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The Socialist

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of Your Class

THE WORKINGMANS PAPER
A CARTOON WEEKLY

To Organize the Slaves of Capital To Vote Their Own Emancipation

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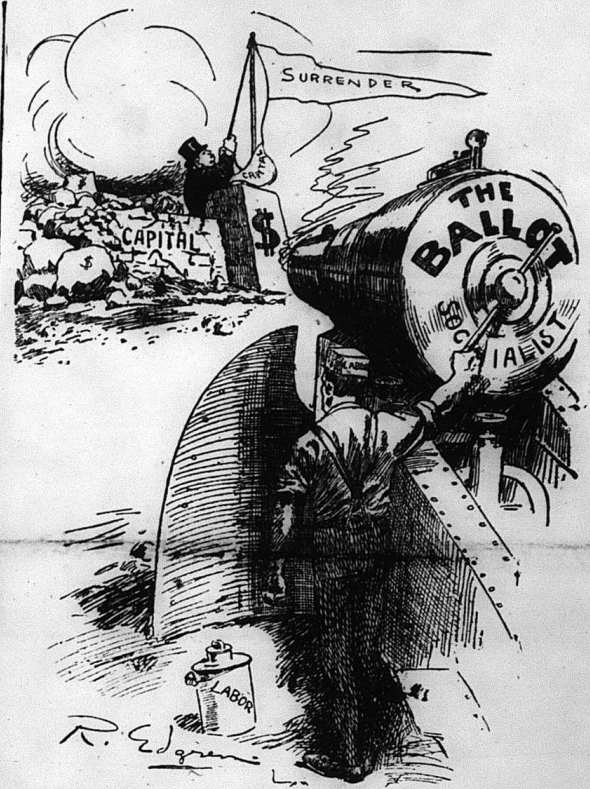
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USE THE MODERN WEAPON, BOYS!



Socialist Organization

It is a political organization, it is the organization of the working class to capture the government. Socialism as a political party would be impossible without the ballot. It is an organization of voters. In the words long carried at our masthead, we aim "To organize the Slaves of Capital to vote their own emancipation."

Some people think the working class incapable of organizing. The Labor Unions give the lie to such fears. The men who organized and sustained the American Federation of Labor and the American Labor Union are all working men. The United Mine Workers and the Western Federation of Miners do not consist of Capitalists or Capitalist lackeys. These are among the most compact and powerful organizations on earth. They have been able to cope with such enormous combinations of Capital as the U. S. Steel Corporation and the Colorado Fuel & Iron Co. With all the powers of government and of accumulated wealth behind them, able to command the military and to purchase the intellectual, the corporations have had the "right of their lives" to defeat the great industrial organizations built up by unaided workmen.

So we need have no fear that working men cannot organize. As they have organized on the economic field, they are organizing on the political field.

But such organization does not come

of itself. It requires work and drill. Only practice makes perfect. The Labor Unions have been practicing for years. They know how to conduct business meetings. They have learned how to debate. They know how to submit to the will of the majority. They have learned how to marshal their forces, how to communicate with one another, how to keep their own counsel, how to "stand pat."

And they are democratic in their management. Nothing proves this so well as the fact that corrupt leaders and spies cannot ruin the Unions. In spite of all the traitors in their ranks, the workers have been so well organized in the Labor Unions that they have gone on fighting capital and winning many a battle. They could not do this, if they were systematically sold out. The truth is, they are too democratic for leaders to mislead them. The rank and file, by means of the Referendum always win out in the long run.

Now the thing for the working class to learn is just this capacity for organization on the political field which "Organized Labor" has learned on the economic field. The workers must learn to act as one man in politics. Because the Unions contain a vast number of men already trained in methods of organization, it is of the very highest strategic importance that these Union men be won over to the Socialist organization *right now*.

The amount of ignorance among Socialists of the commonest rules of order, their incapacity to conduct business in a meeting or to ascertain the will of the majority, or to work together

on committees, would not be believed by those who have not seen it all in our Locals.

For instance, many Locals cast a Referendum vote for the entire membership at a meeting attended by a bare quorum. In this way ten members present have been known, by a vote of 6 to 4, to cast the whole 40 votes of the Local for a certain measure.

In some of our Locals not a single comrade knows how to put a motion. One of the commonest practices is to put a motion without allowing discussion. In this way one self-assertive man may run and ruin the Socialist organization in a community.

On the other hand, nothing is commoner than to find a comrade refusing to work if he is outvoted, he kicks, he sulks, he quits. Many strong individuals have been drawn into this new movement, too independent to work with others, men who are practically anarchists, who are incapable of social organization. These men will have to step down or out or down and out.

But all these difficulties belong to our newness and rawness. When the workmen engaged in politics have had a few more years' experience in organization, when especially, they have won over their brothers in the Union ranks, then we shall witness in the U. S. as we now witness in Germany, a political organization of working men, a Socialist Party, which will act more nearly like one living body composed of many members, controlled by a common intelligence, than any other mass of men in the world.

Whatever be the defects in details of organization, there are three general principles which are essential, without which no political party can maintain itself, and with which no political party can be disorganized.

These three essentials are:

First—Interests in Common.

Second—Knowledge in Common.

Third—Action in Common.

First—if a political party is composed of those who have common interests, hardly anything can separate them permanently.

This is the reason why the Socialist Party is composed of wage workers. There is no doubt whatever that all wage workers would be benefited by the abolition of the wage system, which robs them of more than half they produce. So long as Capital remains Capital, namely, the Means of Production in private hands, so long will wage workers be exploited. To abolish this exploitation, to capture for themselves these Means of Production, this is the Common Interest of all wage workers. Therefore these wage workers naturally form one political party.

The greatest temptation and danger to the Socialist Party in America is to disregard this first Essential of Common Interests.

We hear it said by many advisers among us, "But we must have votes in order to win, and there are not enough wage workers in the country to give us the majority if we had them altogether." Hence, they urge, we must get the votes of the farmers and business men, or we shall never have a chance to win.

Now, it is not true, even now, that the wage workers do not form a majority of the voters. The wage workers have been increasing at a great pace these last ten years. Any city directory will show us that. A recent calculation in "The Worker" makes out 52 per cent of wage workers in the United States.

But it would not matter if we only had 25 per cent of the voters. In that case we should have to wait until the percentage increased to over 50 per cent, as it soon will.

The point is this: If farmers and business men have interests different from workmen, it is suicidal to get them into a working men's party. For the first essential to a successful political party is Common Interests.

Differing interests are bound to show different programs. For instance, if the farmers would be relieved by the public ownership of railways and thus their interests promoted, their program would demand such a measure though the wage workers' interests would not be promoted in the least by such ownership. Now, if farmers and wage workers were combined in the Socialist Party so as to have votes enough to win, what good would such a victory bring to the wage workers, if the farmers had their way? Would not immediate division and defeat follow?

We are not saying that the farmers' real ultimate interest does not lie with the wage workers' party. We are only now driving home this first point, that a political party must be composed of people with interests in common.

If the wage workers' interests and the farmers' interests are not the same, it is absolute folly to get them into the same political party. Such a short-sighted policy is unworthy thinking men.

The second essential to a political organization is Knowledge in Common.

Interests in Common are not enough. For example, a Union Labor Party might be formed which should include the great mass of wage workers. If its membership had no more knowledge than Mayor Schmitz, it would become the prey of designing politicians as he has. Such a party would be like a crowd of prisoners escaping from Libby Prison. They have common interests, namely, to reach the lines of the Union Army. But they are wholly ignorant in which direction that army lies. Some one in that crowd must know the way, and he must be able to prove to the rest that he knows the way. In one word, they must have such a knowledge of the facts of their situation that they will act so as to save themselves.

This indicates the necessity to our organization of correct, scientific, economic knowledge, that knowledge which distinguishes Socialist politics from mere Labor politics. Labor politics is a Samson, strong but blind, crushing himself and others in the ruins his misdirected efforts bring. Socialist politics is a Hercules, performing incredible labors and cleansing the world, because he sees and knows more than all others put together.

The greatest danger ahead of the working class in the United States today is that it shall plunge into politics without knowledge. This is what the Hearst newspapers are advising. It is in the air. The Unions from San Francisco to Bridgeport are feeling it. The failure of the strike and boycott when pitted against the Trusts, has come home to the Unions everywhere. They are turning instinctively toward the Ballot.

The question is, Will they use an intelligent ballot? Must they pass through the long preparation and discouraging defeat of a Labor Party before they learn what Socialists can teach them?

That depends largely upon the Socialists themselves. Will they recognize this opportunity? Mark Hanna's last word to the country was, "Save the Labor Unions from Socialism." Hearst's seductive appeal is, "There must be one great Labor-Democratic Party with the Unions as the militant backbone."

It depends on the vigor and perception of the Socialist Party whether these capitalist attempts to mislead the Giant shall succeed. If all Socialists would at once enter the Labor Unions, cultivate their friendship and institute the most strenuous and wise propaganda among them, Hanna and Hearst would prove false prophets, and an organized, educated proletarian army of Two Million voters would confront one Capitalist Party within the next five years. The dying Middle Class would recognize its only hope in the Party of the Future and the most of its members

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