THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE WORKER

BY PHILIP KURINSKY

PRICE 10 CENTS
OUR AIM AND OBJECT

THIS pamphlet is one of a series on the labor movement issued by the WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE, a voluntary association of workers whose aim is to distribute literature on the labor movement and the economic problems of today.

The object of this series is to help give the workers a clearer understanding of tactics and organization and thus enable them to strengthen their organizations.

The Workers' Educational League makes no profit on its literature and all money received from sale of literature is used to print new pamphlets. If you are interested in education you can help spread the work at no cost to yourself, by ordering ten or more pamphlets and selling them to your friends. By doing this you help spread the idea and broaden the scope of the work and new pamphlets can be issued more often.

A list of pamphlets already issued will be found on the inside of back cover. Look the list over. Order ten or more. Help spread EDUCATION and ORGANIZATION among the WORKERS.

Cash should accompany all orders. Twenty assorted pamphlets mailed postpaid for $1.00.

Box 205 Madison Square New York, N. Y.
THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE WORKER

By

PHILIP KURINSKY

Author of

"Industrial Unionism and the Revolution"

TO MY BROTHER AND COMRADE

HERMAN

Published by

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE

Address: MODERN PRESS, BOX 205 MADISON SQUARE,
NEW YORK
FOREWORD

ALMOST every one of the more leading spirits of the workers’ revolutionary movement grants that in such a country as the United States, for instance, there is not as yet any revolutionary sentiment amongst the masses. This is due to various causes chief of which is the economic. The country is, however, ripe for a truly revolutionary organization which should be composed of the most revolutionary workers, that element which must lead the workers as a whole in their struggle against the capitalist class.

This organization or party—let it be Communist Party—must avoid all the mistakes which the Socialist Party committed in the last twenty-five years or so, and must be kept pure of all the rotten elements who dragged the Socialist movement into such a reactionary swamp in which it finds itself since the beginning of the war.

If so, then we must listen to our own words, and follow our own conclusions. The writer of these lines, being a worker himself is interested, as many other workers are, that such a clean movement should be created and it seems, to the writer’s satisfaction, that the foundation of such a movement has already been laid. We must see then that the foundation should be broad and strong that it should be difficult to undermine it.

Into a workers’ movement, especially into a revolutionary workers’ movement, various kinds of people enter, various kinds of parasitic worms who, like the parasites in a human body, try to get all their nourishment from the organism. And just as in the case of man, the parasitic worms succeed in penetrating to such an extent that they suck the life out of him, so, at times such worms succeed in penetrating a revolutionary workers’ movement till they destroy the whole movement. One needs only to ask, what became of the Socialist Parties with their revolutionary principles? Where did their principles and membership go to? And the answer which he will have to give himself will bring him to the thought which we just brought out.

The professional intellectual—there are exceptions, of course—is one of these worms, and as workers we must see that the real revolutionary workers’ organizations should be clear of them.
And this is the aim of this booklet. The writer has no pretensions to have written a literary masterpiece. He asks only that the workers should keep an eye on everything in the movement—our movement and not anyone else's.

If the attempt is not successful then we ask other workers to write with more facts, arguments and talent. The worker must be prepared with everything—physical and intellectual. In Russia, it is said, it could not be helped. It was necessary to come to the intellectuals for aid. Why? Because when the revolution suddenly broke out the worker was unprepared. Therefore the intellectual must be utilized till the worker prepares himself, and the intellectuals take advantage of the opportunity and sabotage everything they can lay their hands on. But here in America, for instance, or in England? Here we only speak of preparing, and what excuse will the worker find in the coming crisis? No excuse whatsoever because he had enough time to prepare.

In this brochure we have another thought which the reader will clearly see, and that is, to take the trade-union movement more earnestly. Taking out of consideration the many leaders who are in this movement for their personal interests, it is still a movement which, thanks to conditions, will be compelled to go forward and forward. And the masses in the unions are of such material that they can be led in the right way. The masses, with the exception of the scabs, who are scabs because of their ignorance and partly because of the system of trade-unionism, are naive, honest and instinctively revolutionary. It is only necessary that there should be in the unions the sincere, logical revolutionary workers who should know how to win the masses to their side, and explain to them the false leadership under which they find themselves. One should not imagine that this will be an easy task. The present leaders will fight the militant minority who will show the workers the right path with all means at their command.

Should one wait till all the unions become revolutionary? No! Such a thought is utopian. To think of waiting till all unions will become revolutionary or till there will be One Big Union is just as utopian as the thought of the socialist to wait till all the workers will vote the socialist ticket and elect a socialist majority in parliament. When we speak of revolutionary upheavals we have constantly in mind the minority. It can not be otherwise. Else we would not need to advocate the Revolution! We, like the intellectual, could find some sophistic argument and say as follows: "Revolution really means a complete
transformation of society, in the political as well as in the economic relations. But what shall we do if the worker is not yet educated? We must wait till every organized and unorganized worker will become class-conscious and then there will be a change in society. If it should happen that there should remain some fanatical group of capitalists who will not allow such a thing we will somehow get along with that group.” Are these not intelligent words? Yes, only in words. The trouble is, however, that we could more readily expect the Messiah than the revolution.

We have in mind only the minority, the vanguard of the working-class and it is only this vanguard that will be in the revolutionary organizations. Only with these revolutionary workers can one build a truly revolutionary organization; only such workers can push their unions forward to the ultimate goal. And when there will exist such a minority of revolutionary workers in the unions of the vital industries, then the majority will enter into the current of the revolution and accomplish the task which was destined for them by History.

PHILIP KURINSKY.
CHAPTER I
THE INTELLECTUAL’S POOR WELCOME

The more power, the modern Hercules, the Proletariat, attains in his struggle against his oppressor, the more strategic positions he recovers from the King of Earth, the ruling class, which hinders and retards the progress and development of a truly free mankind, the more poignant the Class Struggle, and the outlook for revolutionary activity appears even in such countries in which the worker has thus far been backward, as for example in the United States, the more does the debris of the Bourgeoisie, against whom the class struggle is so severely waged, come ever closer to the working class.

Marx, in his Communist Manifesto, says: “Finally in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movements as a whole.”

And in his historical writings, he cites innumerable facts, how the various sections, the debris of the bourgeoisie, tried with all the means at their command, to gain the support of the proletariat. It is well known, that at the close of 1847, there was scarcely a statesman of the bourgeoisie who had not paraded as a Socialist, in order to secure for himself the sympathy of the working class. (See Revolution and Counter Revolution.) He thus brings out the cowardly and traitorous role which those socialists have played on all occasions.

History repeats itself. Various elements of the middle class, the more intelligent elements, who realize that the coming of a new era is unavoidable, and who, for different reasons are dissatisfied with the conduct of the ruling class, declare themselves to be socialists and attempt to assume positions of leadership through declarations of loyalty to proletarian principles.

But what kind of a welcome does this type of intellectual receive in truly proletarian ranks? This is important to know.
If you, reader of this brochure, happen to be one of those very intellectuals concerning whom we will speak about, and you are anxious to find out the real sentiment of the workers, enter, if you please, a "wobblie" hall in the western part of the country, and if you are recognized, you will be greeted with the sneering, caustic epithet, "God damned intellectual."

Possibly when you will observe the face of the person who utters these words you would notice a face that expresses roughness and wild stubbornness; a pair of heavy hands, from which comes an odor of iron, steel or all kinds of chemicals; hands with which, were he to shake yours, would cause you to recall the words said to have been uttered by Heinrich Heine, "When a worker clasps my hands, I have to wash them afterwards with perfume."

And in addition, this wild man (so he will appear to you) might possibly be deeply engrossed in an ordinary conversation about the "slum-gullion" which he cooked in the jungle, and how tasty the food was; and end his rambling narrative with a little tale of how he landed a few "wallops" on the jaw of some "scissorbill" for refusing to "line up" in the I. W. W. And why pay any attention to such an ignorant dolt? That, possibly, might be your conclusion, but therein will be your mistake.

The type of worker that will lead you to this conclusion is much deeper than you think. Your intelligent bourgeois mind is surely unable to understand him, and your heart unable to feel with him. For though you may be perfectly familiar with all the manuscripts of Karl Marx, and be acquainted with his theory of surplus value, and the worker is not, you still remain the man of the cabinet, the parlor radical and he, the man of experience, the warrior, the man of deeds.

One cannot judge the worker by appearance. "Look not upon me because I am swarthy, for the sun hath scorched me. They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept," says King Solomon's Song of Songs.

His face became sunburnt while working in the vineyards that belong to the bourgeoisie, but his own vineyard, his own interests he had forsaken. Yes, burnt and tanned upon the corn and wheat fields of the agricultural barons and at the furnaces of the steel magnates, the obstinacy which his face expresses is but the hatred and anger toward the bourgeoisie who have made a slave out of him, since they appeared on the scene of history and taken everything to themselves. His strong, rough hands are a symbol of honesty, a sign of hard labor. They are really necessary to
him—in them is the power to destroy the capitalist Bastile which swallows up all the slaves of the world.

And this he would rather accomplish by the sweat of his own brow, for while he may not be able to express his innermost desires in beautiful, artistic form, while he may be powerless to meet your sophism with profound arguments, his native intelligence and his sore and feeling heart tell him that as long as he will allow his head to be turned by sophistry and permit others to solve his problem, his end will be a bitter one. Afterwards, he will regret having allowed himself to be misled by those against whom he felt an instinctive antipathy.

This very feeling of antipathy is concealed in his heart from generations past, for the oppressed were always betrayed when they surrendered their might to others. The history of the oppressed is full of incidents where some kind of intellectuals, with beautiful phrases and sophistic arguments attempted to win the masses over to their side, and to show them that the intellectual is the very “image of God” and he alone is capable of governing. But as soon as the power was given over to him, or better, as soon as he succeeded in getting the power away from the common people, he showed himself in his true colors and woe to the people who allowed themselves to be cheated out of their birthright.

Let us look, for example, at a page in the history of primitive Christianity. What do we find? We find that so long as the Communes were under the control of the plain, faithful people, they were just what the carpenter Jesus wanted them to be. As the apostolic history of the first Christian commune tells us “No one called anything his own, but everything belonged to all in common. No one suffered any want.” Numerous Communist sects lived happily in this manner. All were equal before God. Equality, brotherhood, ruled in the commune and all lived with the hope of a beautiful future.

So the plain people lived, till the intellectuals, the bishops, came. When the bishops saw that they could do nothing with the common people, who clung to their communism, they went among the people “bored from within” so to speak. The bishops appealed to the people with their sophistries, confused their minds, and the plain people gave up the leadership to them. And then, with their sophisms, the bishops corrupted the teachings of Christianity, and the Kingdom of God spoken and dreamed of by Christ developed into the might of the papacy at Rome.

Thus the masses always had upon their necks various kinds of bishops, various kinds of intellectuals. The intellectuals may
have changed their names; they may have lived in different epochs—in the time of primitive Christianity or in the time of the French Revolution; they may have been called bishops or Girondins, or even by such a fine-sounding name as "social-democrat," it does not matter. In their veins flows the blood of the aristocracy, and this blood drives them to seek to rule over the common people.

At the present time we see a new kind of bishop pushing himself to the front—a modern intellectual who appeals to the workers with fine phrases, and tries with all his power to capture the parliament. "Let the 'principles of the social-democracy' be heard in parliament. Let a party be represented there—a labor party! Send us there! We shall speak for you, in your name." The class conscious worker, learning from experience, knowing the ambition of the intellectual to stand higher than the masses, acquainted with his character, turns away from him with scorn. He does not want to know him, not because the worker is uncouth and envies the other his intelligence. Were that the truth, he would really deserve the name of Vandal. For the real meaning of intelligence is "knowledge and understanding," "and the only means," said Robert Ingersoll, the great American free thinker, "with which we can elevate humanity into the sunshine of philosophy is intelligence."

Again, if intelligence means understanding, knowledge, then we can say that the worker has never been backward. There is no invention in the world which does not contain the mind of the worker. There is not a single bridge which the workers did not construct; not a single architectural masterpiece which the workers with their skill did not put together. This may not be acknowledged by the bourgeoise writers, but nevertheless it is true. William Morris, speaking of art says: "Nor must you forget that when men say popes, kings and emperors built such and such buildings, it is a mere way of speaking. You look into your history books to see who built Westminster Abbey, who built St. Sophia at Constantinople, and they tell you Henry III—Justinian the Emporer. Did they do it? Or did men like you and me—handicraftsmen, who have left no names behind them, nothing but their work?"

And had the worker not passed through that period of slavery where he was not allowed to educate himself and had he the opportunity to take advantage of the few educational privileges that the capitalist allows him (in reality for the capitalist's interests) we would be able to point to the hundreds of philosophic
books which would compare very favorably with such bourgeois philosophers as Spencer. For the plain worker with the common countenance possesses so much will-power and intellectual character, his life is so rich with intellectual, emotional experiences, that all that is lacking to him is some classical knowledge, some time to educate himself in order to translate those experiences and scattered thoughts into literature, and create pictures of which the bourgeois mind can have no conception.

In general the worker is always ready to learn and respects those who teach him, but not when the enslaving of the spirit and body is demanded of him. Not when the intellectual aims to gain the mastery over him. Not when a two-fold price is extorted. As is expressed by Prudhonne, in his book, "What is ownership" in speaking of "talent."

This, however, is exactly what the intellectual demands, even that truly talented thinker, who nevertheless is inoculated with the bacilli of the Bourgeois System. He demands recognition of his talents and his skill, that is, that the means of existence be furnished him, and at the same time desires always to be a privileged character, an aristocrat, a ruler.

It is the intellectual with whom intelligence is something to play with, a profession, a means of livelihood. It is the sort of intelligence that the Christian intellectual, Martin Luther displayed. One day he could speak in behalf of the revolting peasants, writing to the nobles that "God no longer wants them to eat, drink and make merry at the expense of the poor man," and the next day, when the peasants were suffering defeat, he could declare that the injustices were just, and that according to pure Christianity, it was a divine duty for true Christians to help suppress the rebels, for faith requires of the lowly to bear all their burdens in silence.

Or we may point to such a type of intellectual, a clergyman, of whom it is told that during the turmoil coincident with the quarrels over slavery shortly before the Civil War in the United States, he showed with bible texts and citations that slavery was acceptable to God, in fact, that slavery was a noble order of society.

It is the intellectual who is the careerist, with the overweening ambition of becoming the super-man, to be the aristocrat of society. And he will find a justification for everything he does. He will find some precedent, some interpretation to put himself in the right.

It is the intellectual who comes to the masses with the word
revolution, but proves with Marxian texts that the revolution must come peacefully and legally. He is as Sorel and Berth describe him, full of phrases, eager to be elected as the representative of the workers, to play the role of leader, but never to act in an aggressive, determined manner, never to call upon the masses to use their might to destroy their oppressors.

This kind of intellectual, the proletariat drives away from itself with the cold, penetrating irony with which Socrates drove away the charlatans—the Athenian Sophists who posed as wise men, but who could merely utter fine phrases and confuse the mind with dialectics and sophistry, make of night day and of day night and hunt after riches, honor and glory. Not intelligence does the worker drive away from him, but the intellectuals who render intelligence into sophistry, who merely argue for the sake of argument.

CHAPTER II
THE ROLE WHICH THE INTELLECTUALS PLAYED IN HISTORY

RUSSIA is a country from which we can learn a great deal. It has passed through a whole lot. Especially can we learn from Russia in regard to the intellectuals who succeeded, because of the ignorance of the masses, in becoming a well-defined class.

This class, deemed itself to be the salt of Russia. It had reason to do so because during the first years, it was applauded and worshipped by the naive, ignorant peasants and workers. These latter looked upon the intellectuals as an ignorant, naive, sick person looks upon a doctor, who writes the prescription in a fine handwriting, and in a language unknown to him. Naturally the doctor gains great respect in the eyes of the naive invalid. No mere trifle this. No such small matter to have gone to school for many years to learn how to heal sick persons!

But the same invalid looks differently at his doctor when he learns through experience that the doctor did not understand his sickness and that he came more for the money than to heal him, and that he studied to become a doctor not because his tender heart was eager to relieve pain but in order to get honor and wealth. Then the respect for the doctor disappears from the heart of the patient and contempt takes its place.

At first the naive, ignorant worker, regarded the intellectual with respect, as a learned man, an idealist who was willing to
sacrifice for the poor people. But when the mask of the intellectual was torn off by the role which he played, then the same ignorant worker looked at him in quite a different way.

The intellectuals betray themselves through their own acts. They themselves tore the masks off their faces. They showed that they were not in the least different from the bourgeoisie, but were part and parcel of the bourgeoisie and had the same aim and goal. They assumed a different guise in order to deceive the masses.

I shall here quote from an excellent article on the intellectuals by Vladimir Lossoff, ex-editor of the Russian I. W. W. paper: "Visiting foreign countries they saw that everywhere the intellectuals played a great role due to the existence of political democracy. That is why they came to hate Tsarism so much. It was an obstacle in their path. They hated the Tsar because he did not go to their ranks for his officers, ministers and other officials but went instead to the ranks of the nobility. They came to the conclusion that the form of government must be changed. True there were exceptions, such as Tchernishevsky, Gorky, Lenin, Trotsky and others.

"Seeing that they themselves were unable to attack Tsarism, the intellectuals sought the help of the workers just as the French bourgeoisie in the time of the great Revolution.

"Long before the revolutionary movement began, the intellectuals tried to get into closer touch with the masses. Even the Octobrists, who wished to depose Nicholas the First understood that without the people they were powerless. And they did everything to awaken the people. They promised land and freedom; they promised everything that the masses wanted. Their promises merely abated the appetite of the peasants who demanded more and more.

"Similar cases occurred before. In the French Revolution, the peasants were at the front and they won a great many things for themselves, which were not promised. So the Russian peasants in 1905 demanded more than was promised them in the constitution.

"At the time of the French Revolution, the bourgeoisie was satisfied when Louis XVI promised reforms. In 1905, the intelligentsia was satisfied with the granting of the Duma, because they enjoyed the luxuries of life anyway. Not so with the peasants and workers. Winning a Duma they began to struggle for an Industrial Republic, where masters and slaves do not exist.

"When the workers in 1905 went out on a general strike the
intelligentzia, in fear of the "mob," refused to support the revolution any longer. It was bitter for them to see that the peasants and workers no longer obey them. The students calmed themselves. There were no more university strikes and they became "quieter than water and more humble than grass." No more protests were seen, signed by famous writers and artists. They became quiet and orderly, "pure artists." That was a result of their fear of the awakened masses.

"You are afraid of the people! That is why you wish to get out of the struggle! These words were said by Marat to the French Bourgeoisie. The same could be said of the Russian bourgeoisie and intelligentzia of 1905: "You are scared of the workers and that is why you are satisfied with a constitutional monarchy that is worth nothing." They were satisfied, but the working masses continued the struggle."

Characteristic is the following: The intellectuals not only forsook the workers who stood in the front line of the struggle—as was so well described above, but they forsook them like a witch with curses on their lips. They had no other names for the common people than wild beasts, barbarians, vandals, etc. They did not understand the real life of the masses—their spirit, their hopes and strivings. They never experienced the sufferings of the people—never understood its customs. At first they considered the masses to be without any faults. But coming into closer contact with the workers and peasants, they were disillusioned. They could endure the plain people only when their enthusiasm and sentiments were aflame, but as soon as the enthusiasm wore off, then their revolutionary ardor disappeared. Then they could no longer bear with the common people, whom they had deified and upon whom they showered their mercy, cherishing the thought that "a slave can not free himself from chains of bondage" and that they will be the ones who will free the people, and as a reward will receive the reins of government.

Surely Pavel, the plain worker whom Gorky describes so characteristically in his book "Mother" could not be disillusioned. For he did not become a revolutionary soldier, a fighter for the emancipation of the workers because he imagined the people, to whom he belonged, to be faultless. No! He was very well acquainted with his class—how they allowed themselves to be sheared like sheep by the bosses, how they got drunk on Sundays and went home to beat their wives and children. He was one who experienced these very things, who suffered hunger and privation and knew what it meant to be a worker. The revolutionary spirit was within him and it only required the reading of
a book to make him realize exactly what he felt and thought. He knew why his comrades got drunk and beat their wives and children; he knew why they became thieves and criminals. “Think of what a life we lead,” he says to his mother. “Here you are already 40 years old. Have you lived? Father would beat you—I understand now that he would relieve the sufferings of his heart by beating you. Something would pain him and he would not know the reason why. He worked for thirty years—beginning when the factory consisted of but two buildings. Now there are seven. The factories grow, and the people die working in them.”

Conscious of all this it was only natural that they should attempt to bring light to the blind with the fire of Socialism. He could not leave his brothers to their fate. His enthusiasm could not wane because his convictions were too deep. The slavery in the factory where he himself spent many years could not go out of his mind. There he found his ideal. He did not need to go anywhere else.

The same was true of his mother. He needed only to tell her what he thought, and she immediately grasped his ideas, and the hope came to her that she too might be able to do something for the cause. She began to work for the cause till she fell just as tens of thousands of other heroes fell in the struggle for the emancipation of the Russian working class.

Not so with the intellectuals. True, many of them have sacrificed their lives. But with them it is the same case as with the professor who cut his hand to feel the pain. One must admit the idealism of the professor who sacrificed for science. But the professor is a single individual, and there were only a few intellectuals among the class of intelligentsia who sacrificed their lives for the Russian Proletariat. The general class of intellectuals come to the workers to seek an ideal and when they find it, it lasts as long with them as the beautiful dream of an opium smoker—only so long as the sleep lasts. For the intellectual can never feel what the worker feels.

Let us leave the period of 1905 and discuss the role which the intellectuals played in the recent Russian Revolution. Did they desire and demand more than a bourgeois order? Did they look for anything more than a mere change in the form of government? Did they seek anything more than to inherit the power? Did they desire more than the officers’ epaulets? Do they not in their hearts prefer a return to Tzarism rather than to see the Workers’ Republic continue to exist? Listen to what Mr. Olgin, an intellectual himself, has to say about the intellectuals
of Russia. After coming back from a visit to Russia, among other things, he says: (Forwards, Sat., Apr., 1921)

"The intellectual did not recognize the revolution. He cursed its hopes and its methods. He turned his back to the progress of history and only hunger compelled him to take part in the present order. But in his heart he remains a stranger. It is not hate. Hate is strong. Hate has color. The intellectual can only complain, can only wait quietly. He has a heart full of petty grudges. He murmurs. Not for him the blazing red fires.

"Is the intellectual bankrupt? Is his soul an empty thing filled with dust and dirt? What does he want? What does he dream of? Were he honest with himself, he would confess that he longs to go back. If you speak to him, he will tell you that he is not a reactionary. But what is progressive and what reactionary is not clear to him. He has no program, he is unable to show you any definite path.

"When the intellectual begins to recollect the period of his greatness, his dissatisfaction increases. It seems to him that his lot is worse than it was, that "they," the present rulers are the cause of his misery. He forgets the blockade and other misfortunes. He must have some one to blame and upon whom he can vent his wrath. The most popular conversational theme at present with the intellectual is the dishonesty of the commissars—as if when every commissar would be God himself, the situation would be any better.

"Deep in the heart of the intellectual is still another pain. His birthright was taken away from him. He no longer plays the role of leader. For years he believed that history chose him to be the head of the masses. The masses came and put him aside. And now some one orders him about who has little respect for him, without any mercy. The son of the Masses tells the intellectual openly, to his face: 'You, brother, teach me what you know so I shall be able to get rid of you forever. I need your knowledge in order to construct my life, but you yourself, I do not need'. That is what pains the intellectual like a wound."

A letter from a certain A. Turick of Berlin to the Jewish paper "The Day," which is hostile enough to Bolshevism, gives an excerpt from a well-known German writer Holichter:

"The curse of mankind and especially of Russia is the intellectual. The man of the people has an instinctive communism; the people have an inborn sense of justice, simplicity and sociability and only the accursed intellectual invented egoism, the ideal of 'happiness' and he goes about with his eternal striving to live as a separate Ego. The intellectual never thinks of social
well-being, but always of himself. He creates philosophic systems and ‘welt-anschawngen’ and is satisfied with that; he measures everything by the standard of eternity, infinity, God. The people, fundamentally, is more far-seeing and human, and whatever bad characteristics it possesses are due to the influence of the intellectual. In Russia, the intelligenzia at first sabotaged the Bolsheviks and afterward supported them. The intelligenzia was the cause of all the peasant uprisings. It perverted the people, developing in the masses the ideal of false freedom. . . . and if Bolshevism falls, it will mean that the Victors would be the intellectual-bourgeoisie idealists who rooted themselves into the soul of the masses and poisoned it.”

Yes, that which is said above is truth itself. The curse of humanity is the intellectual, because he is the main misleader. The intellectual is most dangerous because he often poses as the friend of the workers, winning them over to his side through beautiful phrases. Then he betrays them on such a large scale that it is impossible for them to help themselves.

That was made clear during the war. Before the war, the intellectuals, the Scheidemanns, the Thomases, the Renaulds, Russells, Spargos, MacDonalds, Alberts, and so on, were constantly speaking of internationalism at the various Socialist Congresses. They spoke like angels of workers’ principles, but as soon as the governments declared war, so soon were those angels transformed into devils, and together with the ruling machine, sent the workers of one country with cannons, bayonets and hand grenades to kill their fellow workers of a different country.

And what did the intellectuals do in Germany? It is hardly necessary to repeat the story of the Eberts, Scheidemanns and Noskes, the intellectuals, the socialists who uttered words of gold before they attained power, who spoke, in Reichstag, in the name of the German workers, and who after they were in power, used that power to kill thousands of German workers only because the workers demanded a true workers’ republic and not a mere change in the form of government.

This is the historic role which the intellectuals played in every period. In every revolution, in every revolutionary outbreak, the worker alone, with his whole heart, with enthusiasm for a nobler future, obeyed the first call to battle and did not leave the field till the very end. The worker alone was the real revolutionist, the heroic soldier, while the intellectual was but the preacher of high ideals, the scheming politician, the reformist, the coward who in the most serious moments forsook his struggling comrades upon the field of battle. The intellectual flies from the
proletariat in the gravest period of the revolution, and especially after the revolution when he sees that there is no hope for him to become the officer, the possessor of power. Because this is the main motive which drives the intellectual into proletarian ranks, when he sees the coming of a storm, a revolution.

Marx in his historical works, concerning the uprisings in Vienna and in parts of Germany in 1849, speaks of the intellectuals in the same way:

"In every case (in the various uprisings) the truly militant class of revolutionists, the class that first grasped weapons and attacked the soldiers, consisted of workers of the cities. Part of the poorer classes, farm laborers and small farmers, naturally joined the revolution after its outbreak. A large number of young men of all classes stood for a certain time in the ranks of the revolutionary army. But this number constantly decreased when the situation assumed a more serious aspect. Especially the students, the representatives of "intellect," they loved to call themselves, were the first to forsake their banners, unless honored with the rank of officer, an honor which they seldom earned."

Kropotkin, in his great book "The Great French Revolution" brings out very plainly, with innumerable facts, the deep chasm that exists between the intellectuals and the common people, the men of the streets. With countless historic examples he pictures before us the differences in the revolutionary strivings between the ignorant masses and the various actions of the bourgeoisie, including the educated intellectuals who, at the beginning, were on the side of the common people.

From the people, Kropotkin tells us in a very interesting manner, came revolutionary action. The common people strove to make an end to the feudal system, fought against the priests, stopped the flight of the king, tried to bring the revolution to its logical conclusion. The masses were determined never to allow the return of the despotism of the monarch and the rule of the wealthy and of the priests; they organized insurrections and with arms in hand fought to push the Revolution forward and go on with the building of a new society. It was the common people who understood so well the dangers that surrounded the Revolution who had such a true understanding of the situation. True they were unable to express their thoughts or to give logical arguments. They merely felt but their feelings were superior to the thinking of the "statesmen," and it was they who saw the conspiracies hatched in the Tuileries and in the castles of the aristocrats.

It was the poor man, the man of the street, who fought for
the Revolution in every part of France. The Commune of the 10th of August was brought into life by the masses and not by any other section of the population.

This was the striving of the masses, as Kropotkin tells us in every page of his book. What were the strivings of the others, of the intellectuals and the middle class? The same as in every revolution in history.

They worked with all their might to seize the full powers of state and were interested only in preserving and increasing their wealth. They tried to obtain exactly what they were in need of, what the national economists called "industrial and commercial freedom," which meant full freedom for the employer to suck profits out of the workers and to enslave them. They worked for the Revolution and promised the people to take part in it, so long as power was not completely in their hands. But as soon as they were in the saddle they fought with arms in hand against the people who saw in the Revolution the means of freeing themselves of the double yoke of political and economic slavery. As soon as power was in their hands, they showed their love for property and their hatred for any effort on the part of the masses to destroy the old system. Still more, the majority of the "intellectuals" whom the people trusted, turned their backs upon the masses and joined the ranks of the defenders of order as soon as they saw the first sign of an uprising, so that they could keep the people in oppression and stifle the desire for Equality.

"The main aim of both the middle class and the intellectuals," says Kropotkin, "was the preservation of property, running like a black thread through the whole Revolution till the expulsion of the Girondists. It is also certain that if the idea of a republic frightened the middle class and even the Jacobins, it was because the people connected the idea of the republic with the idea of Equality and that meant equality of wealth and an agrarian law. That was the ideal of the Equalitarians, the Communists, the Expropriators, the Anarchists of that time.

"The middle classes and the intellectuals tried with all their power to suppress the movement of the people and brought the Revolution itself to a stand-still. 'It is shameful,' said the intellectual, Robespierre, 'it is shameful to mislead the aroused and uneducated people with the hope of a free government under the name of a republic. The destruction of the constitution can only lead to civil war which will result in anarchy.' The agrarian law is a swindle which crafty individuals use to mislead the masses. He rejected at the beginning all attempts at equalizing wealth. Always careful not to go against the opinion of the ruling class
at a definite time, he was cautious about throwing in his lot with those who marched with the people, in spite of the fact that he knew that the ideas of Communism and Equality were the only forces that could destroy the feudal system.

"Those intellectuals whom the Revolution pushed to the front, the apostles of the Revolution—amongst them honest men like Robespierre—lacked the necessary confidence in the Revolution, and still less in the people. Just as the parliamentary radicals of our time who fear to see the people come out on the streets, they did not have the courage to speak openly against Equality. They declared their position to be necessary to guard, at least, those liberties which were won in the Constitution. Rather than take chance with a new insurrection, they preferred the constitutional monarchy.

"Most of the historians, thanks to the authoritarian education which they received, picture the Jacobin club to be the initiator and the head of all the revolutionary movements in Paris and in the provinces. And for two generations everyone believed that. But now we know that such was not the case. The initiative of the 29th of June and the 10th of August did not come from the Jacobins. Quite the contrary. Even the most revolutionary of them were against an appeal to the masses. Only when they saw themselves pushed out of and overtaken in the revolutionary movement, they decided, only only a part of them, to take part.

"But with what fear in their hearts! They were willing to see the masses in the streets fighting monarchy. But they were afraid of the results. Perhaps the people would not be satisfied merely with the destruction of the power of the king! What if the commune of Paris, the extremists, the anarchists, should get the upper hand?

"The middle class, together with the intellectuals brought the Revolution to a stop. The scene was merely changed; the motives remained the same. The same actors, the same conspirators. The masses wished to go further, but those whom the waves of the Revolution carried to the very top of the movement, did not have the courage to go further. They were unwilling to let the Revolution put its hands upon the property of the aristocracy and the priesthood, and they tried their best to moderate, to hold back and finally to suppress the movement of the masses. Even the most radical and most earnest among them, the nearer they came to power, the more did they take into consideration the interests of the middle classes, in spite of the fact that they hated them. They suppressed their own desires for Equality and took
into consideration what the English middle class would think of them."

In short, no matter where you move the mirror, the same face is reflected, the same cowardly, traitorous intellectual. It is impossible that they should become proletarianized and it is foolish to expect of them with the exception of a very small percentage, true revolutionary action for only the proletariat can be really revolutionary.

Does not the question often come to our mind, why is it so? Should not, rather, the contrary be true that the educated intellectual should understand more, and feel more and, in reality, be the real revolutionist? How can it be explained psychologically? Paul Lafargue whom we mentioned before was also interested in this question. Speaking of the intellectuals, and seeking to convince them that they, of all people, should be the ones to come into the Socialist Party, because their work is lower even than common labor because the supply of intellectuals is far greater than the demand, he says:

"Imbeciles! Imbeciles! they have eyes but they see not that it is the capitalist bourgeoisie which establishes that degrading equality.

"We should have to put off the triumph of socialism not to the year 2,000 but to the end of the world if we had to wait upon the delicate, shrieking and impressionable hesitancy of the intellectuals. The history of the century is at hand to teach us how much we have a right to except from these gentlemen.

"Since 1789 governments of the most diverse and opposed character have succeeded each other in France; and, always, without hesitation, the intellectuals have hastened to offer their devoted services. I am not merely speaking of those two-for-a-cent intellectuals who litter up the newspapers, the parliaments and the economic associations; but I mean the scientists, the higher they raise their heads, the lower they bow the knee.

"It is not in the circle of the intellectuals, degraded by centuries of capitalist oppression, that we must seek examples of civic courage and moral dignity. They have not even the sense of professional class-consciousness.

"Their education ought to have given them the necessary intelligence to deal with social problems, but it is this very education which obstructs their hearing and keeps them away from socialism. They think their education confers on them a social privilege, that it will permit them to get through the world by themselves, each making his own way in life by crowding his neighbor or by standing on the shoulders of every one else. They
imagine that their poverty is transitory and that they only need a stroke of good luck to transform them into capitalist class. Education, they think, is the lucky number in the social lottery, and it will bring them the grand prize.

The intellectuals, in all that has to do with the understanding of the social movement, do not rise above the intellectual level of those little bourgeoisie who scoffed so fiercely at the bunglers of 1830 and who, after being ruined and merged in the proletariat, none the less continue to detest socialism; to such a degree were their heads perverted by the religion of property. The intellectuals, whose brains are stuffed with all the prejudices of the bourgeois class are inferior to those little bourgeoisie of 1830 and 1848 who at least were not afraid of gunpowder; they have not their spirit of combativeness, they are true imbeciles.”

Yes, Lafargue explains it correctly. We allow ourselves a sharper expression. We would liken the imbeciles to Jacob who, as it is said, even in his mother’s womb fooled his brother. We do not agree with Lafargue because he wants the intellectuals to enter the party while we say that if there are any in the party they should get out. But it does not matter. Their place is really in the Socialist Party.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTELLECTUAL EVER THE ARISTOCRAT—EVER THE RULER

TAKING historic facts into consideration, we see that the emancipation of an oppressed class was always the result of its own revolutionary initiative. From this we can draw the conclusion that the task of emancipating ourselves from the slavery of the master, of the oppressor, falls upon ourselves, namely, upon the workers.

If we believe in the well-known principle of the International, “that the emancipation of the workers must be accomplished by the workers themselves,” then we must act in accordance with that principle. Else it will appear that we are like the orator who, when he speaks, seems to mean what he says, but who in reality is only acting a part, reciting a declamation which he learned to say mechanically with the necessary gestures to attract the attention and gain the applause of the crowd. But there is nothing in his mind or in his heart. He does not think and does not feel.

We repeat that our emancipation depends upon our own efforts. Therefore, we must not surrender our activity and our
initiative to any group of intellectuals. They may claim to be our friends; they may insist, as much as they want to, that they believe in the same principles as we do, but we must know our own interests; we must realize that the intellectuals are not rebels and that the problem of the workers is only a side issue to them. If the intellectual does, at times, put on the clothes of the worker, it is but a mere imitation and nothing else.

Try to shake him up a bit. Beneath his worker’s clothes is still the aristocrat. He might be preaching Communism, or Socialism, but in reality he is a Nietzschean type, holding the masses in contempt and considering himself to be the super-man.

Always and everywhere intellectuals, or philosophers existed who loved to play with ideals, who loved to speak of a just social order, but only in so far as it would not disturb their aristocratic position, because they were born and raised in that position and can not be easily torn away from it. And in this connection we have in mind not the intellectuals mentioned in the first chapter, but men of sincere belief and ideals, who, notwithstanding, are still intellectuals.

Let us take for example the Greek philosopher Plato, who also wrote about Communism, but an aristocrat by birth, he looked upon the manual worker as a lower animal. He defended a society divided into two classes, intellectuals and workers. The intellectuals should be the aristocrats who were to rule, while the workers should be the slaves who were to work to support the intellectuals.

Plato was not of the sort of intellectual whom we described in former chapters, intellectuals who peddle with their knowledge and conscience as with ordinary commodities. Plato was an honest and original thinker and just like Socrates, hated the Sophists, who sold their knowledge and conscience for money. His aristocratic mind, however, could not conceive of any republic, other than one in which the people were divided into classes. He was at one with Aristotle, in thinking that slavery always existed and always would exist. They only desired that the power of government should be in the hands of the intellectuals. Then it seemed to them, there would a beautiful and ideal republic.

That is the striving of the intellectuals of all periods—that the power of government should be in the hands of a Plato, an Aristotle, a Hegel, an August Comte, etc.—such men who are in love with themselves and who have a profound contempt for the common people, “the rabble.”
The great Spencer, who, in some workers' circles is taken for an anarchist, could not understand how such a society could be built, where everyone could take whatever he needs and create as much as he can. It would work out that the unskilled will be the equal of the skilled and that the children of the former would have the same opportunities for education and development as those of the latter—and that is not in harmony with the laws of biology. Such a society can not exist—was his contention.

You understand, his bourgeois philosophic mind could not grasp the power of Solidarity and mutual help which will exist in a communist society. The same psychology is characteristic of all intellectuals.

Let us take Heinrich Heine for example. Well did he sing of the weaver, with feeling, with warmth, with sympathy, but Heinrich Heine, the radical was also Heine the Aristocrat. He was afraid that Communism would injure art, poetry, although in his later years he believed Communism would triumph and wished to see it victorious.

Oscar Wilde, the radical, with all his sincere wishes for the emancipation of the worker, which he so ably reveals in his "Soul of Man Under Socialism," nevertheless proves to be the intellectual, for after all, his every word shows his fear that the people will never free themselves by their own efforts; that they are not sufficiently capable of grasping freedom. His intellectual make-up could only grasp the false reasoning that only the agitators could free the worker, that from the masses themselves no great desire for freedom ever expressed itself, and naively observed, "Wealthy people are as a class, better than impoverished people, more moral, more intellectual, more well-behaved. There is only one class in the community that thinks more about money than the rich, and that is the poor." Is the reverse not true?

One noticeable exception was Louise Michel, who felt different about slavery. In her biography she vividly shows that the negro slaves in Caledonia, where she was exiled, struggled manfully, and heroically to attain freedom, and in fact, suspicious of the advances of the agitators, repulsed them, fearing they were false friends, so that it took strenuous labor on her part to prove to them that she was their ally.

Kropotkin, in his work "The Great French Revolution," speaks with a finer and truer understanding of the common people, than does any other intellectual, but such as he, who are so thoroughly saturated with the psychology of the masses, are exceptions among
their class. They are not to be blamed, because the aristocrat that is hidden in such persons, prevents them from having a true conception of the Communist future, and least of all, of the struggle which the proletariat must wage to achieve that future.

We say that even less do they appreciate the struggle, and will cite as an example, one whom we approach with the most profound respect and reverence, that immortal thinker Leo Tolstoy. In the time of the 1905 revolt in Russia, he made the following declaration to a correspondent of a Parisian newspaper: "I do not stand on the side of the Russian Autocracy, nor on that of the Revolution, for both use brutal violence and repel me. For me, one who throws a bomb at some coach is just as inhuman and horrible as a soldier who shoots down defenseless people."

You understand, Tolstoy, the rebel, Tolstoy, he who decried all Government, he who donned a peasant costume, he who idealized the plain man of the masses, when the time came that these self same masses, whom he himself had urged to throw off their shackles, through a supremely heroic gesture did attempt to free themselves, he condemned this noble revolt as an unnatural and criminal demonstration. What a foolish thought from such a brilliant thinker!

Of course one can point to the fact that this was the natural outcome of his whole philosophy of life, his humanitarianism, and this is true, but it is just as true that under his peasant costume lay hidden the erstwhile aristocrat, dormant but never extinct.

Thus, if we consider not and are careless enough to accept the intellectuals into our ranks, into our revolutionary organizations—if there are such—then we must expect that the organizations will lose their original character and be transformed through a program which will be dictated by the intellectual. It is possible, that so long as the intellectuals in the organization are few in number and have not sufficient power nor influence, they will obey the dictates of the workers, but as soon as they become more numerous and obtain the influence which they seek, then they will act as they wish and begin to dictate to the workers.

But you might ask, where will the workers be? Who tells them to be fools and allow themselves to be misled?

We will answer this question with another question. Where is the intelligence of so many wise people who permit themselves to be fooled by business agents? The answer is a simple one.

The business agent, if he is an experienced man in the business (and most of them are), and possesses in addition a certain
degree of intelligence analyzes the character of the man with whom he deals. He questions him concerning everything and becomes so intimate with him that he understands his psychology. Then he begins to work upon his spirit and instincts until he gets him under his control and the dupe agrees to do everything the business agent desires.

In such a manner do the workers and the revolutionary organizations come under the control of the professional intellectual.

The intellectual captivates the soul of the worker with these pictures which he sketches theoretically of the workers' life. He pictures for him the beautiful society which the worker has in mind and assures him that he agrees with him. He speaks in accordance with the psychology and outlook of the worker and the latter invites him as a friend into the revolutionary organization which he has created with so much pain.

The worker who comes from the masses, and who is honest and naive, believes the intellectual. He gives him the confidence which the intellectual seeks. The worker forgets himself. He forgets that this intellectual comes from a bourgeois class and that everything he says or writes he does so, not because he actually feels, but at best because he learned from books and not from actual experience. His pretense to proletarianism is merely theoretical, for in practice he acts aristocratically and egotistically and his place is not in a revolutionary organization of proletarians but in a society of "egoists."

Because the worker forgets, loses himself and becomes hypnotized, captivated by a speech of the intellectual, the latter gains a great deal.

He takes advantage of the worker's enthusiasm and continues his work. He flatters the worker and draws for him, with warm sympathy, the picture of Tantalus in whom the worker finds his likeness. The worker becomes entirely hypnotized and surrenders his initiative and activity into the hands of the intellectual. He acts like a mesmerized person, who does everything he is commanded at a definite time after his awakening. The worker does everything against his nature and will and imagines that he acts in accordance with his own thought and free will and not by the will of a stranger, an outsider.

Of course, when the worker becomes conscious, he looks about him and realizes what has happened. He begins to think and wants to remedy affairs, seeks all means to get out of the tangle, but for the time being it is useless. The damage has been done. Meanwhile he is caught in the net, in the hands of the business agent.
And difficult it is for the worker to free himself from the agent, from the intellectual, because he remains with him in one organization and takes advantage of the worker's weaknesses.

The intellectual considers himself too high above the worker to attend an ordinary business meeting. It may be that, having read of how the Kings of old refused to show themselves before their subjects to command more fear and respect, he tries to emulate their stand. A business meeting is too dry for him, but he generously allows himself to be elected upon the most important committees and the hard, dirty work, as he calls it, he leaves to the worker. He only comes when he needs to present an important report.

Naturally, being on the most important committees, he gets experience and training. His leisure time gives him an opportunity to think over carefully what he has to say in his report, and his education enables him to clothe his report with rhetorical phrases. Through this he further gains the confidence of the worker, especially of that worker whose convictions are not deep and whose consciousness is not sufficiently clear. The worker forgets that he himself should and could do that work. The only difference would be the lack of ornamental phrase. To compensate for that, there would be more feeling and truth and most important of all, the organization would not gradually come into the control of strange elements.

But such is the course of the labor movement, until finally the workers realize that there are two forces in the organization, each one pulling in a different direction, the intellectuals toward reformism and the workers toward revolutionary activity. Instead of fighting against the outside enemy, there arises a struggle within. And the struggle is not so easy, for the intellectuals who have penetrated into the organizations are in the saddle. They have the confidence and the power, and have the element who is less determined and less conscious on their side, and that element helps the intellectuals against the class-conscious workers who have finally recognized who the intellectuals are.

The fact that the intellectuals are on all important committees and have all the necessary connections in the organizations, strengthens their egoism. They begin to think of themselves as "emancipators," as the Moseses, who deliver the commandments from the top of the mountain, while the people cry, "We will obey!"

There must be no opposition. They threaten to expel the rebellious elements out of the organization and they do throw
them out, as we have seen in the Socialist Party. And the little sympathy which the intellectuals in the beginning showed for the cause of the workers, disappears. The call of their instinctive egoism, awakens in their hearts just as the call of the wild awakens in the dog, whom Jack London describes with so much talent in his “The Call of the Wild.”

Through their egoism they create a split in the organization. And who is to blame? The rebel whom they accuse of being disrupters, kickers! And the outside world believes them, because they are the leaders of the organizations and because those who control the press—the so-called radical press—are of the same type and it is to their interest to defend them. They have the press under their control and that is why they do everything they please.

The only means to avoid such things as described above is to exclude the intellectuals from any truly revolutionary, proletarian organization, so that the organization should be controlled by the workers themselves. If we do not do that and we accept into our organizations lawyers, doctors, druggists or even the more earnest intellectuals, then our organization may have the most revolutionary program, in the end it will be transformed into a watery, reformistic, Social-Democratic Party.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT CAN THE INTELLECTUAL DO TO HELP THE WORKERS?

But is it not a fact, one might ask, that among the intellectuals who might originate from bourgeois elements, are found some who are truly torn away from the environment in which they were raised and whose minds are occupied with thoughts of a Communist Society? Are there not some who sincerely advocate the cause of the ushering in of a better future? Shall we ignore and repel them?

Not at all! We have nothing of the kind in our mind. What we mean is that the worker should not surrender his initiative to others, as we explained in the last chapter. History has allotted the task of emancipating the working class from the chains of slavery upon the workers themselves and they must do it.

Alone, without help from any outsider, must the worker seek and find a way which will lead him out of the darkness in which he finds himself. And he will surely succeed as long as he will depend upon his own powers and be inspired with courage, idealism and self-sacrifice.
From the workers themselves must come out a conscious element, and an advance guard. That element, like the Roman slave, Spartacus, who came out from amidst the enslaved gladiators, will be the path finder and act like the hero Duncan, whom Gorky so well describes in his legend "The Burning Heart." Duncan found himself together with his brothers in a thick dark forest. It seemed as if they could find no way out of the forest themselves. Then Duncan with his nails tore his breast and taking out this living heart, he set fire to it and held it aloft as a torch of holy love and cried "Forward brothers, let us not stop till we get out of this dark forest into the free steppe." And if we act so courageously and so resolutely, we shall win for ourselves enough outside friends and we shall be able to use their friendship.

"We must not," says the anarchist Reclu, "we must not leave out a single thing that will be of aid to us; we must not ignore a single friend which historical development grants to us."

But it is not necessary for these friends to enter the workers organizations. Did the I. W. W. lose its outside sympathizers and friends by not allowing them to become members of the organization, because they are not workers? No! They remain the same friends and regard the I. W. W. with the same respect.

The friends of the workers will not be driven away and will not be lost because the workers decide to exclude them from their organizations, so long as they do not become actual workers. Neither do we have to worry for their activities. They can find enough ways to be active and to offer their services to the cause of the workers.

Let us say, for example, that a certain general, revolted at the hellish bourgeois social system, decides to help the workers free themselves from this system. Being experienced in military tactics and knowing that the enemy can be attacked only through organized might, he devotes his energies to training the workers in the art of war so that when the time comes, they will know how to fight the enemy. Can this general not do enough for the workers in such a way? Or must he really enter the workers' organizations so that he could order the workers about just as he commands the soldiers? We think that he can find enough ways to serve the workers without becoming a member of their organizations and the workers will therefore not lose him as a friend and if they will, then he convicts himself of insincerity.

Then again, let us take as an example a wealthy man, who comes to the conclusion that all he has, he derived through no effort of his own. Such an instance is Bishop William Brown,
who confesses in his useful book, "Communism and Christianism" that every dollar that he owns comes from the workers and he himself did nothing to earn it, as he says in his book: "During more than a whole generation Mrs. Brown and I have not produced a spoonful of any food, a thread of any garment or a shingle of any house; and yet we have had foods, garments and houses in abundance, with some to spare, while their producers have had them in scarcity with much to want" (pages 65-66).

Thus Mr. Brown, knows what to do with the money that does not belong to him. With it he spreads propaganda amongst the workers. He, according to the writer's information, offers everything he has, his wealth and his intellect to the cause of the workers.

So the other bourgeois intellectuals can find a way to show their loyalty to the working class. The physician can practice amongst the workers. He need not be a member of their organization in order to get advertised and then charge more than the ordinary physician for his services—as is the case in many instances. Neither is it necessary for the lawyer to be a member of a revolutionary workers' organization and take up labor cases and charge more than the lawyer who is not interested in labor, and then invest money in capitalist companies and at the same time be the tone-giver, the leader of a workers' party.

A professor of history could, for example, write a history of the struggle against Capital, or some journalist of renown could just as readily relate the events leading to the emancipation of the worker, as many do, and have done.

And if these friends merely desire to be together with the workers in one organization, then the workers must not be ashamed to tell them, "Take off your bourgeois clothes and go to work in our midst." And if they are in earnest, they will do it—and then they will be welcome.

CHAPTER V

LABOR UNIONISM AND THE INTELLECTUAL

Of all the organizations that come and go, with pretenses of representing the interests of the workers, the union is the purest. No matter how much we radicals should criticize a workers' union, one thing we must admit, namely, that a union is free of one disease, that it has no lawyers, doctors, druggists and other kinds of intellectuals in whom we have so little confidence and who are found in other so-called workers' organizations.
Unionism is, after all, a true workers' movement and is surely the oldest of all the movements and parties that exist now in the interests of the toilers. Kropotkin well remarks in his “State—Its Role in History”: “Thanks to our ignorance we boast at present of our International Workers' Congresses, we forget that such congresses were held by handicraftsmen and even apprentices in the 15th century.”

Unionism exists—we may allow ourselves to say positively ever since one worker had the possibility and opportunity to talk with his fellow worker concerning the best means of fighting their oppressors—or better still—Unionism exists since the existence of bosses and workers. And each union had to endure enough persecution in its struggle for the ideal of workers' solidarity. Sidney Webb expresses a correct view when at the beginning of the second chapter of his “History of Trade Unionism” he says: “The traditional history of the trade-union movement pictures the period prior to 1824 as one of uninterrupted persecution and unceasing suppression. Every union that can claim an existence of more than half a century possesses a rich collection of romantic legends (of persecution) of its early days.”

Naturally we do not forget that a union came into existence only with the purpose of bettering the immediate conditions of the workers and not with the class-conscious aim of abolishing the wage system. That is, although we can designate unionism as a movement of a class in its struggle against the oppression of another class, yet the foundation of the movement is based upon a craft-form of organization, a relic of the guilds of the middle ages, whose aim is to guard the standard of life of a certain craftsman.

Neither do we forget that these craft organizations outside of the fact that they have no aim of abolishing the wage system, the cause of all the workers' slavery, have no and do not wish to have any connections with other craft organizations even in their daily struggles. Thus there exists a labor aristocracy, a class of labor intellectuals, of a labor bureaucracy that has succeeded in gaining all the power in the unions. Against this clique of bureaucrats we must fight with all the power at our command, for as revolutionary workers we are interested in preventing any kind of intellectuals from gaining power in the labor-union movement. In spite of this we assert that the union movement is the purest, the only hope of the proletariat, where he can use his initiative, his own Ego and not be in the hands of strange elements.

The craft-alooftness, which prevails in the labor movement and brings about a condition where the engineer and conductor
look with contempt upon the common laborer who works on the tracks, must gradually disappear thanks to the great development of industry and to the struggles for better conditions which the unions are forced to wage in order to justify their existence.

Even in the first years of the union movement when industrial development was at a low stage, when machinery did not play such an important role, when only a few workers were under one employer, when the worker merely had his hand tool—even in those times, due to the persecutions which the unions had to bear, there was evident a feeling of solidarity amongst the whole army of wage-workers.

At present the class-war which is becoming constantly sharper and more bitter compels the labor-unions to become more conscious of the unity of the workers’ interests. The defeats which the workers suffer due to the labor aristocracy will finally cause the expulsion of the latter from the unions and then will disappear the inequalities that exist within the unions. That progress in the unions is unavoidable the great steel strike showed. We shall repeat what Foster says in his book “The Great Steel Strike”:

“For those progressives who will look upon the steel campaign from an evolutionary standpoint—that is by a comparison with past experiences—it will stand out in its true light as marking a great advance in trade-union methods and practices. It is true that the unions in the campaign made many mistakes, quarreled seriously among themselves, and put forth only a fraction of their real strength; but when one considers that they substituted a group of twenty-four unions for individual action in other campaigns; established a standard initiation fee instead of the multitude that existed before; adopted modern methods of organizing in place of the antiquated system previously prevailing; organized a joint commissariat, carried on a successful organizing campaign and waged a great strike together, one must admit that a tremendous stride forward has been made. The conclusion is bound to be optimistic and full of enthusiasm for the future.”

Yes, gradually, gradually driven by the ever-growing bitterness of the class-struggle the unions will be transformed into revolutionary organizations, and adopt the tactics which were advocated by Pouget, Pelloutier, Lagardelle of France and by the I. W. W. of America since the last sixteen years.

We surely do not forget, we dare not forget, that we must be on the constant watch in the unions as well as in organizations consisting of the vanguard and to wage a struggle against those elements who are eager to gain power in the unions for their
material benefit. And this element will not stop at any means to get rid of a revolutionary opposition. The "leaders" will do all in their power to crush these workers who try to bring in the thought of the New Unionism, a thought which is the very product of the workers' life.

That these labor bureaucrats, a product of the old craft-unionism will not hesitate at anything to get rid of an opponent is evident from an incident that occurred in local 39 of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. There they spread the false rumor, taking the word of an agent by the name of Bailin, that a certain revolutionary worker by the name of Goldman (A. Verblin) was a "spy." Thanks to the indifference of the masses the bureaucrats succeeded in expelling him from the union and at the writing of this pamphlet he has not yet been cleared of the blot which poisonous tongues cast upon him. And who knows how many other honest revolutionary workers suffer in other unions from such slanders?

But such a thing can happen because the class-conscious workers remain aloof from the activities of the union instead of participating in them and being constantly on guard.

We must "bore from within" just as we must bore from without. Here we agree with Foster's appeal that the militant element should participate in the activities of the union. We must remark, however, that we do not agree with his opinions concerning the I. W. W.

The I. W. W. has a wonderful history and as Haywood once remarked, "it is sprinkled with drops of blood." Its propaganda in the form of revolutionary strikes has been invaluable in furthering the class-struggle of America. Whatever progress the unions have achieved is in great measure due to the propaganda of the I. W. W. The thought of "One Big Union" which it has spread all over the country is now bearing fruit, and even in the steel strike the I. W. W. members played a part. We not only disagree with Foster but we are surprised that with his historic outlook on the labor movement, he should consider the I. W. W. in the light that he does. We also do not agree with Foster in his contention that one should only bore from within. True revolutionists do not stop to ask within or without. They agitate in any way that is possible. We hope that we shall not be accused of favoring a policy of dual unionism as Foster calls it.

The idea that the militant element should be active in the unions is a very logical one and we must give credit to the Anarchists who always preached the idea of working within the
unions which are after all the organizations that carry on the direct struggle against the exploiters and where the “propaganda of the deed” is practiced in reality and not only in words. It only grieves one to see that many of the Anarchists use out the idea not for a noble purpose but in order to get well-paid jobs in the unions. The Communists also advocate the policy of working within the unions and due to the fact that they have a disciplined organization they will be more successful than the Anarchists. It is assumed that the discipline will not be used out by persons anxious to hold power.

Unionism has such a character that even the most conservative leader (the honest conservative) can not merely utter empty phrases like the intellectual whom Edward Berthe describes sarcastically: “the intellectual who considers fighting ridiculous since talking is so easy.” The union leader can not exploit the workers with political phrases, tell them a story about doing them a lot of good if he will be elected to parliament, etc. He must do what the workers decide at the union meeting. He must act now and not postpone till the social revolution. He must speak of struggle and if he tries to escape from direct struggle he must disappear from the stage like the Rickert gang of the Garment Workers’ Union, whom the workers drove from their midst.

A union is based on struggle. Struggle is its life blood. Otherwise it would lose its foundation and be without support. That is why the old unionism is so bitterly criticized because it has lost the red color, the character of combat. Time has outlived the old unionism and it must give place to the new unionism that will drive the social pacifists, the intellectuals who deal with their intellect, as a horse dealer with his horses, out of power.

In the new union movement beautiful phrases will have no effect. Struggle will be the chief element and to struggle the professional intellectual is not accustomed. To that is accustomed only the actual worker, the true proletarian who has nothing to lose but his chains.

The union movement is the only workers’ movement and that is why we place so much hope in it. It will give up the pacifism which characterizes it at present; it will clear itself of the dirt that has gathered round it and will become what it should be the workers’ revolutionary movement.
CHAPTER VI
THE NEW CLASS OF PROLETARIAN INTELLECTUAL

We repeat that which we have just said in the previous chapter, that the unions being true workers' organizations, will turn into the path that the present time requires of them, into the path where the historic class struggle will lead them. Just as the sailing vessel had to give place to the modern steamship, as the ancient handtools were forced to disappear before automatic machinery which brought a revolution in the methods of production, and led to vital changes in the economic and social life of man, just so will the old unionism, with or without the consent of the leaders, have to give way to the new unionism.

This is certainly not a prophecy or a picture like the one which the intellectual Sorel, who is considered by many to be the theoretician of Syndicalism, makes of the general strike. He considers the general strike to be a social myth—an idea in which there is certainly no logic because that would mean that the worker merely imagines a general strike, which can give him inspiration, but can not occur in actuality, as Pouget pictures it with such force in his "Syndicalism and the Co-operative Commonwealth."

In a real movement there is necessary something more than a picture in the imagination. Mere pictures are good for poets. They can have the pleasure to have phantasies such as the "Ancient Mariner."

We can not afford to deal with phantasies, we must deal with reality and penetrate deep into the heart and soul of the labor movement. Doing this we cannot ignore the union movement, as some intellectuals do, when they assert that the unions are only "counter-revolutionary organizations" and there is nothing to do in them. Surely some of them will be counter-revolutionary but that cannot be the truth in the case of all of them.

The union movement, if one looks at it from a historic point of view, has made great progress in the idea of the class-struggle during the last few years. That is an indisputable fact to the one who was active in the unions and who has seen their development with his own eyes. We must come to the conclusion that the unions will play the main role in a revolution. Lenin, in his "Left Wing Communism," discussing the question whether revolutionists should participate in reactionary trade-unions says:
"Without the closest connections with the Trade Unions, without their hearty support and self sacrificing work, not only in economic but also in military organizations, it would have been, of course, impossible to govern the country and to maintain the dictatorship for two and a half years or even for two and a half months." Lenin understands the matter rightly. He needs no magnifying glasses to see it in its length and breadth. With this fact we must reckon a great deal.

The unions, however, will not only be an instrument which one can use in the struggle; they will be an eternal institution. These countless unions which were built through so much sacrifice on the part of the workers, and which will grow in numbers in the near future, will form a union of industrial communes, which, after the victorious struggle, will direct their efforts to social activities, to the organizing of production and distribution. We are building the new society in the shell of the old," says the preamble of the I. W. W. And that is the real truth without exaggeration.

But that which we are interested in bringing out in this chapter is that the new unionism creates a new intelligentsia, a workers' intelligentsia in contra-distinction to the professional intelligentsia of which we spoke in the whole pamphlet.

The difference between them is this: that the professional intellectuals try to abolish the present system by words while the proletarian intellectuals do so by deeds. The former, for the most part, are revolutionists because they, like the old priests who desired priestly gifts, aim at getting greater privileges. The sincere ones are Don Quixotes, because they have no intimate knowledge of the workers and they can not feel with them, no matter how hard they try to imitate the workers.

The proletarian intellectual, raised up in a working-class environment, and having passed through all the experiences of the workers, will be imbued with the proletarian spirit and will therefore be far from false and traitorous thoughts.

With the first the class struggle is a theoretical question, with the second it is an experience of life, a question of his own class. The first is merely crafty like a fox without courage to act and that is why he preaches parliamentarism, because there he only needs to show his theoretical powers. The second is like a lion full of courage not only to speak but to act and filled with a true desire to free himself from the chains and that is why he accepts direct action.

And these proletarian intellectuals are the only ones who can be considered the vanguard of the working class.
The question comes up, are there such intellectuals in the labor movement? Yes, there are. From a distance it may appear as if there are none, because if we take a paper in our hands we see that at a workers’ mass meeting there are scheduled to speak a whole row of doctors and lawyers. This and this doctor will speak or that lawyer and so forth. And one could think that there are no intelligent workers who could take the place of these intellectuals. The fact is otherwise. Ask who are the editors of the I. W. W. papers and magazines, who write most of their pamphlets, and you will find that they are workers. And who are the main officials? Common lumberjacks who are now paid officials and on the next day plain workers. They are not like the professional intellectuals who must make a living out of their intelligence. They are workers who, when their term of office is over, go back to their work. And not only is this the case with the I. W. W. but with plain trade unions. With the exception of a few intellectuals who come into the unions due to the influence of the socialists who are at the head of these organizations and to the Gomperses who are interested in preventing the existence of any revolutionary element in the unions, it can not be denied that the unions are led by workers. And the papers of these unions contain excellent articles written by workers concerning trade and other questions which are of interest to the labor movement, and these questions are intelligently discussed.

It is interesting to know that not only is there appearing such a class of proletarian intellectuals, but there is also a discussion as to how to prevent these new intellectuals from becoming a new aristocracy. Experience has shown that workers elected to a paid office and who remain there for a long time and lead a better life lose the psychology of the worker. And these ex-workers themselves mislead the masses. We see, therefore many resolutions introduced at union conventions (such resolutions were introduced at the convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Cap-makers Union and other organizations) which declare that the officials should not keep office for more than a year and must go back to work afterward. And during the time that the official is in office he should receive only those wages which the average worker of his trade makes throughout the year. Such resolutions and others of the same nature are introduced and naturally are opposed by the leaders and those who hope to take their places.

But it will not help them. These ideas which are closely connected with the idea of the new unionism must ultimately prevail and it is the duty of every intelligent revolutionary worker to
work in the unions and try to bring those ideas into realization all the quicker.

The vanguard of the working class must exert all its efforts to throw all the undesirables out of the labor movement and thus leave the path open to a victorious proletariat.
New Pamphlets Just Off the Press

ENGLISH

The Struggle for Power, by Albert Verblin. A refutation of the arguments presented by Hillquit in his "From Marx to Lenin."

The Intellectual and the Worker, by Philip Kurinsky. Discusses the historic role of the intellectuals in relation to the workers—their harmful effects upon the workers' organizations, etc.

What Is This Shop Steward's Movement? In English, by Tom Walsh, General Secretary of the Building Trades Department of the Shop Steward movement. A clear, concise explanation of the shop steward form of organization. Five cents each. Three dollars a hundred.


JEWISH

Revolutionary Song Book. In Jewish. Contains all the latest revolutionary songs and old favorites of the radical movement. Illustrated with pictures of some of our martyrs and rebels. Price 10 cents each. Five dollars a hundred.


Other pamphlets in English and Jewish will be announced shortly. Send all orders to

MODERN PRESS
Box 205 Madison Square Station
New York, N. Y.