

DANGER AHEAD

Note.—The article that follows was written by Comrade Eugene V. Debs in 1911 and published in the "International Socialist Review." It is almost prophetic in its forecast and as a warning to the "got votes" folks. Its reprinting at this time is justified.—Editor.

"To my mind the working class character and the revolutionary integrity of the Socialist party are of first importance. All the votes of the people would do us no good if our party ceased to be a revolutionary party, or came to be only incidentally so, while yielding more and more to the pressure to modify the principles and program of the party for the sake of swelling the vote and hastening the day of its expected triumph.

"The ruth is that we have not a few members who regard vote-getting as of supreme importance, no matter by what method the votes may be secured, and this leads them to hold out inducements and make representations which are not at all compatible with the stern and uncompromising principles of a revolutionary party. They seek to make the Socialist propaganda so attractive—eliminating whatever may give offense to bourgeois sensibilities—that it serves as a bait for votes, rather than as a means of education, and votes thus secured do not properly belong to us and do injustice to our party as well as to those who cast them.

"There is also a disposition on the part of some to join hands with reactionary trade-unionists in local emergencies and in certain temporary situations to effect some specific purpose, which may or may not be in harmony with our revolutionary program. No possible good can come from any kind of a political alliance, express or implied, with trade-unions or the leaders of trade unions who are opposed to Socialism and only turn to it for use in some reactionary policy.

"Not for all the votes of the American Federation of Labor and its labor-dividing and corruption-breeding craft unions should we com-

promise one jot of our revolutionary principles; and if we do, we shall be visited with the contempt we deserve by all real Socialists, who will scorn to remain in a party professing to be a revolutionary party of the working class while employing the crooked and disreputable methods of ward-heeling politicians to attain their ends.

"Voting for Socialism is not Socialism any more than a menu is a meal.

"Socialism must be organized, drilled, equipped and the place to begin is in the industries where the workers are employed. Their economic power has got to be developed through efficient organization, or their political power, even if it could be developed, would but react upon them, thwart their plans, blast their hopes, and all but destroy them.

"Such organization to be effective must be expressed in terms of industrial unionism. Each industry must be organized in its entirety, embracing all the workers, and all working together in the interest of all, in the true spirit of solidarity, thus laying the foundation and developing the superstructure of the new system within the old, from which it is evolving, and systematically fitting the workers, step by step, to assume entire control of the productive forces when the hour strikes for the impending organic change.

"Without such economic organization and the economic power with which it is clothed, and without the industrial co-operative training, discipline and efficiency which are its corollaries, the fruit of any political victories the workers may achieve will turn to ashes on the lips.

"With the workers efficiently organized industrially, bound together by the common tie of their enlightened self-interest, they will just as naturally and inevitably express their economic solidarity in political terms and cast a united vote for the party of their class as the forces of nature express obedience to the laws of gravitation."

STATE SOCIALISM

CAPITAL is the great revolutionizer of conditions, of methods and of thought. We live in a period of intense developments and must keep pace in our minds, let we lag behind on our action.

Only a few years ago for most of us and not more than a couple of dozen years ago for practically all of us, the government ownership of industries was one of the most essential parts of our Socialist conceptions. Under the growing influence of the workers one industry after another was to be wrested from private owners into state management, and so the new society would be built within the old. To some of our friends this was about the limit of their vision. To the workers this state socialism had to be supplemented by parliamentary action, so as to get the state industries under democratic control. But to the more revolutionary characters at that time it was evident that the process of democratizing state management would not be an entirely peaceable process. When the working classes would be near to getting a majority in parliament it was foreseen that resistance from the ruling class might be expected, and the shock we would receive from this resistance compelled an ultimate effort on our part to overcome it.

Therefore, we had not only to increase our votes, but it was also necessary to develop our power and our organization for the ultimate overthrow of the capitalist government. And as this final struggle was to result from an attempt of the ruling class to resist the natural development of our increasing parliamentary influence, it was but logical that the workers should be on the defensive and stand for the "ermattungs" strategy of Kautsky and others. Everything had to be sacrificed to keep the existing organizations in good trim for this expected reactionary attack of the capitalist class, in the hope of delivering a final knockout. And this attack was expected either against the right to organize or against general suffrage. Even the world war found the leaders concerned foremost about the maintenance of their formal organizations.

Now look how completely this conception has been overturned by facts: Not only must we recognize that our ideas about political democracy have to be revised, and that capturing government by increasing our votes is rather ridiculous—since the influence of parliaments has been gradually reduced—but we actually see our

enemy class demanding State Capitalism to further its own interests.

And this is by no means merely a temporary war measure. Those who read European capitalist papers know that the far-seeing capitalists all over the world already plan for a more intimate relation between industry and government, and no doubt the greatest share of the world market and world power will go to those nations most efficient in state capitalism.

But we need not go to Europe. One of our own capitalist papers has a standing phrase, "Unorganized America," and all of our financial papers advocate more efficiency in this line. The most surprising fact in this connection is that the railway capitalists themselves are no longer seriously opposed to state ownership of the railroads. Railway capital means Big Interests, it means the Money Trust, the highest and most developed form of capitalism. Try and imagine the true significance of the chief representatives of these railway interests actually threatening to leave the railways to the government if the latter should care to interfere in any way that would affect the interests of capital!

Now don't be absurd enough to believe, as the "Call" did, that this is a result of the increased power of the workers, that the railway interests, the Morgans, etc., are backing down under threat of the railway workers. It is a false policy to advance the illusion that the so-called eight-hour law was a victory, when as a matter of fact it was a defeat. Morgan and his friends are more powerful than ever and will continue so as long as railroad workers entrust their interests in the hands of leaders such as they now have. But their conception of state capitalism has changed. They realize that it is necessary for their interests as a whole to have state owned railroads. They know that this is indispensable to compete with Europe; they know that it is necessary to successfully carry on a future war, and they see that it is the most efficient way to crush future labor revolts. State railways mean to them, as state railways mean in German, that a strike is a crime and organization only allowed under state control, with the military forces and the military law to enslave and, if necessary, kill the workers.

This is the reason why the Rockefeller "National" City Bank in one of its recent pamphlets gives statistics showing that the United States

is the only big nation without state management of railways, and this is the reason why the railway magnates show a willingness to "capitulate" to the workers on the issue of state railways. What an amazing lack of insight in a paper of a Socialist party to see in this change of attitude of the capitalists a victory for labor! It is the beginning of a certain and crushing defeat unless the workers themselves decide to act before it is too late.

State capitalism is the highest form of capitalism, the form in which a new feudal class of knights of money and monopoly is about to organize and brutalize their slaves. What has become of our conceptions of only a few years ago? Is it not our duty, then, to oppose this state ownership, now that our enemies seem anxious to help us along?

No, most assuredly not.

We are advocates of state ownership, notwithstanding the changed attitude of our enemies. It is not even a disadvantage that our demands, as such, prove to be in the line of capitalist development. But when two ask the same thing it is not always and necessarily the same thing they ask. State ownership and the state under the absolutistic control of Big Interests is the absolute reverse of state ownership under the democratic control of the workers. Our demand for state ownership, therefore, is more than worthless unless supplemented by democratic organization in mass action. In fact any demand of any importance in the imperialistic period of capitalism is without effect, unless it is conquered and protected and controlled by the organized power of the workers in a militant mass action.

S. J. R.

Socialist Brahmins

IT IS not our expectation, nor our hope, that the members of the Socialist party will rush en masse to join the Socialist Propaganda League of America. Any such "mass action" as that we would regard as a calamity. We want Socialists in the League just as fast as Socialists understand the League's purposes and respond unreservedly to its call. But we do expect the distribution of our "Manifesto" and of "The Internationalist" to be followed with the opposition of the more or less intellectual "lights" of the majority who regard themselves as the custodians of the party and the censors of Socialist thought and Socialist acts. One of the reasons why we did not send the "Manifesto" to Milwaukee was a conviction of the uselessness of such a proceeding, in view of the fact that "change" is written all over it. Most of the majority "lights" are opposed to change. When they favor it, things get all muddled up; witness A. M. Simons' somewhat timid proposal for a new party patterned after the labor party of England. (See N. Y. "Call," Dec. 17.)

We readily admit that changes proposed for no particular reason, and without reference to particular ends, are changes that should be opposed. But a stolid opposition to all change because it is change and because it may shock or alarm somebody, that is nothing more nor less than a de-thronement of reason. It would not surprise us if a lot of reasons were de-throned among certain folk who will think they are thinking about the "Manifesto," when in reality they are merely the victims of certain nervous reactions.

Now it is quite clear to us that in the days that are coming we shall have use for a distinguishing and inoffensive name for our opponents of the kind we have in mind. Upon reflection we have decided to confer upon them the quite dignified title of Socialist Party Brahmins.

Brahmin is the name of the highest Hindu caste. They consider themselves custodians of all the higher culture of India and are "specialists" who pride themselves on their "fine literary taste," and so forth. And they oppose all change in the constitution of things related to their privileges.

The Brahmins, then, are those who oppose all change, except perhaps that of jumping from the frying-pan into the fire, and advocate letting-it-alone. All right, go to it, Brahmins! There are three ways open to you: Stand pat, muddle things up, or quit being silly and join the Socialist Propaganda League of America.

Make Converts Every Day

We will make converts day by day; we will grow strong by calmness and moderation; we will grow strong by the violence and injustice of our adversaries. And, unless truth be a mockery and justice a hollow lie, we will be in the majority after a while, and then the revolution which we will accomplish will be none the less radical from being the result of pacific measures.—Abraham Lincoln (1856).

LEFT WING JABS

What Is—What Isn't

MUNICIPAL markets, municipal gas, municipal ice boxes, none of these things, nor all of them combined, is Socialism.

Government railroads, government telegraph, government lighthouses, none of these is Socialism.

We will have Socialism only when the modern tool for producing wealth, the machine, is socialized; only when Rent, Interest and Profit have been abolished; only when private appropriation of wealth produced socially ends; and the ending of robbery, the abolition of the instruments of robbery, and the socialization of the machinery of industry depends upon the intelligent action of the workers themselves.

These Be Your Patriots

EVERY corrupt office-seeker, every corrupt office-holder, every conscience lacking money-grubber, every cornerer and monopolist of the people's food for profit, every pious apologist for theft and brutality, every "friend of labor" who will do anything but get off labor's back, and every low-down politician who contrives to put legal obstacles in the way of progress, every one of them dubs himself a "patriot"; and if you have an opinion different from theirs, every one of them will say that you are a traitor to the country.

Workers Must Do It

THIS was said by the radical Wendell Phillips: "No reform, moral or intellectual, ever came from the upper class of society. Each and all came from the protest of the martyr and victim. The emancipation of the working people must be by the working people themselves."

Phillips lives in the heart of the working people, while the "upper class" still say their prayers and take "the toll."

Common Poverty

IT IS a fact worthy of notice that the system which results in common property for some of the people also produces common poverty for the rest of the people. That is the sort of "democracy" we have. And until the workers get over their brain poverty, and organize their power in a manner incapable of being over-ruled by the cohorts of robbery and repression, they will continue to be the victims of common poverty imposed upon them by the system that makes producers poor and parasites rich.

About Platforms

IN THE national campaign of 1912 we had a platform that was tempting to political pilferers. It offered a lot of political goods that could be stolen and incorporated ready-made into the platform of an "independent" political platform "to get votes." Four years later, in the campaign of last year, we did no better. The majority stuck to the old lumber pile. Not only that, but "to get votes" there was included in the document in 1916 the astonishing proposal (the swallowing of it did not astonish the majority) that a certain measure of industrial activity and control (for profit?) should remain with the individual!

The European Spectacle

IN THE European war you have a colossal evidence of the certain result of "national patriotisms." The victims of it tearing at each others' throats and shooting lead into each others' bodies. Not for freedom, nor culture, nor civilization, but for the continued domination of the political and economic overhead groups concerned in maintaining tyranny based on economic servitude of the producers of wealth. Work—work—work as you never worked before, for the Socialist Propaganda League of America and The International Brotherhood.

Does This "Hit" You?

MEMBERS of the militia of the entire country now know the value that the professional soldier puts upon their services. Leonard Wood, professional soldier, and a general of the army, has given it out that if the "guards" sent to the border had been engaged in a fight with trained troops a general carnage would have been the result. He says: "The guardsmen would never have known what hit them!" That ought to "hit" you boys in the memorizing section of your brain-pans.

Vanquished? Not We!

THERE has been quite a lot of hysterical "hooraying," especially in certain quarters in New England, over the big setback for Socialism in the recent national

election. But nobody knows as well as the shouters that the "hooray" is made for the ears of the ignorant. The Socialist Propaganda League of America, as representative of the militant internationalists of the world, serves notice on that bunch that their exultant yelp will soon be changed to a cry of distress. Vanquished? Not we! Socialism dead? Shades of Jim Connolly, Socialist-Irish martyr! Go put snufflers on the sun! Not by counting noses can you measure this movement, but only by what is swelling in the hearts and being understood in the brains, of the people—your people and all of us.

"Speaking of Patriotism"

The smug and sanctimonious patriots for profit cannot understand why "foreners" who come here from all the countries of Europe do not immediately become patriots too, and join in the national service to the Mazuma. It is beyond their power of understanding that some of these "foreners" may have convictions about life, may have risen from the swamps of selfishness and death, may have had a lookout from the hilltops of justice and seen the slowly rising sun of human brotherhood. Weary of cringing to brutal power in the countries from which they come, where hope has died and manhood is crushed, they find themselves in a state of society that (though showing betterment in minor respects) treats them with bigotry, contempt, violence and massacres in the industrial field, and where the rankest crimes committed against labor are passed over with fruitless inquiries or excused as "the sort of treatment they deserve." Why should anybody wonder that the "foreners" are not suddenly transformed into "national" patriots.

CONSTITUTION

of the Socialist Propaganda League of America

Name. The name of this organization shall be "The Socialist Propaganda League of America."

Object. The S. P. L. A. declares emphatically and will work uncompromisingly in the economic and political fields for industrial revolution to establish industrial democracy by the mass action of the working class. It also declares that the international unity of the workers is imperative and, therefore, works to bring about that unity, regardless of all barriers, territorial or racial.

Membership.

All class conscious working men and women who approve the revolutionary purpose and program of this League and will sever their connection with capitalist parties or organizations maintained for the purpose of perpetuating the capitalist system of industry, are eligible to membership. Five or more shall constitute a local group or branch of the League. There shall be members-at-large, affiliated with the national office, of those residing where no local organization exists.

Organization.

There shall be local Branches and a National Committee of seven. The National Committee shall be elected by a general membership vote. The National Committee shall be charged with carrying out the decisions of the League, supervise its affairs and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected.

All acts of general importance shall be decided by referendum vote.

Propaganda.

The propaganda of the League shall be carried on by the publication of a weekly paper, "The Internationalist," owned and controlled by the organization, by pamphlets and books, and by meetings and agitation among the working class.

There shall be a Press Committee of five or more who shall be elected by the National Committee.

National Secretary and National Treasurer.

A National Secretary and a National Treasurer shall be elected by the National Committee from their own body. They shall serve one year unless removed for cause.

Referendum.

A referendum may be initiated by three (3) per cent of the membership of the League, irrespective of location.

Finance.

The national dues for membership in the League shall be five (5) cents a month, 60 cents a year, to be paid directly or through branch officers to the National Secretary.

Members-at-large shall pay ten (10) cents a month.

Checks drawn by the National

Treasurer shall be countersigned by the National Secretary.

Members in Good Standing. Only members in good standing may serve on the National Committee or vote on branch affairs or national referenda. Members in good standing are those who are fully paid up to date.

Charters. Charters shall be issued to branch organizations free of charge.

Amendments. Alterations or amendments to this constitution shall be by a referendum vote of the members.

A Socialist's Lament

Readers of The Internationalist will be interested in the following mournful outburst from Comrade A. M. Simons. Notice how nicely it confirms the things said by the Socialist Propaganda League "before the deluge." Well, Simons, old man, cheer up! Let us work for Socialism to the last ditch. Read the lamentation of a Socialist:

"One reason for the decline (of the party vote) is suggested by the fact that three days after election the Socialist press and national headquarters was still claiming 1,200,000 votes. Everyone who had access to the news reports knew before the decision had been made between Wilson and Hughes that the Socialist vote had dropped. There was a time when the Socialist party tried to educate its followers, rather than "fake" election returns. There was a time when the party was not so eager to sell its soul for votes.

"For nearly 20 years I have been a close observer of our participation in Socialist campaigns. During the last four years I have had many discussions on campaign tactics. Not once have I heard the old familiar question: "Is this right?" "Is this in accord with the principles of Socialism?" But over and over I have heard: "Will this catch the Poles?" "Will that land the Germans?" or "Will the other scare the little taxpayer?" Once upon a time almost every Socialist speech ended with "Don't vote for our candidates unless you agree with Socialism!" Then our vote grew. Now we practice expediency and our vote declines.

"With sorrow that comes with the destruction of one's dearest ideal, I say that in many a city the Socialist organization is today little more than an organized appetite for office—a socialist Tammany exploiting the devotion of its members for the benefit of a little circle of perfectly honest but perfectly incompetent and selfish politicians, who still persist in thinking themselves idealists.

"I have collected the names of nearly 50 people who have filled the highest unpaid positions in our party, who have been candidates for office when election was hopeless—writers, speakers, organizers—the type of men and women who gave up what the world called careers to devote their lives to what they believed to be one fight worth fighting, and all these today are leaving the movement in the principles of which they still believe. Others are refusing to work within the organization."

Then after more in the same tone, he continues: "I am sure that if the Socialists of this country come to know the truth they will push the well-meaning politicians to one side and work out a movement which will be the political expression of American labor."

The foregoing lamentation, faithful in its narration of facts it must be admitted, was printed in the New Republic. Then Simons took another shot in the Call, where he proposes a political movement similar to the labor party of England. We presume that it is intended to show how thoroughly tired he is of "expediency."

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

WILL ABOLISH CLASSES

"Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled by force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms, and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

"In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

—Communist Manifesto.

All communications for the editor, the secretary of the League, or The Internationalist, should be addressed Box 23, Roxbury Sta., Boston, Mass. Make checks and money orders payable to Louis Velleman, treasurer.