type of democratic government which in the language of Engels 'ceased to be the state in the intrinsic sense of the word. It is government of the type of the Paris Commune replacing the army and the police separated from the people by the direct army of the people itself.'"

He tells us "it was precisely this type of government that the Russian Revolution of 1905 and 1917 began to build up."

"Marxism differs from Anarchism in the respect that it recognizes the necessity of government and governmental power in a revolutionary period in general and the epoch of transition." (Same article).

Lenin has elsewhere (*The State and Revolution*) pointed out that the workers in getting control will "destroy" the State. If by the State Lenin means the special characteristics of a bourgeois State power then we agree. But Engels is careful to show that the State machinery is not destroyed by a special act but that in abolishing class distinctions and class antagonisms, the instrument of class rule is also abolished. Engels says (*Socialism Utopian and Scientific*—page 127):

"The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into **State property.**

"But in doing this it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the State as State."

It is clear that the whole State machinery "dies out" after the period of dictatorship and when there are no longer classes in society.

In the introduction to "*The Civil War in France*" (1891) Engels says of the State, "At the very best it is an inheritance of evil, bound to be transmitted to the proletariat when it has become victorious in its struggle for class supremacy and the worst features of which it will have to lop off at once, until a new race, grown up under new, free social conditions, will be in

a position to shake off from itself this State rubbish in its entirety."

That definitely points out that the workers will have to use State powers to advance their interests, though it is plain: "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready made State machinery and wield it for its own purposes." (*Marx Civil War in France*).

What did the Commune do? Engels tells us in his introduction: "In the first place it filled all positions of administration, justice and instruction, through elections by universal suffrage, the elected being at all times subject to recall by their constituents, and secondly, it paid for all services, high or low, only the same pay that other workers received.

"Thus a check was put to all place hunting and career making under which delegates to the representative bodies were placed, even without the imperative mandate under which delegates to the representative bodies were placed quite superfluously.

"This disruption of the power formerly possessed by the State and its replacement by a new power that was truly democratic, is described in detail in the third chapter of the 'Civil War.'"

How long the producers will have need of a State power depends upon the conditions of the time. Marx says (*Criticism of the Gotha Program*), "between the Capitalist and the Communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. To this there corresponds also a political transition period, in which the State can be nothing else than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

In countries relatively backward economically and unprepared for immediate introduction of Socialism the dictatorship tends to be prolonged for some years. In modern capitalist countries where the socialist working class get control the period of dictatorship will be short. In Russia the peculiar circumstances drove the revolutionists to lines of action not necessary elsewhere. Lenin tells us for instance: "It is necessary to point out the question of depriving the exploiting class of its suffrage rights is a purely **Russian question**, not one that is vitally necessary to a dictatorship of the proletariat." (*The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Betrayer Kautsky*.)

"The dictatorship of the toilers and producers is not an aim of itself but a means of building up a social system under which useful work and equal rights would be provided for all citizens, irrespective of the class to which they had formerly belonged." (*Bolshevist Envoy Litvinoff to President Wilson*).

The Paris Commune was the first dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx gives up a description of it. (*Civil War in France*, Page 74).

"The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of the members were naturally workingmen, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing to be the agent of the central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at workmen's wages. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of the State

disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves. Public function ceased to be the private property of the tools of the central Government.

"Not only municipal administration, but the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the State was laid into the hands of the Commune."

And he further states:

"While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society. Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business.

JOHN O'LONDON.

### Political Action and the General Strike

THE growing scope of the Proletarian has been shown by an article in Gale's magazine of Mexico City of October in which the editor calls the attention of his readers to the articles on "Revolutionary Political Action," which are appearing in these pages.

He sets out to criticize our position and after stating that the "I. W. W." is being estimated at its proper value as the most practicable plan of industrial organization presented to the working class," he says:

"O'London is partly right but he attaches too little importance to industrial unionism. True, a general strike unless maintained for a long time, would not exhaust nor place at the disposal of the workers the supplies of the capitalists. However, the paralysis of all means of transportation and communication that a genuine strike would cause, would wring almost anything from the capitalists, supplies or no supplies. The general strike is an invincible force if it is really general."

The general strike idea has been dealt with at length in the articles referred to, but it may be well to point out to Mr. Gale that it is not an invincible force and even his ideal organization, the I. W. W. is throwing the general strike philosophy overboard. In the *Industrial Worker* of September 20th, 1919, they state:

"It must be apparent to anyone who has given any thought to the matter that a social general strike as the culminating point in the revolution will fail if it ever happens. \* \* \* \* The workers must organize, not so much for a strike, as for carrying on production and distribution, after capitalism has been overthrown."

"The trouble, perhaps, with those who formulated the general strike theory, is that they could not free themselves from the dogma that capitalism was to be overthrown by establishing a tremendous picket line around the industries. They rejected craft-unionism but couldn't lose its methods."

The idea of Mr. Gale that a general strike must be continued for a long time, in order to paralyze industry and transportation, overlooks the fact, as shown by Seattle and elsewhere, that the longer the strike lasts, the nearer the workers are to being paralyzed. He ignores the important truth that socialists do not want to paralyze industry, but to continue it under the protection of their own political power. For a propertyless class to cease work, to face starvation, to leave the means of production in the hands of the capitalist class, is certainly not the road to emancipation.

Our critic's objection to our view of political action is largely based upon his misunderstanding of what the use of parliament means. He tells us that "in the past there has been too much reliance by radicals on the slender reed of parliamentarism. The results have been

highly disastrous and disappointing." It would be interesting to know how much Mr. Gale expected from the use of parliament by a blind working class sending capitalist, and "labor" and pseudo socialist politicians to parliaments? That the workers are not socialists and therefore could never use parliament as an instrument for helping socialist propaganda seems to be unknown to Mr. Gale.

His conception of parliamentarism seems to be the old idea of going there as reformers, to get legislation passed in the interests of the workers, and to expect that something can be done through parliament to improve the condition of the working class within the present system. He does not know that socialists look upon parliament, in modern capitalist countries, as the central seat of political power; as the evolved institution through which one class expresses its domination over another. Socialists seek to educate and organize the workers; to go to parliament as the mouthpiece of the socialist workers alone; to expect no beneficial legislation; to fight while in the minority, exposing all the trickery and fraud of capitalist government; to spread propaganda to the workers outside; to make use of the civilized methods of conducting class warfare while they can; and eventually, out of the ripening minds and growing organization of the working class, to control the powers of state and use them for the act of transformation of society from a capitalist into a socialist system. The curious interpretations of the Russian revolution find another victim in Mr. Gale. He states that "Russia has shown us that the communist society must be a society composed of industrial groups, and that concurrent with its development bourgeois society will disappear. Such a society can, if necessary, evolve industrial unions, coincident with its own evolution, as was done and is being done even now in Russia." Communist society, Mr. Gale, will not be a society of industrial groups, but a society of wealth producers, having an equal social status, not divided by industrial lines, each having the same interests, no matter what their occupation is, or in what industry they may for the time being be engaged. The idea that the new society would evolve industrial unions is a ludicrous one. When wealth is commonly owned and class distinctions disappear, the necessity for unions, craft or industrial, will disappear. The conditions making union organizations necessary will cease to exist, and, therefore, the unions will die out. Gale's final point that the strike is and always will be labor's mightiest weapons is unsupported by evidence and disproved by history. Labor's mightiest weapon cannot be one which always leaves them within the present system and has no means of carrying them out of it.

If the previous articles on Revolutionary Political Action are carefully read and digested, they will leave little room for the objections which Mr. Gale and others constantly bring against us.

JOHN O'LONDON.

### Gold Production

H. E. C., Taunton, Mass., asks: "How much has the cost of producing gold been reduced in the last four or five years? How does the present cost of production of gold compare with its former cost of production?"

We have been unable to get definite figures on gold production. Perhaps some of our readers can supply them.

# The Socialist Forum

A CORRESPONDENT in Chicago wants to know the difference between wealth and capital, and the phrase, "the abolition of capital," so frequently used by socialists. Wealth and Capital denote special social relations or categories. Wealth, which in certain simpler forms of social organization, consists in the ownership of use-values, under the capitalist system consists in the ownership of exchange-values. Capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons, established through the medium of things. Robinson Crusoe's spade, the Indian's bow and arrow, and all similar illustrations given by the "orthodox" economists, do not constitute capital any more than an infant's spoon is capital. They do not serve as the medium of the social relation between wage-worker and capitalist which characterizes the capitalist system of production. The essential feature of capitalist society is the production of wealth in the commodity form; that is to say, in the form of objects that, instead of being consumed by the producer, are intended to be exchanged or sold at a profit. Capital, therefore, is wealth set aside for the production of other wealth with a view to its exchange at a profit. Marx, in the first volume of "Capital" (chapter XXXIII), explains it by stating how "Wakefield discovered that in the colonies, property in money, means of subsistence, machines, and other means of production, does not as yet stamp a man as a capitalist if there be wanting the correlative—the wage-workers, the other man who is compelled to sell himself of his own free will. He discovered that capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons, established by the instrumentality of things. A Negro is a Negro. In certain circumstances he becomes a slave. A mule is a machine for spinning cotton. Only under certain circumstances does it become capital. Outside these circumstances, it is no more capital than gold is intrinsically money, or sugar is the price of sugar. Capital is a social relation of production."

## Wages and Prices

S| W., of St. Louis asks the following: What is the use of the workers fighting for more wages when prices are immediately increased as soon as they succeed in getting an increase in wages?

S. W. must have been in a pessimistic mood and felt like throwing up the sponge. The popular illusion that prices are raised when wages are increased is incorrect and is due to a lack of knowledge of what determines values and prices. Statistics issued by the United States Labor Bureau show that the prices of all other commodities rise, as a rule, before the price of the commodity labor power. This is due in a large measure to the fact that labor power is a perishable commodity and cannot be stored from day to day, also there is generally a greater supply of this commodity than the demand, as the production of it cannot be curtailed upon short notice. This can be done and is done with all other commodities and tends to equalize supply and demand which tends to keep prices at or about their value. The workers being unable to stop producing labor power, the price (wages) have a tendency to be less than its value. If the workers did not continually

struggle for higher wages, their standard of living would be reduced at a greater rate than at present.

In spite of the struggle of the workers real and relative wages are gradually growing smaller, but their struggle for higher wages acts as a brake upon the downward tendency. In this effort to maintain his standard of living the worker is trained for the final struggle and, as Marx says in "Value, Price and Profit," "By cowardly giving way in their every-day conflict with Capital they would certainly disqualify themselves for initiating any larger movement."

## The Class Struggle

J. R. S., of Salt Lake City, asks if socialism would not make greater advances if the class struggle theory were dropped.

Defenders of Capitalism lay great stress upon the assumption that socialists invented the class struggle, but this is not true. In his "Researches of Philosophies of Property" published in Berlin in 1782, J. B. Busset de Warville says, "Society has been divided into classes, the first consisting of citizens with property, living in idleness; the second and more numerous class composed of the mass of the people to whom the right to exist has been sold dear, and who are degraded and condemned to perpetual toil." Wm. Godwin in his "Inquiry Concerning Political Justice," (London, 1796), says, "The situation has become such that for the poor man the state of society is a state of war. He considers society not as a body whose object is to maintain personal rights and to procure to each individual the means of providing for his own support, but as a body that protects the advantageous position of one class of persons while holding others in a state of poverty and dependence."

These writers were not socialists and their books were published more than fifty years before the appearance of the Communist Manifesto, which contains the famous statement that "the history of all hitherto existing society is a history of class struggles." Other instances could be cited dating as far as back as the early part of the fourteenth century, but these are sufficient to show that the class nature of society was recognized by writers and thinkers previous to the appearance of Scientific Socialism. It remained for Marx and Engels to put the class struggle into its proper historic setting and to show that history was not merely a collection of deeds of kings and generals, but was a history of classes struggling for power.

In present-day society two classes exist with interests diametrically opposed, and stand in constant opposition to each other. Sometimes the struggle is in the open, at other times it is hidden; a struggle which can only end in the victory of the oppressed class, and with the final abolition of all classes the struggle itself will disappear. If J. R. S. does not like the class struggle, we would suggest that he join with us, study the social system as it exists, and with the knowledge acquired, aid in the task of doing away with the causes of the class struggle and usher in a social order where there will be neither classes nor class struggles.

## Another Engels Letter

The letter printed below has been especially translated for The Proletarian from the Italian and appears in a collection of the works of Marx and Engels published by "Avanti" of Milan.—(Ed.)

A young student addressed to Engels the following questions

1. How is it that, after the consanguinous family ceased to exist, marriage between brothers and sisters was still permitted by the Greeks, as Cornelius Nepes attests?

2. How was the fundamental principle of historical materialism understood by Marx and Engels themselves; are the production and reproduction of actual life alone the determining factors, or are they only the basis of all the other conditions acting by themselves?

Frederick Engels replied:

London, Sept. 21, 1890.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 3rd inst. was forwarded to me at Folkstone; but not having with me the book I needed, I could not reply. Having returned on the 12th of the same month, I found such an amount of pressing work that only today am I able to write a few lines. Please excuse my delay.

To your first question: First of all you can see on page 19 of my "Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State," the Punuluan family is represented as developing so slowly that even in this century in the royal family there have been marriages between brothers and sisters. In antiquity we find examples of marriages between brothers and sisters, for instance, the Ptolemies. We must make a distinction between brothers and sisters on the mother's side and brothers and sisters on the father's side. The Greek Adelphos (brother) and Adelphon (sister) are both derived from Delphos (mother), indicating thus the origin of brother and sister on the mother's side. And from the period of the Matriarchate there has been preserved for a long time the feeling that the children of one mother but of different fathers are more closely related than the children of one father but by different mothers. The punuluan form of the family excludes only marriages among the first, not among the second, since the latter, while the Matriarchate lasted, were not even considered relatives. Cases of matrimony between brothers and sisters in ancient Greece are limited to those in which the contracting parties are descended from different mothers, or to those of whom the parental relationship was unknown, and hence the marriage was not forbidden. This, therefore, is not absolutely in contrast to the Punuluan custom. You have noticed, then, that between the Punuluan period and Greek monogamy there is a jump from the Matriarchate to the Patriarchate, which changes things considerably.

According to the "Greek Antiquities" of Washmuth, one finds in the heroic period of Greece "no trace of scruples due to a too close relationship of the contracting parties independently of the relationship between the parents and children." (P. 156). "Marriage with a carnal sister was not at all scandalous in Crete." (Ibid, p. 170). This last affirmation is based on Strabone (x) but at the present moment I cannot find this passage because of the faulty deviation in chapters. Under the expression "carnal sister" I understand, until proof to the contrary is furnished, a sister on the part of the father.

To the second question:

I have interpreted your first main phrase in the following way:

According to the Materialistic Conception of History, the factor which is in the last instance decisive in history is the production and reproduction of actual life. More than this neither Marx nor myself ever claimed. If now someone has distorted the meaning in such a way that the economic factor is the only decisive one, this man has changed the above proposition into an abstract, absurd phrase which says nothing. The economic situation is the base, but the different parts of the structure—the political forms of the class struggle and its results, the constitutions established by the victorious class after the battle is won, forms of law and even the reflection of all these real struggles in the brains of the participants, political theories, juridical, philosophical, religious opinions, and their further development into dogmatic systems—all this exercises also its influence on the development of the historical struggles and in certain cases determines their form. It is under the mutual influence of all these factors that, rejecting the infinitesimal number of accidental occurrences (that is, things and happenings whose intimate sense

is so far removed and so of so little probability that we can consider non-existent, and can ignore them), that the economical movement is ultimately carried out. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history would be easier than the solution of any simple equation. We ourselves make our history, but, primarily, under pre-suppositions and conditions which are very well determined. But even the political tradition, nay, even the tradition which man creates in his head, plays an important part even if not the decisive one. The Prussian state has itself been born and developed because of certain historical reasons, and, in the last instance, economic reasons. But it is very difficult to determine without pedantry that, among the many small states of northern Germany, precisely Brandenburg has been destined by economic necessity and not also by other factors, (above all its complications with Poland, after the Prussian conquest and hence, also, with international politics—which, besides, has also been decisive in the formation of the power of the Austrian ruling family), to become that great power in which are personified the economic, linguistic, and—after the Reformation—also the religious difference between the north and the south. It would be mighty difficult for one who does not want to make himself ridiculous to explain from the economic point of view the existence of each small German state of the past and present, or even the origin of the phonetic differentiation of High German which extended the geographic division formed already by the Sudettl mountains as far as the Faunus.

In the second place history forms itself in such a way that the ultimate result springs always from the conflicts of many individual wills, each of which in its turn is produced by a quantity of special conditions of life; there are thus innumerable forces which cross each other, an infinite group of parallelograms of forces, from which is derived one resultant—the historical event—which in its turn again can be considered as the product of an active power, as a whole, unconsciously and involuntarily; because that which each individual wishes, is prevented by every other, and that which results from it is a thing that no one has wished. In this way history runs its course like a natural process, and is substantially exposed to the same laws of motion. But, because of the fact that the individual wills—each of which wishes that to which it is impelled by its own physical constitution or exterior circumstances, i. e., in the last analysis, all economic circumstances (either its own personal circumstances or the general conditions of society)—do not reach that which they seek but are fused in one general media in a common resultant, by this fact one cannot conclude that they are equal to zero. On the contrary, each contributes to produce the resultant, and is contained in it.

I would furthermore ask you to study the theory from its original sources and not from second-hand works; it is really much easier. One can say that Marx has written nothing in which some part of the theory is not found. An excellent example of its application in a specific way is the "Eighteenth Brumaire of L. Bonaparte." Also in "Capital III" are many illustrations. And also permit me to recommend to you my writings, Herr E. Duhring's "Unwanzung der Wissenschaft" and "Feuerbach und der Ausgang der Klassischen deutschen Philosophie," in which I have given the most ample illustrations of Historical Materialism which to my knowledge exists. That the young people give to the economic factor more importance than belongs to it is in part the fault of Marx and myself. Facing our adversaries we had to lay especial stress on the essential principle denied by them, and, besides, we had not always the time, place, nor occasion to assign to the other factors, which participate in producing the reciprocal effect, the part which belongs to them. But scarcely has one come to the representation of a particular historical period, that is, to a practical application of the theory, when things changed their aspect, and such an error was no longer permissible. It happens too often that one believes he has perfectly understood a new theory, and is able to manage it without any aid, when he has scarcely learned the first principles, and not even those correctly. This reproof I cannot spare to some of our new Marxists; and in truth it has been written by the wearer of the marvelous robe himself. (That is, by Marx—Editor.)

To the first question: Yesterday (I am writing these words on the 22nd of September), I also found in Schomann, "Greek Antiquities," Berlin, 1855, Vol. I., p. 52, the following words, which confirm definitely the explanation given above by me. "It is noteworthy that in later Greece marriages between brothers and sisters of different mothers were not considered incest."

I hope that you will not be dismayed by the terrible parentheses which for the sake of brevity overflow from my pen. And I subscribe myself, your devoted  
F. ENGELS.