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EDITORIAL

THE MEANS TO TRIUMPH.

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THE part of wisdom is to pluck the flower Safety from the nettle Danger. The ill-advised conduct of the I.W.W. officials in charge, at the Chicago headquarters, of the organ of the I.W.W., to allow and encourage individuals, who, finding themselves incompetent to organize, sought to cover their shortcomings by bustling about political theories and kindred subjects, has had the effect of creating considerable turmoil and, consequently, to raise a deal of dust.

On the one hand, the mistaken theory, so easy to fall into, of imagining that the Socialist Revolution can be the product of a mere legislative enactment, has received fresh increment. On the other hand, the companion piece of the said mistaken theory, equally easy to fall into, of wholly rejecting political action, has re-raised its head and re-started to wag its noisy tongue. Nor is the evil limited to these two extremes. The overwhelming majority of the men and women in the land, destined to take a part in the coming events, and without whose co-operation the raising of the Socialist Republic will remain a work undone, who still are but “onlookers,” and to enlist whose services is necessary—from that element more than one sign has gone up of discouragement, as a consequence of the controversial political aspect that the *Bulletin* assumed. This element was beginning to see the light. The beacon—first lighted in the land and kept lighted by the Socialist Labor Party—touching the necessity of the revolutionary economic organization of the Working Class, was beginning encouragingly to break through the thick clouds, that, partly ignorant, partly interested calumny, rolled against it. Progress was being made in popular enlightenment. The progress is now threatened among that vast “onlooking” element. Pure and simple political Socialism they have grown wise enough to reject; the opposite extreme, which has given itself the name of “Anarchy” in this country, their common sense, likewise rejects: in the last analysis, let the

thing veil itself as it may—whether by using the term “political action” in a sense that nobody understands; or whether, preserving the established meaning of the term, by proposing its application in an inapplicable way, as, for instance, that the economic organization shall itself be at the same time an organization for political action; and whether those who indulge such schemes are aware of it or not—let the thing veil itself as it may, in the last analysis it spells “Dynamitism.” Common sense and human conscience join to spurn the thing. Pure and simple “Ballotism” incites “Dynamitism”; pure and simple “Dynamitism” reacts back and promotes pure and simple “Ballotism.” The two extremes, acting and reacting upon each other, confuse and dishearten the masses.

At such a season, a look at the chart traced by that genius whom no genius has yet risen to amend—be he Berger or Bakunin—would seem to be in season.

The Socialist Movement is a Working Class Movement. It is that for two reasons—

First, because the path it walks is and must be plowed exclusively by Working Class interests. No interest foreign, let alone hostile, to the class interests of the Working Class has any place in the Socialist program;

Secondly, because, unless the Working Class itself puts its hand to the plow, the path never will be open, and the Working Class will remain enthralled. One nation, one race, has brought emancipation to another nation, or another race; one class to another class—never. The supposition of such a thing is false in sociology, as would be the supposition of bramble bushes producing apples. Not only will no class emancipate another, but neither will nor can a class step into freedom without it is able to take care of itself. In sociology as in law—not to the supine, but to those who are up and doing does Providence bring help. The readiness of the Working Class to emancipate themselves is a condition precedent to Socialist victory.

These two reasons determine the character of the Socialist movement—they stamp it with the stamp of Proletarian. But all is not said when that is said—and to the glory of the Working Class, all is not said of their movement when that is said.

Hitherto all class movement has been the movement of a class below against the class above—and, simultaneously, to the oppression of the new class below that the successful movement was bound to generate. The bourgeois overthrew the

feudal lord, not in order to establish freedom for man, but freedom for HIMSELF, upon the back of the proletariat. The seeming exception of the great American Revolution establishes no exception to the principle. The exceptional conditions of the country in which the American Revolution took place excuse the belief sincerely entertained by the Revolutionary Fathers that they founded Freedom. Soon as the American bourgeois developed, the law of his own existence compelled him to forget all his lofty aspirations. He strained every muscle to evolve the proletariat, and he promoted the process by inveigling European proletarians across the ocean into his clutches. No previous Class Movement was a Movement for the freedom of man. The Movement of the Working Class is the first exception. The exception is not due to any superior qualities in the proletariat, any more than the circumstance of its being otherwise with previous Class Movements, was due to any inferior qualities in them. It could not be otherwise with them. They were not the last, they were but intermediary links in the long evolutionary chain towards Freedom. The Movement of the Working Class is the culminating Movement in the long series of Class Movements. No more than previous Class Movements could prevent the CONTINUANCE, can the Movement of the Working Class prevent the END of Class Rule. Socialism is the turning of a long lane; it opens a New Era to mankind. No wonder the utterance is heard in some pulpits that Socialism is almost “a new religion.” It, and it alone, can, because it, and it alone, must, establish Freedom. The Movement of the Working Class couldn’t be otherwise, even if it would. Accordingly, Socialism means actual Human Redemption.

Important practical consequences flow from this fact. One of these is the necessity of a political organization of Socialism, separate and distinct from the necessary economic organization of the class-conscious proletariat. Apart from the consideration that political action alone affords the opportunity to preach a revolution in the open; apart from the consideration that a mass-movement, like that of the Working Class, cannot deploy by the methods of conspiracy, applicable only to movements that concern only the few; apart from the consideration that political action, by one set of men, must meet the political action of the opposite set upon the political battlefield, and that the political battlefield—being arranged in the geographic demarcations of Assembly, Senatorial, Congressional, Judicial,

Aldermanic and many other districts—compels the organization of political army corps that square with the battlefield; apart from the consideration that such political army corps are compulsorily organized according to the residence of the individual members, whereas the economic organization compulsorily disregards residence and looks only to occupation;—apart from these and many other considerations, all combining to render indispensable a political organization of Socialism, and indispensable that the same be separate and distinct from the companion economic organization, there is another circumstance born of the above-mentioned broad human character of Socialism, that dictates the course.

Wisely does the I.W.W. provide that none but wage-earners are eligible to membership. Even this provision, strict enough though it seems, experience will certainly render still more strict by excluding many an applicant, now admitted, as not belonging to the category of a wage-earner, and, therefore, not belonging to its ranks. But the Socialist Movement is what it was described—proletarian in class interest, human in scope. Tersely and brilliantly did Lassalle say of it that it comes equipped with all the knowledge of its Age. Much of this knowledge is by the very reason of the pursuits of the elements who possess it, excluded, and justly excluded, from the economic army corps of the Revolution. The Labor Movement is not simply entitled to, it needs the science, the art—in short, the intellectual acquirements of the Age, besides the vital ones of the wage slave's immediate class interests and experience. None but professional workingmen ever sneer at the intellectual elements of society, whose intellectuality does not consist in speaking and writing nonsense grammatically, but whose intellectuality enables them to realize that their place is flat-footed on the program of the class interests of the Working Class. These have a right to a place and a share in the Socialist Movement. Where shall these valuable forces find their place and the opportunity to exercise their useful share? The economic army corps of the Revolution may not admit them. Where else can they be organized and drilled so as to exercise their needed function, but in an allied political army corps?

Indeed, the political and the economic army corps of Socialism are necessary divisions of the large army of the Revolution. That fact, together with the relative position of the divisions, was expressed by Marx with his characteristic

cogency—*Only the economic organization can put forth the political party of Labor.*
It is there all in a nutshell:

The necessity of political action;

The necessity of a separate organization to conduct the same;

The primal necessity of the revolutionary organization to set forth the political expression of the Working Class, and to keep its course straight—away, on the one hand, from the pitfall of pure and simple “Ballotism,” that would debauch, and, on the other, from the pitfall of the pure and simple “Dynamitism,” that would assassinate the Labor Movement.

Wherever there is a man or woman in the land whose class interests, or intellect, or both combined, have truly cleared their vision to the light of the day that is dawning; wherever in the land there is a man or woman, with whom the Cause that they serve with singleness of purpose is the emancipation of the Working Class—wherever in the land these are found, there will be found a being striving with might and main to preserve, pure and unsophisticated, the Preamble and practice of the I.W.W.; striving, accordingly, for the robust development of the organization to the point that the Labor or Socialist Movement may enter upon its march to triumph.

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