

You and Your Job

By CHARLES SANDBURG



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BY CHARLES SANDBURG.

Dear Bill:

Your last letter is here, the one in which you talk about the man who is out of a job. You say, Bill, that the man who is out of a job has only himself to blame. You say it's the laziest man in a shop or store who is the first to be laid off when hard times come. And you're correct there, Bill.

You say that the fellow who is always kicking about his job and his pay and the way he's treated is among the first to be given the merry release. You're right there, too, Bill. It's the agitator, the man who is not satisfied, the man who wants more and always more, who is the first to get it, and he gets it where the Thanksgiving Turkey gets the bright and shining edge of the farmer's ax.

You tell me about the fellow who goes around whining "hard times," asking for credit till his credit is no good, letting his wife and children go ragged and hungry while he guzzles away at beer and cheap whisky all the nickels and dimes he can pick up by begging and wheedling. You say this fellow could get all kinds of jobs if he wasn't so particular about ditch-digging, lawn-mowing, window-washing, working on a farm or at odd jobs to be had everywhere. You say he is too hoity-toity proud to soil his hands with real work. You call him "a quitter." And

so he is. I'll agree with you, Bill, in calling him "a quitter," but right here is where I'm going to quit agreeing with you and argue some points. It's you and me to the mat now on a big proposition.

Who made this man a quitter? There's a question worth asking and worth trying to answer. In the first place, he had no choice about coming into this world, did he? His parents brought him into life on this planet without asking him whether he wanted to come or not. His birth was social, his life and history development have been social. And when I say "social," I mean that what he learned and did and became was the result mainly of contact with other people.

What you do yourself is *individual*. What you do by or with or for others is *social*. Get the distinction, Bill? Well, paste it in your hat and fasten it in your memory. But don't lose it. If I can get you to keep in mind this difference between what is social and what is individual, I'll hammer you into a Socialist.

Who makes the quitters, Bill? Society. Who and what is society? You and me and the man across the street and around the corner and the people uptown and downtown and out in the suburbs and on the farms, all of us together make up society. We elect the men who write the laws and pass the laws, we elect the men who are supposed to enforce the laws. And now you see that if the laws are such that they allow social conditions that produce quitters, then the society that elects men

who make such laws is responsible for having made those quitters, and society ought to be ashamed of the job.

A good deal of brag and congratulation is let loose once in a while about "the self-made man." It always reminds me of the barker in front of the museum. He bawls out, "Walk right up, ladies and gentlemen. We have on exhibition here Jo-Jo, the dog-faced boy. He was born forty miles from land and forty miles from sea." There is no such thing as a "self-made man." He is as impossible as a perpetual motion machine. He is forty miles from land and forty miles from sea! A man can get an education without going to college, but the man who gets an education without going to college owes a debt of gratitude to the men who cheered him, women who inspired him, enemies who goaded him; he owes a debt to a thousand forces and circumstances that he did not create, but which were a help to him. His education was *social*.

Fat, prosperous millionaires riding in red automobiles tell us they got rich by "individual initiative," whatever that means. I don't object to men being fat and prosperous, but I do object to their trying to stuff us with the flimsy fallacy that a man can create by his own efforts a million dollars' worth of wealth. S'help me, I can't see it.

The very speech in which we talk to each other is a thing that grew through centuries. If you had been born on certain South Sea islands, Bill, you wouldn't have had more than about two hundred words to talk with. Instead of

saying, "Please pass the butter," you would ejaculate "Umph," and let it go at that. The average man in our civilization has about fifteen hundred words at his tongue's end for emergencies. The latest and completest dictionary has more than 200,000 words. All these words have grown by the efforts of thousands of generations of men and women and children trying to make themselves understand each other better. Language is a social product, and so are many other things. In fact, it would be hard to find a thing that was purely and unadulteratedly an individual product.

I've been reading some history lately. I don't believe all I read—I wouldn't swear to everything I see in type—but I believe what looks true and reasonable. And I learn that there is good proof that at one time men could not write. The reason they could not write was that there was no alphabet to write with. At one period men had a clumsy way of making records by pictures, but they were worse pictures, Bill, than we used to draw when we were in short pants studying the First Reader. But slowly, little by little, the alphabet came. The men with high brows and microscopes can't find the date it was invented—it grew—it was evolved. Piece by piece, through changes and experiments, we got the alphabet, and so it was with the printing press, and so with the steam engine. A modern locomotive of the latest model is said to represent ideas contributed by more than eleven thousand men. The first hairy, primeval creature who carved

a wheel in the dusk of the jungle did his part while he sang, cheerfully, "Every Little Bit Helps." Our tools, our houses, our food and clothing, our very manners and customs and songs and arts, are all things that trace far back—far back into the hazy beginnings of history.

Cities and temples have fallen into decay and ruin. Where the rain washes on crumbled pillars, and sunbeams and shadows play about silent crevice and wall, once was the clamor and tumult of surging human life. The kings and chieftains are dead. The crowds that applauded them are under the grass roots. But many and many a lesson they learned, many and many a trick they found of using the forces of nature, many and many a habit and trait and custom they acquired, are ours—ours today.

We are born social creatures. We live as social creatures.

Do you see, Bill, how your interests and mine and everybody else's are all tangled up and woven in with each other? Do you see how society, all of us together, produced Rockefeller, Thaw, and the one-legged man on the corner selling lead pencils? What would the world be without people? Solitary confinement is the cruelest punishment you can give a man—the chances are he will go crazy and try to kill himself when enough hours have passed during which he has heard no human voice and known

no human touch. What does a singer or a poet or an actor amount to without listeners? What is a beautiful building worth if there isn't anybody to look at it? How could the gay and prosperous children of fortune go shooting over the roadways in an automobile unless ten thousand men had mined the ore and smelted and welded and stood at machines and assembled the parts, and made it into a thing of cunning and wonder?

If you can't find people to agree with you, you like people to dispute with. What's the use of living if there are not other people? Do you see, Bill, an individual life, a life all by yourself, isn't worth two whoops without a *social* life, a life with other people.

And now to get back to "the quitter." I said that we—all of us, society—made him. Bill, you and I had fairly good homes when we were boys. Our father was lucky enough to have a job most of the time, though it was a little hard back in '93, when the shops ran only four hours a day. Father worked hard and didn't get laid off, but I can remember yet that hunted, weary look he would have when he'd come home at noon, done with work for the day, and would mumble, "They say maybe we'll all be laid off to-morrow." Bye and bye times got a little better and we could have new shoes a little oftener, there was milk for the coffee, and not so much of potatoes everlastingly on the table. I remember we began to take a daily paper again,

and gee! I was glad when we quit molasses and got back to butter for the bread. We had a fairly good home, Bill. We got a good deal out of life "when we were a couple of kids."

Many a summer morning we started from home with bread and jelly and cold ham done up in a newspaper, and we walked out over hills and through woods and got acquainted with birds and bees and squirrels and flowers. At noon we would eat our lunch, chewing every mouthful, to get all the taste and flavor and chew we could out of it. Then we'd lay back on the grass and drink in all the joy of being lazy, watching for yellowhammers and redheads, listening to the call of the catbird and the tattoo of the woodpecker. Regular little savages in our own way, we couldn't stay "lazy" very long, so off we'd go for the swimmin' hole. We would dive from the old plank springboard, duck each other, count how long the other fellow could "stay under," throw mud and splash and frolic. It was a glad young Maytime of life for us, Bill. We had lots of play. You were the first boy in town that could throw an "out-curve" and a "drop." I could catch flies and bat and run bases with any of them. On rainy days we would go out in the barn and read blood-and-thunder stories about detectives and train-robbers—and we had just enough sense to enjoy them without believing them. Then, later, we learned to like good books, and on long winter evenings we read about the world's great battles and kings and warriors. And do you remember the time when you almost

cried and broke out saying, "We haven't got any chance like boys used to have—there ain't no wars nor nothin' so we kin show the stuff we're made of." For all our little blames and quarrels and mistakes, those were great days, Bill, great days!

Now, Bill, old pardner, do you see that we had advantages? We didn't go at hard work till after boyhood, when we were almost grown men. What do I mean? What's my point? Why, just this, Bill: *The quitter has no childhood*; he is put to work in his young days when he ought to be in school, and battered and beaten and torn and worn in the gray air and grime of mine or mill or shop, so when the time comes that he ought to be a man of ability and power, he is just a wreck, a miserable, fumbling, stumbling, played-out and done-for wreck of a man. When the last United States census was taken, an army of 1,700,000 child laborers, all under fifteen years of age, was at work in this country. If, from the time you were twelve years of age, until you were eighteen, Bill, you had been forced to stand at a loom in a cotton mill, or had picked slate as a breaker-boy in a mine, or had been a "carryin' in boy" in a glass factory, you would have been ready to quit! You would have been shot to pieces, just a runt of a man, and if you had heard some Shakespearean reader recite, "What a piece of work is man! In apprehension how noble," you would have gasped out, "The hell you say!"

The "quitter" comes from many different places. I was in Oshkosh a few days ago, and

was told of a laborer who while at work was crushed to death by a falling wall. The oldest of his nine children is fourteen. There was no insurance—a man who gets \$1.50 a day and has a wife and nine children takes food from living babies who are hungry if he pays life insurance premiums. Now, Bill, I'm not absolutely certain, but if I were a betting man, I would bet you a thousand to one that some of those nine children will be quitters. Of course, Senator Dolliver, Andrew Carnegie, and preachers and editors tell us that poverty is an advantage. They say a man has to have obstacles to overcome in order to develop. With this proposition I agree. I think it is true that the muscles we exercise are the ones that grow, the faculties we use are the ones that develop, and the man who has never wrestled with problems and difficulties has never known the joy of living. But over and along with this I place the proposition that a man will grow and develop in body and brain only when employed at work that gives him some high degree of pleasure. I believe in "obstacles," but I say that a system such as the capitalist system, putting such obstacles as starvation, underfeeding, overwork, bad housing, and perpetual uncertainty of work in the lives of human beings, is a pitiless, ignorant, blind, reckless, cruel mockery of a system.

Senator Dolliver says poverty is an advantage. He may have believed in underfeeding when he was a boy, but when I last saw the

distinguished advocate of poverty, the fat clung to him in heavy collops and round flanks.

One reason I'm a Socialist is because the Socialists were the first to fight to abolish child labor, and to-day the Socialist party is the only one that has dared to declare in its platform that it is unalterably opposed to child labor, and that it will do all in its power to remove all conditions that make it possible for human beings anywhere to be underfed and overworked.

This one man crushed by a falling wall in Oshkosh isn't a single lonely accident all by itself. The charity bureaus report that 50,000 such deaths occur each year, and in addition to these, 450,000 are injured and disabled. Ten per cent of these have to accept charity.

Our military soldiers we pension and honor. Our industrial soldiers we make into beggars. Choked and suffocated in mine explosions, mangled by flying projections of machinery, caught under car wheels, toppling headlong from scaffoldings, they are brave, useful men—heroes of the industrial army. Some have provided insurance, some have friends, some are able to work, though crippled, but ten per cent are made beggars, and in desperation hold out their hands for charity and learn the shame of alms.

It is time for the standing army to sit down. Some of the millions of dollars used to maintain idle garrisons could be passed along to the crippled industrial heroes.

Fifty years ago tramps were scarce, so the silver-haired grandfathers tell us. An occasional Weary Willie would come along, and

people really liked him because he was so peculiar, such a curiosity. But Josiah Flynt, who traveled over America with all kinds of tramps, estimated in 1901 that the tramp army numbered 500,000. Some people say it's terrible that so many men should have so far lost their manhood as to refuse to earn a living. But it would be equally terrible if the whole tramp army should start to earnestly look for work. They would take the places of men who are at work and have families to support. They could live cheaper than the man with a family, and they would bring down wages and lower the standard of living. Remember this when the unshaven bum batters your back door and asks for coffee.

Since the panic broke on us last fall, more and more men have been losing their jobs, and to-day, without a doubt, many millions of men are out of work. The *New York Times* publishes a statement that in New York city at least a quarter of a million men are idle. Arthur Ruhl says he answered an ad which called for a man to address envelopes at \$1 per day. And Ruhl found three hundred men at the office clamoring and elbowing for the job.

It's a sickening, tiresome, disheartening business, Bill, to be out of a job and go from one place to another asking if you can sell your labor power and have people look suspiciously at your shabby clothes and tired face, and tell you there's nothing doing. Into shop and store and hotel and factory you go, and the answer is always. "Not to-day." Your heart sinks, and

you feel a bitterness clutch at your throat, for you are on the way that gathers the criminal, the booze-fighter and the dope-fiend. I know, because I was up against it in 1897, when the capitalist newspapers were full of "Business Resuming Its Stability, Reports of Great Gains in Trade." It was summer, and the Chicago papers said \$3 a day was being paid harvest hands in Kansas. On the bumpers of freight trains and the tops of passengers, I went West from Illinois, you remember. When I got to Kansas City, the wage for harvest hands was reported at \$2.50 per day. Then every mile I traveled westward, the wages dropped. And when I got to Larned, Kansas, and took a job throwing wheat on the tables of a threshing machine, I was getting \$1.25 a day and board. The job lasted three weeks. So I don't blame a mechanic who is used to life in a city, and has a wife and children to care for, if he fights shy of advertised farm work. A "hired man" on a farm generally works from "sun-up to sun-down," and there is nothing steady about the job. Besides, the railroads have a custom of demanding money, real coin, from those who use their trains to go from one locality to another.

A scientific Socialist calls a man out of a job "an industrial reserve." This means, Bill, that if the man who has a job won't behave himself and take what the boss gives him, the idle hungry man at his elbow will be used. The man who is out of a job is very useful for breaking a strike and forcing down wages—that's one reason trade unionists and Socialists everywhere

fight side by side to get laws passed requiring the government to guarantee work to every man who is willing to work.

You see, Bill, we're manufacturing quitters, turning them out by the thousands every month. In London they call them Hooligans, and the East End of London is a pit of sodden hopelessness. A man in America wrote a book showing that New York is almost as bad as London. This man's name is Jacob Riis. Theodore Roosevelt, who likes to have his picture taken on horseback, said of Jacob Riis, "He is the most useful man in America." The imperial personage in the White House has thus commended Riis, and his book on "How the Other Half Lives," shows a man of ability, courage and sympathy. No one would call him a quitter. Well, Riis wrote one book in which he gives the story of his life, and tells us of a critical moment, when he, "the most useful man in America," was a quitter. He had been knocked from one place to another, working at different jobs. He was discouraged because he couldn't get anything steady, and one night he sat out on the end of a pier in New York harbor. His money was almost gone. No job was in sight. He seemed farther than ever from bringing over to America the girl he loved in Denmark. For weeks he had been turned down wherever he asked for work. He thought it all over, what a curious gamble life is, how two men may have equal gifts and both work hard and long for their ambitions, and one will get rewards and be decked with laurels and the other go in want

and be tossed to the dogs as a loser. He thought it all over, and as he looked down at the softly plashing waters, the black waves fascinated him—it would be so easy to slip down and have all the bitterness and weariness done with and over—forever. He recovered himself and fought away the despair. But if a daring and resourceful fighting man, such as Jacob Riis has proven himself, could even for a moment be tempted to give up the struggle for existence, how about the millions of others not so young, not so hardy and enduring, not so rich with hope and health?

I believe in men. I believe if you give men a decent chance they will do the decent thing. A man will generally go the right-way if he isn't pushed and pulled in wrong directions by forces he can't control. When I see millions of men out of work, and more tramps and criminals coming on every year, I know better than to blame the men. I know there is a plan, a system of forces back of it all, acting as a cause. The Socialist says, "Remove the cause."

Bill, I'm going to quote some figures to you, and I ask you to be patient through the figures, and then I'll quote some poetry. One per cent of the people in this country own fifty-four per cent of the wealth. Fifty per cent have no property at all. And ten millions are sunken and mired in a poverty rotten and beastly, where hope sickens and the password is a curse. An officer of the Indiana state board of health says that sixty-five per cent of the deaths of infants below two years of age are due to poisoned and adulterated food. Ninety per cent of

all children who enter the public schools of America do not enter high schools. Those are the figures. Here is your poetry:

From the sweat of their brow the desert blooms
And the forest before them falls;
Their labor has builded humble homes,
And cities with lofty halls,
And the one owns cities and houses and lands,
And the ninety and nine have empty hands.

The one big fact that spreads itself all over the history of the last century is the change from individual production to social production. Marvelous inventions of machinery have come. Fingers of brass and arms of steel are now turning out articles once made by the fingers and arms of men and women. Where the workmen used to own their tools and one man did all the work on a given article, to-day they gather in regiments and brigades of hundreds and thousands under one roof. Two hundred and sixty needles per minute, six million match sticks per day, five hundred garments per day, each by a machine tended by one little boy. One man can produce boots and shoes for 1,000 people. One man can produce bread for 200 people. One man at a linotype machine does the work formerly done by eight men. One horseshoe machine displaces 500 men working by hand. This displacement of men, and this increased producing power, is found in almost every industry. Along with this improvement in production has come improvement in transportation

and communication, so that with railroads, steamships, electric lines, telegraphs and telephones, the distribution of goods after they are produced is faster and easier than ever in history.

Now, all these new things are owned and held by a small class of people, the capitalist class. The instruments of production and distribution are so controlled by this class that they can give the workers prosperity or misery, as it pleases them. To one who looks into the matter, this capitalist class is found to be very small. Sereno Pratt, the editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, writing a special article for the *World's Work Magazine* for April, 1904, says that the final control of the banks, railroads, telegraph lines and dominant industries of the United States centers in the hands of a group of twenty men. Instead of one czar, like Russia, we have twenty! These men are in politics and dictate the legislation of the national congress and that of the state legislatures. They have their hands in the so-called high sanctuary of the supreme court and get decisions in their favor when they need them.

Part of this capitalist class has done worthy work. John D. Rockefeller, J. Pierpont Morgan, Edward Harriman, have brought together interests that were fighting each other. In doing this, these men have centralized industry and transportation so that when the people are ready to assume control of them and operate them for the benefit of all, they will be ready. But there are others in the capitalist

class who cannot furnish a good excuse for being on earth. The Goulds, Vanderbilts and Astors, for instance, live in luxury and do no useful work at all. They pass out pittance for charity, "the great bluff of our time," as John Graham Brooks calls it. But, in the main, they are leading voluptuous, lascivious lives that stain and corrupt all who come near them or even see them. At present we are leading to a point where some petted and delicate woman like Marie Antoinette, on being told that the mob in the streets has no bread, will ask, "Well, why don't they eat cake, then?" The extremes of wealth and poverty in America are as sad and serious as those of Europe. Stables for blooded race horses are fitted with mahogany and marble, and each horse has his special groom; a few miles away men jostle each other to get room to sleep on the filthy floor of an insanitary 5-cent lodging house. A woman takes her poodle with her to the opera to hear Caruso sing; babies die in the slums for lack of food. A bulldog of specialized type sells for \$8,000; at foundling asylums infants may be had for the asking. Small families live in large houses; large families live in small houses.

All these things trace back finally to the industrial and political worlds for causes. If nobody gets too much everybody will get enough. Modern society is mob at the top and mob at the bottom. The rich have their gilded hells and folly; the poor have their slums and vice. Between the two, as the only saving force in modern civilization, stands the working class

organization, the producers, who by mental and manual labor hold a balance of sanity and give a promise of a better day for humanity.

You will hear of different kinds of Socialists, but there is one belief by which you can always locate the real Socialist, the type of man who has played a part in welding the working class into a restless, fighting, discontented, intelligently meddlesome revolutionary force. This man, the true Socialist, realizes the class-struggle. He sees a war going on between two classes, the capitalist class and the working class. Strikes, boycotts, demands for higher wages and better factory conditions on the part of the toilers; lockouts, blacklists, Pinkertons, bull pens and the preaching of "thrift and industry" on the part of the employers—these are partial evidences of the class struggle.

The one clear and established fact, however, which the capitalists do not like to have agitated is the fact that the capitalist class is, as a class, conscious of its best interests. The capitalists know what they want and get what they want. The workers, as a class, do not know what they want, are not conscious of their own best interests.

The working class will have to educate and organize itself for its own salvation. Any salvation passed out on a platter by the capitalists is charity and can be taken away as it was given.

All of this I am giving you has a historical and scientific basis. The Socialist, the class-conscious workingman, has generally read and

thought much; he has let the alarm clock in his brain go off; he is awake to the great, throbbing human drama staged around him. And he knows the class-struggle is no bookish bubble-thing, but a reality of blood, sweat and tears, of desires and passions.

You must remember, Bill, that in this letter I am giving you only a few fragments, stray links and signs of the great world movement of Socialism. Read "The Common Sense of Socialism," by Spargo, and see how practical and sensible Socialism is. Read a little book by Engels, "Socialism Utopian and Scientific"; and you will see that the Socialism of to-day is not a picture, but a battle! We have passed on from dreams to facts. Even so.

Get the Socialist Party Platform and Declaration of Principles. Read it carefully through and through. Then fold it, put it in your vest pocket, carry it around with you, and whenever you have five minutes to spare, go over it again. Keep this up until you understand it from beginning to end as well as you think you understand the American Declaration of Independence. You may have the Socialist idea without knowing it. You may find just what you've been looking for.

I was told a few days ago that there are two words which practically all immigrants to this country learn first of all. The new-come foreigners pronounce and remember those two words as they would speak of things that are sacred and powerful. Those words are "job" and "boss." Without a job you can't live.

Whoever owns your job owns you.

You're a lucky man if you have a good job. A good job means plenty to eat, plenty to wear, and a good home.

Now listen! If a job is a good thing you ought to do everything you can to hold your job. You may do your work right and satisfy your boss. But you know, and everybody else knows, that many a good man who does his work right and pleases his boss gets laid off, loses his job.

The boss says, "Hard times—no orders—we have to shut down." Then the man who is out of a job says, "But I have to live! I and my children have to eat, and the grocer wants cash." But the boss only answers, "I can't help it. Business is business."

If you can't get another job when you're laid off, you can do three things. You can starve. You can steal. You can beg. And any one of the three is the way to hell and degradation.

You don't want to do any of these things, do you? You want to do all you can to make your job safe, don't you? You want work all the time. And in exchange for that work you want a decent, comfortable living. You are not a keg of fish nor a lump of coal, to be juggled in the markets.

Now, you know that politics has a lot to do with your job. You know that our state and national government is a great, strong power that can help the working class. You know, also, that the worst time to think about politics is when you are out of a job. Now is the

time to think it over! Don't wait till the works shut down and you're tramping the streets. Let your brain work now. Think about politics on pay day and between pay days. Think it over now!

Now, Bill, there's just about one more point, and then I'll make my exit for this time. Pay particular attention to this, and, in the words of Marc Antony, "Lend me your ear." This is important. The question is: What have the old parties done for the workingman? Do the Republicans and Democrats have any real, hearty interest in getting better living conditions for the working class? They say they want "justice to labor." But here are the facts, Bill. Neither the Republican nor Democratic parties has dared to say in its platform that it is opposed to child labor. Neither has dared to say a word commending the work of the trade unions. When Wall street cried out last year that money was needed to head off a panic, the secretary of the United States treasury brought them the funds they called for—and Republicans and Democrats assented to it and let it happen. But when labor bodies and Socialist organizations over America pleaded with Congress that it order the construction of needed public works, so that the millions of idle men might have jobs, Congress did nothing all winter except pass the Aldrich bill, giving the bankers of the country power to issue \$500,000,000 more of currency. This is only one instance where the Republicans and Democrats showed that they are really one party—

but there are hundreds of other instances. The thing is all so clear that when a workingman once sees it he is with the Socialist party, first, last and always.

Do you remember, Bill, when we played football, that old cross-play we used to fool the other teams? They thought the ball was going one way when it was going another. Well, that cross-play has been used on the American workingman over and over again by the Republican and Democratic parties. At elections, each side generally puts up two nice men who believe in the same nice things. The voters have a guessing contest to find out which of the two is the nicer man.

Get next to these facts: The Democratic party is not the workingman's party. We had hard times under the Democrats. The Republican party is not the workingman's party. Three million desperate, hungry men are out of work in this country now, and every one of them is after your job if he can get it. And you may be next. The way things are now, you can't swear that next month you will be safe at work, getting steady pay. You are not sure, and nobody else is.

The Republicans and Democrats in Congress could help out on this terrible problem of work for every man who wants work. But the truth is that the Republicans and Democrats are really one party. They all belong to the same gang and vote the same way, in favor of the millionaires and against the working class, on important bills. They make a good many bluffs,

and try to fool us by passing a few laws that never work out. But if you will look up the records of the State legislatures and the Congress at Washington, you will find no real difference between Republicans and Democrats.

Here's the reason: The big business men of the country are in politics. The men who own the banks, the railroads and the trusts in steel, oil, coal, meat and other things, are in politics all the time. They pay the campaign bills. They run the Republican and Democratic parties. They run the government. They make the laws.

Here is a certainty, though: The workers simply must have their own political party. "If labor will not help itself, then God help labor." The workers must agitate and educate. They must raise their own campaign funds and work out their own salvation. They must organize. They will have to know that without organization, industrial and political, they are damned and helpless, tied and gagged and laughed at. When Marx said, "Workingmen of the world, unite!" he meant: "Get together! Organize!" Alone and apart, some of you Republicans, some Democrats and some Independents, you are divided and powerless. Working together, en masse, planning toward one end, fighting toward one end, you can send the men you choose up into the legislatures and the national Congress to write laws that will get you better working and living conditions right now. This has been done in France, Germany, Belgium, England and other countries.

The workingmen of our country, too, are waking up to the game that is being played on them. A workingman's party, the Socialist party, is in the field. This party is run by workingmen. It is not like the old parties. It is honest and open about what it wants. You know right where it stands.

We want to get higher wages and lower hours. We want to give all the help we can to the labor unions. We want government pensions for old and worn-out workers. We want the government to pay sick and accident insurance to workingmen. We want to abolish child labor and put every boy and girl in school who ought to be in school. We want to stop the trade in poisoned and adulterated food. We want free text-books and every possible advantage in our public school system. We want to get for each man the full product of his labor. We want the government to stand back of every man and say: "You have a right to a job, always and at all times, and if you want to work you shall have work, and at good, living wages. If the capitalists will not provide, the government must."

The men who run the government now run it for the rich people and people who never do any useful work, either with hand or brain. They have got you workingmen divided. Some of you are Republicans. Some of you are Democrats. Nobody can explain the difference between the two—because there is no difference. You get jokes and speeches, free beer and torchlight processions before election day, but after

election day, when you ask for legislation that will help you, you are kicked away like beggars who don't know where they belong. The brass bands and the hurrah business is only to get your vote.

Good food, good clothes, more books, music, education and pleasure for all, is what we are trying to get. With machinery nowadays, one man produces more than ten men did a hundred years ago. There is enough for all. Therefore, let all have enough.

We are set for no small battle. We are bent on nothing less than capturing the government and using it for the best interests of the working class. To convince a strong majority of the people that we are right is a huge task, but we have with us not only all the fact and sentiment that cling around justice and mercy and the sacredness of humanity, but, working blindly and blunderingly with us in the industrial and commercial worlds, are forces of mass and power.

Better homes, better food, better clothing, more pictures, books, music, culture, are possible for the masses of the people. Calmly and thoughtfully we say labor is entitled to more of the good things of life. Never before in the history of the world was there such stupendous and overwhelming plenty of all the good things that mean material welfare. If you come asking for these things like beggars, you will be treated like beggars. Beg no longer, but study your cause, get into political action and

learn to demand. That is the message of Socialism to the working class.

When you workingmen know what you want and organize to get it, you will get it. The big business men have the money. But we have the votes. You workingmen must learn to become proud of your power and think how you can use your power. If we stand together and elect men who come out clean and square for what we want, the result will be a better, sweeter, fairer life for all, both rich and poor.

I ask you to get acquainted with the Socialists and find out for yourself what we are planning to do. We may be dreamers, but we are mighty hard-headed dreamers on this question of jobs and work, and bread for all. Learn all you can about the Socialist party. Study our principles. Go to our meetings. Read our papers and books.

You're only one man, Bill. But come over and help us! We need you. You need us. Get into line. Be game!

One word more—don't throw this letter away. Keep it and read it once more. Then pass it along to some other fellow.

Keep your chin in the air. Get your head busy on Socialism and you'll line up under the red banner of love and hope and peace and order and all that will come when every man and woman has an equal chance and fair play is a real thing in the lives of all of us.

Yours always,

SANDY.

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is now the largest and best socialist magazine in any language or country. It is the only illustrated magazine that is of, by and for the working class. Each month it gives the latest news of the Class Struggle from all over the world, with vivid photographs from each new scene of action. Not a dull page in the whole magazine. The ablest writers in the organized socialist movement are among its contributors. Editorially it stands for a clear, uncompromising working-class movement, both at the polls and in the shops. Monthly, \$1.00 a year, 10 cents a copy. Some news dealers sell it, but the safe and sure way to get each issue promptly is to use the blank below.

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