The Mission
of the
Working Class

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: It gives me great pleasure to be with you this evening. I am glad of the opportunity to address the laborers of Syracuse upon a subject which is of the utmost importance to every member of the working class.

I wish to begin my address by briefly pointing out the economic basis of scientific Socialism. It is frequently thought that Socialism is merely a scheme, a Utopian theory without economic foundation, like the many social theories which have appeared in the world’s history. The schemes of Charles Fourier and St. Simon, and before them Sir Thomas More and Plato, are of this class. These men were actuated by noble motives and endeavored to point out the road to a nobler civilization. Their schemes, however, were purely idealistic. They were not in possession of sufficient economic data to enable them to formulate a scientific system of industry. But they did well, grandly well, considering the light they possessed. They perceived the evils of our social system, their criticisms sparkle with satire and evidence a historical penetration and sagacity truly remarkable. But they were children of their age, and consequently did not perceive the genesis of capitalist exploitation or comprehend the law of economic evolution.

These forerunners of scientific Socialism aimed to run society into a special mould. They formulated a plan which they thought society could put
on, as a man puts on a suit of clothes, ready made. These Utopianists were true altruists, but it was left for Karl Marx to clearly point out the genesis of surplus value and the evolutionary tendency in economics.

The Socialism of to-day is not a scheme or device of anyone; it is a scientific philosophy, and rests upon an historical, economic and scientific basis. It points out with accuracy the laws of economic evolution. Its principles are universal and world-wide, and are destined at no distant future to usher in a higher state of civilization.

The Socialist, then, is not a visionary, but an educator. His mission is not to teach theories, but to point out the truths regarding the working of economic laws. The Socialist is a discoverer in the realm of economics. He has ascertained by careful analysis of the economic and social conditions that, in the natural course of evolution, this system, through the destructive action of its failures and crises on the one hand, and the constructive action of the trusts and other combinations of capital on the other, is destined to work out its own downfall and usher in the Co-operative Commonwealth.

Now let us note some of the stages through which industry has passed, in order that we may see clearly the origin of the modern working or proletarian class.

1. The Handicraft Stage—the period of small production. This era of small industry extended from time immemorial down to the middle of the Sixteenth century. In the latter part of this period the laborers themselves owned individually the tools with which they worked. The tools, of course, were small and paltry, and so capable of individual ownership on the part of the workers. As the laborer owned his own tools and bought or produced his own materials, there was no dis-
pute over the division of the product. The total product was his without deduction. In these days the capitalist and laborer were combined in the same person. The only qualification that needs to be made is, that from the middle ages onward the master workman might have two or three journeymen and as many apprentices. The journeymen, of course, worked for wages, and so the master could secure a small profit out of his labor, and might, consequently, be called a potential capitalist. Wage labor, however, was the exception, not the general rule. Where men worked for another it was not so much for wages as for the purpose of fitting themselves for mastership. But this condition endowed the master with the potentialities of a capitalist, though as yet he was prevented by the strict rules of the guild from extending his power. These fetters must first be broken before the capitalist regime could gain a foothold. Capitalist production presupposes the freedom of the laborer. He must cease to be attached to the soil as a serf or bound by the rules of the guild. Capitalist production also presupposes the separation of the laborer from the means whereby he realizes his labor. The method by which this end was accomplished is familiar to all. The appropriation of the people's land by the nobility, the eviction of the peasants and fencing in of the commons, the destruction of the guilds by Henry VIII., and confiscation of their property—these acts of usurpation and spoliation, together with the discharge of the feudal retainers, caused by the breaking up of the feudal bands, furnished for the would-be capitalists a large body of free and outlawed proletarians who had no alternative but to sell themselves into wage slavery.

2. The Manufacturing Stage—the period of manufactures. All obstacles being now removed the master workman can extend the field of his
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operations. The small shop of the master workman is transformed into the manufactory, and the number of journeymen are increased in like proportions. Wage labor, hitherto the exception, now becomes the general rule. It is here that the capitalist appears, and consequently the beginning of capitalist production. Profits proper also made its appearance and became the source of further capital. The chief characteristic of the age was the introduction of division of labor; social production superseded individual production.

3. The Factory Stage—the period of modern industry. This stage was introduced by a series of inventions and discoveries which completely revolutionized the method of production. The names of Wyatt, Kaye, Paul, Hargreaves, Arkwright, Crampton, Cartwright, Watt, Whitney, Horrock Roberts and Bullough are familiar to all. "These inventors," says Prof. Ely, "may in a sense, be called the fathers of modern Socialism, for without their inventions it could not have come into existence." The preparatory stage of this industrial revolution dates from 1730 to 1770. The age of the great mechanical inventions from 1770 to 1792. The age of the application of steam to manufacture and improvements in the great inventions from 1792 to 1830.

Along with this revolution in the tool came the revolution of labor; the skill of the workman was transferred to the machine. Here the machine makes use of the workman instead of the workman making use of the tool. Production now passed out of the manufacturing shop and entered the factory. The small capitalist of the manufacturing era gave place to the large capitalist who was served by regiments of wage slaves.

This production, based upon mechanical invention and a far reaching division of labor, was essentially social production. The individual pro-
duction, which rested upon the individual ownership by the workers of their instruments of production, was now supplanted by social production resting upon individual ownership by the capitalists of the instruments of production. Private property in the instruments of production, which formerly meant private property of the producers in their own tools, came to mean, as soon as production became socialized, private property of non-producers in the tools of social labor. This private ownership of social tools meant the private appropriation of the product of social labor. The method and instruments of production had been changed, but the method of appropriation remained the same.

This contradiction between the new form of production and the old form of appropriation is the basis of the whole social conflict today. This incompatibility between social production and capitalist appropriation is the cause of the class struggle between the proletariat and capitalist classes. A clear comprehension of this contradiction in our capitalist system of production reveals the economic basis of scientific Socialism. We find here the fundamental contradiction from which arise all the contradictions inherent in capitalism. The solution of the social problem is merely a solution of this contradiction. A clear understanding of the causes which led to this condition will reveal the way out.

We have seen that the change in the form of production, brought about by the industrial revolution, wrought the downfall of the small producers and reduced the once independent handcraftsmen and agriculturists to the level of wage slaves. The result of this transformation of the limited implements of production into mighty powers, turned these into social implements, thus precluding individual ownership on the part of the workers. The vast cost of the new machinery,
and the large amount of capital requisite for the new method of production, gave rise to a capitalist class—the owners of the instruments of production. But the laborers must have access to the means of production or starve; but this access is obtainable only through the competitive wage. The effect of this loss of control by the workers over the means of production is the direct cause of their dependence. This monopoly of the means of livelihood forms the basis of every kind of servitude.

Now it must be perfectly clear to all that if the laborer’s servitude is caused through the appropriation by a class of the means of production, their emancipation can only be accomplished by their again becoming the owners of the instruments of toil. But individual ownership is impossible, owing to the subdivision of labor and the immense scale of production. The solution, however, is not hopeless, for the change in the nature of production gives us a clue to the means by which this contradiction may be eliminated. As production has been socialized, the means of production should also become socialized. Tools used in common should be owned in common. We should make the method of ownership correspond to the method of operation. The private ownership of the instruments of production is becoming more and more incompatible with the nature of these instruments. Their magnitude and social character mark them for social ownership and control.

Here, then, is the solution of the contradiction between social production and capitalist appropriation. This incongruity can only be abolished by restoring to the people the control of their economic interests. Although it is impossible for them as individuals to regain this control—for the industrial system of the future must be sys-
tematized—nevertheless, they can bring these interests under collective control, substituting for the present irresponsible rule of the few, responsible public agents who will manage the affairs of society in the interests of all the people.

One of the strangest things is that people should consent to leave their industrial interests in the hands of irresponsible persons to be controlled for private emolument. The present economic rulers hold the livelihood of the people in their power and admit of no responsibility. This department of life is of the utmost interest to every man. Why should a man be deprived of a voice in the industrial group of which he is a member more than in the political group? Of what value is it to have democratic politics and not industry? Socialism proposes to substitute a popular self-government in the industrial as in the political world. Economic democracy is a corollary of political democracy. Socialism would bring this industrial regime under popular government, to be exercised by the people in the interests of the people.

The present industrial regime is despotic. In place of this despotism it is proposed to substitute a social democracy. There is no reason why we should have sovereign rule in the industrial realm more than in the political; or why we should abrogate chattel slavery and leave untouched wage slavery.

Industrial democracy being in the line of evolution is certain of attainment. Democracy has already been attained in politics and religion, and industry is passing through similar stages of development.

In the early period of human history men fought singly. Next they gathered into groups for self-preservation, forming the tribe or nation, which necessitated a leader, chief or king. When these rulers began to abuse their power the peo-
people rose in their might and asserted their independence. They dethroned the monarchs and selected their own governors, making them responsible to society for their official acts.

In religion we find the same development. Men first worshipped alone, then they gathered into groups and formed religious societies. These organizations were led by men appointed for the purpose. When the priests began to abuse their power the people rebelled. Reformations were inaugurated and religious democracy established.

Do we not find the same thing in industry? Men, as we have seen, first worked individually, as in the Handicraft Stage, then gradually they became associated in groups and division of labor was introduced in the Manufacturing Stage. These associations grew into greater and greater magnitude, as in the Factory Stage, each requiring special direction and management, and so the master workman developed into an industrial chief—a captain of industry. These rulers, like those in politics and religion, have perverted their power and the people are rising and will make their economic rulers, as they did their political and religious rulers, responsible to themselves. Democracy has always followed despotism. Will it fail in the industrial realm? No. We shall have an industrial republic planted upon the foundation of our political republic.

Socialism, then, logically demands the socialization of the instruments of production to correspond with the socialism of production on the one hand and political democracy on the other.

Now, is there any evidence that this demand is nearing realization? A careful discerner of the times realizes that the Kingdom of Socialism is at hand. The rapid development of modern industry evidences that the transformation is much nearer than many seem to think. We have traced
the evolution of industry from the handicraft stage of production through the period of manufactures and on into the era of modern mechanical industry. But this last period has taken on several phases.

In the beginning of this era there was individual ownership of social tools. But as machinery developed and the wastes of competition necessitated the massing of large capital that production might be cheapened and rivals undersold, it has been more and more difficult for the individual capitalist to furnish the requisite means, and so the joint stock company arose.

From the individual ownership of social tools, then, we pass to the next stage—the joint-stock corporation ownership of social tools.

The origin of the joint-stock company completed the evolution of the individual capitalist. We have seen how at first he was a manual laborer working with his men, but the possession of a little capital raised him above manual labor and he became a mental laborer, a manager, who received wages of superintendence. But the possession of more capital raised him above even the laborer of direction and he handed this function over to an hired employe, thus becoming a mere interest receiver or profit monger. When the corporation entered industry the two functions of manager of industry and owner of tools became divorced.

The capitalists united in a joint-stock company do not pretend to labor, but hire a manager, in whose hands they place their capital, and whose business it is to make profits for the stockholders. The whole capitalist class, as such, have thus become superfluous, the services previously performed by them being handed over to hired managers. If the capitalists should take it into their heads to emigrate to Europe or the moon, industry would go on just the same, for industry is
today socially organized from the bottom to the top. The capitalist today is purely a useless organ in production, and being such he must disappear. In economics, as in biology, as soon as an organ becomes useless it is eliminated.

The next phase of this development was the union of these companies into a trust. The appearance of the trust upon the industrial horizon is the most significant phenomena of the present day.

In New Jersey—that little State which has the honor of doing so much for Socialism by aiding in the trustification of industry—there are incorporated 4,495 companies, aggregating a capital of about $1,400,000,000, nearly all of which are trusts in the now most popular sense of the word; that is, combinations having for their object the monopoly of a certain product of industry, public service, or valuable mines, real estate, water power, etc. The New York Journal of Commerce, a recognized authority on matters commercial, makes the statement that the trusts now control 90 percent of the capital which the census of 1890 showed as the total invested in manufacturing enterprises.

This gradual development of competing industries into monopolies is destined, at no distant future, to realize the ideal for which we labor. One who understands the causes which have led to the substitution of combination for competition, well knows the impossibility of ever returning to the latter. The choice must be made between monopoly under private control and monopoly under public control, for monopoly in some form is bound to obtain. As the corporation is more powerful than the individual, so the trust is more powerful than the corporation. Concentration in one industry necessitates concentration in all. The efficiency of capital in large
masses is what has been called the law of industrial gravitation. Associated capital and machinery are necessary to effective and economical production. The return to the days of competition and small things would constitute a reversal of all progress. Nothing can be more visionary than the free competition of fifty years ago. That condition has been buried in the same grave with the stage coaches, sickles, hand flails and tallow dips. To restore the era of “free competition” we would have to destroy all modern machinery, factories and stores, imprison all inventors and punish progressiveness with instant death. As day follows night, so monopoly follows competition. The death of hand labor meant the death of the old competitive system. As soon as we passed into the era of social organized labor it was but a question of time when monopoly would rule the day. The business of the future must be done by organized capital; it is the only way the needs of the people can be met.

The question is, Shall we have organized capital in the hands of individuals, or in the hands of society? The choice is not between competition and combination, for the former is rapidly disappearing. Combination either of the few or many is inevitable. Combination is the socialistic way of doing business; competition is the individualistic way.

Industry, then has successfully passed from the handicraft stage of production into the era of manufactures, and from thence into modern mechanical industry, and this era has evolved into the corporate or joint-stock stage, and is now rapidly taking on the form of monopoly. But this monopolistic stage, which has been entered, is not the end, for as individuals have combined into corporations, and corporations into trusts, so trusts will combine into a Co-operative Common-
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wealth. This being logical is inevitable. In economic evolution there is no retrogression. It is only in universal combination that a complete consummation can be attained. Trusts must combine into the great trust—the nation. There is no more possibility of our re-entering any of the past eras of production from which we have evolved than there is of the butterfly re-entering the chrysalis. The stage of handicraft and manufacturing, and even the competitive stage of modern industry has passed, or is rapidly passing, into innocuous desuetude. As slavery gave way to feudalism and feudalism to capitalism, so capitalism must give way to Socialism. But everything in its own order, first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear.

The fruits of industrial evolution are now reaped by the few. The trust is Socialism for the few at the expense of the many. What we want is Socialism for all at the expense of none. The trust utilizes the methods of Socialism—combination, co-operation and co-ordination—to get the best results from man and nature without the Socialist aim and spirit. Every trust virtually admits the truth of Socialist charges, that competition is wasteful and that by combination the cost of production is greatly reduced and harmony restored to the industrial realm. The only solution of the problem is that which has been pointed out—the socialism of the trust, that the benefits now monopolized by the few may become the inheritance of all. The choice must be between plutocratic Socialism and Democratic Socialism.

The development of the trust is a great annoyance to the middle class of small producers and distributors, and so we find them raising a hue and cry about the tyranny of the trust. Why is this? It is because they belong to the competitive stage of modern industry, which stage is fast
being supplanted by the monopolistic, and as a result they are being forced into bankruptcy. The trust, which is the logical sequence of the competitive system, is the great labor-displacing machine of the big capitalist. Of the 14,000 failures annually 87 percent are those whose capital was $5,000 or less, and 9 percent those whose capital was over $5,000, but less than $20,000. Consequently of the total failures only about 4 percent have a capital in excess of $20,000.

But this is not all. We are told that of the 1,168,343 firms doing business in the United States and Canada in 1897, 233,332 either failed or wound up their affairs after losing their last dollar. At this rate it would take but about five years to wipe out the existence of the whole middle class were there not an equal number standing ready to invest their small earnings or inheritance in middle class enterprises. But the supply is not inexhaustible. The wealth of these aspirants of bankruptcy will soon be absorbed by the plutocracy and then society will be divided into two classes—a few hundred prodigiously wealthy families on the one side and the great mass of proletarians on the other.

The middle class reads its own doom in the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. It is nearing the breakers. The field of production is already nearly closed, and the men of means, having nowhere else to invest their increasing wealth, are now beginning to invade the field of distribution, and the small store will, in a few years, be as scarce as the small factory is now.

Let us not be deceived by statistics here. There was an apparent growth of the middle class from 1880 to 1890; a growth in quantity, but a decrease in quality. Those entering the mercantile middle class were not attracted there by any enlargement of its field of opportunities; they were driven
there by the closing up of other avenues of employment and enter only to feed the fire of bankruptcy. Driven from the field of production, they enter the mercantile body only as a halting place on their way to commercial death. This very phenomenon is a symptom of the approaching collapse. As before pointed out, concentration in this field has been delayed, but the time has now come when it will go forward with alacrity as the other fields for investment are being closed. The statistics of 1900 will undoubtedly show a rapid decrease in the number of the middle class. Is it any wonder, then, that the middle class should raise a cry of protest against this concentration when it sees its special privileges vanishing before the approaching trustification of industry?

Its protest, however, is not in behalf of the laboring class, but in behalf of its own existence. Its cry is not against the exploiting system of production, but against the new capitalism, represented by plutocracy, becoming the sole exploiter. The middle class does not object to some riding on the backs of others, it only objects to being the party ridden. The old capitalism cries out against the new, because it feels the iron heel of capitalistic oppression.

Their opposition to progress, however, is about as futile as the opposition of the laborers to the introduction of new machinery. The laborers were blind to the benefits of machinery because they saw in it only an instrument of oppression, and their strength was wasted in an endeavor to force a return to the Handicraft Stage of production. The same is true today of the middle class. They are bending their energies toward the dissolution of the trust system, not realizing that the trust is a natural product of industrial evolution. The solution of the problem for both the laboring class and the middle class is not in endeavoring
To destroy machinery and the trust, but in their collective ownership and control.

The laboring class need clearly to understand that this outcry against the trust does not imply a betterment of labor conditions. It does not mean the independence of the laborer. The tools of production today are social, and can only be operated by co-operative labor. This fact precludes the possibility of individual ownership of the tools by the laborers. To destroy the trust, then, does not mean that the laborers can become owners of the tools necessary to their labor; it only means that these instruments of production can be owned by smaller combinations of capital. The laboring class would still be absolutely dependent upon the owners of the instruments of production. The only difference is, that if the program of trust smashing was carried out the number of fleecers of labor would be larger than under the trust program. But, pray tell, what benefit is that to the laborers? Is any one so foolish as to contend that labor is better off by increasing the number of exploiters? Laborers, be not deceived. The worst set of exploiters on the face of the earth is the small capitalists, and the smaller their field of operation the larger the profit they must extract from labor. We have been through this stage of industry and have learned from experience that the laborer has nothing to hope from the small capitalist more than the large. We demand the abolition of the whole exploiting system and the turning of all parasites, whether large or small, into useful production. The plea of the middle class for its retention is futile. The force behind economic evolution has otherwise decreed.

The class-conscious laborers, then, are not interested in the preservation of the middle class with its absurd principle of industrial competi
tion. That competition is injurious is evident from the fact that it is being supplanted by the principle of combination. Capitalists have recognized the advantage of production on a large scale. They have found out by experience that associated capital is the only way to effect economical production. Surely no one with economic sense desires to go back to the era of competitive supremacy. No more absurd and wasteful system could be devised. The principle is absurd in theory and false in fact. It postulates conditions which exist nowhere but in the fertile imagination of its advocates. It assumes that all have an equal opportunity, the proletariat with the millionaire. The theory of free competition under present conditions is a farce. Freedom of competition is simply freedom of the strong to fleece the weak, and the cunning to ensnare the innocent. Who wishes to again reinstate in full power this vicious principle, the very essence of which is antagonism? It necessarily begets cruelty, injustice, cunning, oppression and selfishness. It violates the law of love and sacrifices manhood to material wealth. Its mottoes are: "Each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost;" "In union there is weakness;" "Antagonism is more productive than co-operation;" "A house divided against itself shall stand." It postulates that a country where every man tries to get the better of his fellows will be happier and more successful that a country where each man tries to help his fellows.

No, friends, we do not care to perpetuate the present planless, wasteful system of industry. We propose to substitute the economic principle of combination for the wasteful principle of competition. The principle of combination is sound and ought to be extended to the whole social order. As production and distribution on a large scale are more economical they ought to
survive. The only safety to society, however, is in its adoption by the whole people. When the trust, which is an embodiment of the principle of combination, is socialized, then the evils which arise from private ownership will disappear, leaving only the benefits that result from co-operation.

We recognize that the ultimate goal of capitalist evolution is the trustification of every department of production and distribution, so that the greatest possible product may be realized from the least expenditure of economic forces. The difference between a capitalist trust and a public trust lies in the department of distribution, and capacity of the people to consume the product of their labor at cost. The capitalist trust is Socialism in production, but individualism in distribution. We want Socialism in both production and distribution.

The capitalist class, as represented by the Republican party, endeavors to uphold the trust and its private ownership in order to maintain its own supremacy. Senator Hanna has pointed out the inevitableness of the concentration of industry and the advantages which flow from increased production and economy. But such statements are one sided, and endeavor to cover up the pathway of blood, the bitterness and failures that have attended its growth. The middle class, on the other hand, as represented by the Democratic party, chooses to see only the evils, overlooking the great power that concentration brings and the enormous economy effected by unified industry. It remains for the Socialist, untrammeled by the interests of the other classes and parties, to clearly point out both the good and evil of concentration, and show how the evil can be eliminated and the good retained. We note with satisfaction the progress which has gone hand in hand with the development of industry,
but we clearly see that we have now reached the point where the system of private ownership of the trust blocks the way to further progress. We see that the only salvation is in pushing the evolution on to its logical consummation—public ownership. We reject the Democratic middle class policy of destroying the trust and so throwing civilization backward. We would preserve it and improve it and open it to all. Socialism, then, welcomes the trust, not as a finality, but as a step toward Socialism, and the quicker the constructive work of these great combines work out their destructive counterpart in failure and crises, the quicker the final consummation of the industrial evolution will be effected.

The trust is systematizing and unifying industry and preparing the way for the Co-operative Commonwealth. Any industry organized into a trust is eminently ripe for appropriation by the community. It is useless to say that such an enterprise cannot be managed by the state, when it is being managed by a band of capitalists. The board of directors—who usually do not own the capital invested—can as readily be made responsible to the whole people as to the shareholders. The directors in charge at the time can be retained if thought advisable, simply making them responsible to all the people. Socialism is thus seen to be practicable, inevitable, and to rest upon a solid economic foundation.

Now, what are the causes at work that will lead to the consummation? In order to answer this question, we need to understand the causes that have led to the social revolutions in the past. A clear understanding of these causes will reveal the mission of the modern proletariat or working class.

In every age there is a dominant ruling class which shapes and controls the social and indus-
trial organization in its own interests. At first the interests of this class are in accord with the advance of society, but the time comes when their interests are at variance with social progress. The economic development which produces this contrast between the interests of the ruling class and the social interests also develops a class whose interests are contrary to the ruling class and more in accord with the social development. A contest is sure to follow between these conflicting classes, and in the course of time the class more in accord with the changed conditions is bound to triumph. It is simply the new wine breaking the old bottles. When this transformations occurs it may be termed either evolution or revolution. Revolution, however, is but a form of evolution, and is generally the last step in a period of slow growth and preparation.

The final step, whether peaceful or violent, which interchanges the relations between ruling and subject class, is the inauguration of a new stage. This step, however, cannot take place until economic conditions are ripe for it.

Let me illustrate this principle by again appealing to history. In the middle ages the ruling class was the landed nobility. This nobility determined the character and form of all social institutions. It also determined the character and form of economic servitude. The whole social system rested upon a form of land ownership. This particular form called serfdom attached the laborer to the soil as serfs. But the servitude would have been nearly as great had the laborers not been directly attached to the soil, for land, being the principal factor in production, its ownership would have carried with it the ownership of those who must have access to the land or starve.

In this period the landed nobility ruled supreme, and looked with contempt upon all la-
borders and traders. In the course of time the towns grew into cities, trade and commerce developed, and the small tools of production became gigantic machines. These new implements became the dominant factor in production, thus giving into the hands of their owners the means of overthrowing the landed aristocracy.

The mercantile class, which was despised in its infancy, displaced the nobility and became the ruling class because their interests were more in accord with the economic development. The landed nobility little realized in their supremacy that the class which they despised would work their overthrow. By their contempt and ill-treatment of the mercantile class they were sowing the seed of revolt which was sure to lead to their own destruction.

The old nobility fulfilled its mission and disappeared. Feudalism gave way to capitalism. Its overthrow was caused by the very class which they despised. History is again repeating itself.

The capitalist class today, like its predecessors, shapes and controls the social and industrial organization in its own interests. Legislation, customs, religion, morals, education, public opinion, etc., are all regulated by capitalistic supremacy.

At first the interests of this class were in accord with social progress and well-being, but that time has long since passed. The interests of society and the interests of capitalist producers are now antagonistic. Society wants a large product, but capitalist producers want high values, and values depend upon a limited supply. Were there a sufficient quantity of any product to satisfy all demands, such would cease to have value. Cotton is an illustration of this divergence between class interests and the general interests. Society, of course, wants a large supply of this useful product, but the producers have been trying for some time to devise means to
diminish the crop. This is the purpose of every combination, to regulate production and limit the supply to the commercial demand. The result of the present wage and profit system is to artificially limit the consumption by destroying the purchasing power of the masses. The interests of the ruling class, then, are antagonistic to the social interests. Progress and well-being are now blocked by this antagonism which inheres in the present system of wealth production and distribution. We can never hope for the abolition of poverty under such a system. Although modern machinery places at our command the possibility of almost unlimited wealth production, still as long as these instruments are in the hands of private or corporate firms they will only be used for private profit. Poverty in the midst of unbounded wealth is a disgrace to civilization. Were the means of production socially owned, production would be carried on for the purpose of satisfying human needs and would continue until all the needs of the people were met.

But is there any evidence that this ruling class, whose interests have become so opposed to progress, will ever be supplanted? Yes. This very economic development which produced this contrast between the social and capitalist interests has also developed a class whose interests are contrary to the ruling class and more in accord with social progress and well-being. This class is the proletariat, the class of wage and salary workers. By proletariat is meant those who are deprived of property in the instruments of production. The interests of the capitalist and working class are diametrically opposed. When the laborer and capitalist were united in the same person, as in individual production, there was a most complete harmony. But when these functions are separated, as in modern industry, there is nothing but discord.
Let me pause for a moment and make this matter plain. The wealth produced by labor is divided into two portions. One portion goes to labor in the form of wages, the other is divided into rent, interest and profits and is pocketed by non-producers. It is because the capitalist has monopolized the instruments of production that he is able to appropriate a portion of labor's product. All leading industries are joint-stock concerns, and a capitalist may hold stock in a score of such industries. He purchases, say, $10,000 worth of stock in each of these industries, of which, perhaps, he knows nothing. His broker has told him that they are paying investments and that is all he cares. He never goes to the factories or even to the towns in which they are located. He simply takes his stock and locks it up in his safe and at the end of the year he draws his dividends. But where do these dividends come from? The answer is not difficult to find. Take a cotton factory as an illustration. Here, say, 1,000 men have worked for a year and have produced a certain amount of cotton cloth. This is transported to the market and exchanged for money. From the money received for the product there is first deducted the cost of raw materials and the wear and tear of machinery. The balance is divided into about two equal portions, one of which is given to the laborers in the form of wages and the other is called profits and divided among the capitalists as dividends. Now, as the product produced is divided into two portions, it is axiomatic that it cannot be so divided as to increase the share of both. If the laborer produces $6 worth of wealth a day and the capitalist keeps $3 there is only $3 left. But if on the other hand the laborer can secure $5 there is but $1 left for the capitalist, and if, perchance, the laborer could keep all the wealth he creates...
there would be none left for the capitalist, and he would have to go to work.

We see, then, that the interests of the laborer and capitalist are not identical. It is to the interest of each to get as large a share of the product as possible. The value created by a day's labor is a constant quantity, and is equal to the sum of the value of the labor-power (wages) and the surplus-value (profits). If a constant quantity consists of two parts, is it not self-evident that you cannot increase the one without diminishing the other? If the surplus-value rises, the value of the labor-power falls, and vice-versa.

Many superficial persons have been led to consider the interests of laborers and capitalists identical through a failure to distinguish between capital and capitalists. Thus, while capital, which is produced by labor and has been exploited from it, is of service to laborers, the capitalists are not. The capitalist today is merely a man who, by his monopoly of the instrument of production, is enabled to levy a tax or tribute upon productive toil, and thus secure an income without personal exertion. The apology often offered that the capitalist should receive interest because he renders a service to labor is not valid, because the service is reciprocal. Capital is only preserved by constant reproduction at the hands of labor. It would soon decay unless in productive use. Laborers, by taking capital and keeping it intact, render a greater service to capitalists than capitalists do to laborers. There is no more reason why laborers should pay the capitalists than that capitalists should pay the laborers, nor as much. But in reality it is to the direct employer or "captain of industry" to whom the money-lender renders the service, by enabling him to extend the field of his operations; that is, fleece labor on a large scale. The man who borrows money and
uses it to exploit labor is simply compelled by the lender to divide the spoils. Interest is merely a part of the booty. The harmony of interests between laborers and capitalists is like the harmony between the horse-leech and its victim. Capitalists, like all parasites, live off of others. This they are enabled to do through their monopoly of land and capital.

Capitalism, then, like feudalism, has developed the class which is to work its overthrow. We have seen how the landed nobility and capitalists have performed their work in social evolution. We now come to the mission of the modern proletariat or working class. This class have a mission to perform, and that mission is the abolition of wage-slavery.

The economic struggle is necessarily a class struggle, a struggle between the proprietor and non-proprietor class. The subjection of the working class is due to the fact that the instruments of production are owned by another class. The interest of these two classes being diametrically opposed necessitates a class struggle. While there are members of the other classes who perceive the truths of Socialism and lend themselves to the cause, still, as a class, we need not expect them to take the initiative or aid in carrying forward the movement for the abolition of the wage-system. They think their interests lie on the other side, but like the slaveholders of old they are blinded by their prejudice. The majority of this class will have to wait until they are thrown headlong into bankruptcy before their eyes will be opened. But this will not be long. The whole middle class are hopelessly doomed, and it is only a question of little time before they will join the ever-growing majority—the proletariat. But there are many who realize the hopeless struggle and have joined the cause of progress in advance. That work of reorganization, however, must rest
chiefly with the proletariat, and the members of this class are being fitted and prepared for the fulfillment of their mission. The laborers have been gathered together in large factories, where they have been organized and made to feel their class-consciousness and solidarity.

But, as we have seen, the transition from one stage to another cannot take place until conditions are ripe for it. Although the proletariat has been in existence many years, the time was not ripe for it to work out its destiny until the economic evolution had expressed itself in the trust and syndicate. This condition is now realized and the time has come for the proletariat to work out its destiny.

In all previous revolutions class has superseded class. The class below has overthrown the class above, thus emancipating itself by subjecting others. But the triumph of the working class is necessarily the abolition of all economic dependence, for the working class can only emancipate itself by socializing the instruments of production and distribution. The new servitude which arose as the result of other revolutions was caused by a continuance of private property in the instruments of production. By abolishing this private ownership the cause of economic dependence and servitude will disappear.

The rapid concentration of wealth evidences that the end of capitalism is near. This end is also evidenced by the rapid organization of the working class. But how will the final step be taken? What are the means by which the working class will emancipate itself? Class interests and class politics are inseparable. It was perfectly natural, then, that as these class lines became more and more tightly drawn they should find political expression, and that the working class should organize politically to secure its rights. The class-conscious laborers are today organized.
under the banner of Socialism. This party claims your confidence and support as laborers because it expresses your interests and rights as a class. Its purpose is to awaken in you a conception of your class interests and lay the foundation of a class-conscious political organization. The first step toward emancipation is the mastery of the public powers. In the political field you are supreme. Here you meet the capitalist as an equal, while as a class you overwhelmingly outnumber the capitalists and your advantage is constantly increasing with the destruction of the middle class and the narrowing of the capitalist class.

The time has come for the manual and mental workers to unite and strike for liberty. Strike at the ballot box for freedom. Vote into effect your demand for the abolition of wage slavery. Wrench by united political action the power of government from the hands of your exploiters, that you may put your economic program into effect. In your effort to attain this end accept no political palliative. Any measure which does not tend to the abolition of wage-slavery is unworthy of your support. The laboring class must learn that it need expect nothing from any political party which does not stand squarely upon the demand to wrench from the exploiting class the economic and political weapon of exploitation. No such uncompromising demand as this will ever be made by any political division of the capitalist class. If the laborers are to achieve their emancipation they must stand upon a platform of their own, demanding the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class. The Socialist party is the party that presents this demand and proposes to carry its principles into effect. Laborers, why longer waste your efforts in the old political parties, which are but handmaids of the capitalist class? Their chief object is to divide us into
various factions, fighting against each other, and thus prevent our uniting to secure our freedom. The petty political issues which the Republican and Democratic parties raise are only for the purpose of fleecing us on the one hand and throwing dust into our eyes on the other, lest we see the only real question at issue—Socialism vs. Capitalism.

Friends, be not deceived. You have no interest in the success or failure of parties composed of classes whose interests are antagonistic to your own. You surely have been fooled and used as a tool to do your master’s bidding long enough. I am rejoiced to see that the laborers are at last getting their eyes open to the thorough capitalistic nature of both old parties and the fraudulent issues which they put forth. To be sure, the interests of various capitalists are conflicting, some being able to exploit labor better by one method and some by another, but all are united upon the policy that labor must be exploited. The laborer’s interest, however, is one and alike everywhere; it is forever against this abominable competitive system which robs them of the larger part of the product of their toil.

Laborers of America, do not longer throw away your vote by casting your ballot for something you do not want. You had better vote for what you want and not get it than vote for what you don’t want and get it. But, friends, we shall get what we want. Socialism is the outcome of economic evolution. That Socialism will follow capitalism is as certain as that light will follow darkness. The rapid growth of the Socialist vote evidences that salvation is near. Fellow laborers, hesitate no longer in joining the ranks of Socialism. Swell its vote and thus hasten the day of your emancipation. A vote for the Republican or Democratic ticket is but putting another rivet into your chains of economic servitude.
Mission of the Working Class.

Laborers, unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains; you have a world to gain. Unite, that your mission may be speedily realized. If you would be free, you yourselves must strike the blow. You have no subject class, like earlier classes struggling for mastery, to use as a weapon to fight your battles. You must achieve your own emancipation; and to accomplish this you must unite for political action in a party which recognizes your class mission, and recognizes that the time for its fulfillment is at hand. The realization of this mission means the abolition of all class rule, for under Socialism all society will be members of the producing class, and consequently, that which is for the benefit of one will be for the benefit of all. We rejoice that the proletarians of the world are beginning to realize their mission and are uniting in mighty class-conscious armies, before whom the ruling powers are beginning to tremble; they are uniting to the end that they may conquer the public powers and convert the nations of the world into Co-operative Commonwealths.
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