

The problem of the common enemy is as old as the Socialist and labor movement itself. And it will last as long as the forces to which the working class is opposed in its struggle do not form one uniform mass, but a composite of social forces. Socialists, when dealing with the subject abstractly, are apt to forget the fact that the society in which we live and work is very rarely, if ever, composed of two classes only—capitalists and workers. But in practice we are never permitted to forget it. Hence, the great and burning questions of tactics which have always divided the Socialist and labor movement.

This was particularly the case during the early stages of the labor movement, when the problems of the class struggle were complicated not only by the presence of other exploited classes, such as farmers, and a class occupying a middle ground between exploiter and exploited, but also by the presence of two upper or exploiting classes—the capitalists and the holdovers from Feudalism.

When the working class first consciously appeared upon the historical arena it found the stage occupied by two upper classes contending for the mastery of the world. The relative power of these two classes was different in different countries: In England the capitalist class had all but established its mastery, having largely succeeded in relegating the remnants of Feudalism to the rear, except in so far as the feudal barons lost their feudal character and themselves became captains of industry. In other countries the process had not yet reached that stage, but was rapidly approaching it. But the battle between these two contending forces was still on everywhere in Europe, and it naturally complicated the situation for the working class which was just beginning to become conscious of its own existence, its power, and its historic mission. How was the working class, intent upon conquering the mastery of the world for itself, or at least upon getting its fair share of the world's good things, to comport itself in the presence of this struggle between capitalism and the survivals of feudalism? What was the correct attitude for it to take with respect to the struggle of these two classes? Was it to be *indifferent* to it, or was it to take sides?

And if the latter, then on which side was the working class to range itself? Which of the two upper classes was the workers' *worst* enemy, so that it behooved them to make *common cause* with the other?

Such was the problem: Did the working class have an enemy in common with one of the two upper classes, so that it could properly make *common cause* with one of them against the other? And if so, with whom did it have a *common cause* and who was the *common enemy*?

Upon the solution of this problem depended the tactics which the working class was to adopt in its own fight for betterment and emancipation. And the search for this solution, more than anything else, divided the labor and Socialist movement into different schools and parties.

To describe the various solutions of this problem that were offered, and their application or attempted application in practice, would mean to write a history of the theory and practice of the labor movement in its broadest aspects. In this article I shall attempt to deal only with one phase of this subject, and that in merest outline only.

In following the developments of Socialist thought on the subject, and the vicissitudes of the labor movement in attempting to apply these results of this thought in practice, two main tendencies may be observed. In the earlier stages of the movement the "Socialists"—that is to say, the theorists-intellectuals—were in the main, inclined to a solution favorable to the old order as against the newer capitalist order. They were inclined to look upon the capitalist class as the working class's worst enemy and upon the capitalist system as *the* system to be fought by the working class; and they were therefore ready to *accept* assistance in this struggle from any source, including the survivals of feudalism, and rather *expected* assistance from that quarter in the struggle against the *common enemy*—the capitalist class. On the other hand, the practical leaders of the working class, particularly those springing from the working class itself, were, on the whole, inclined to make common cause with the