

# ***Democracy***

*...PAST,  
PRESENT  
and FUTURE*

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**By Arnold Petersen**

The Human race is gradually learning the simple lesson, that the people as a whole are wiser for the public good and the public prosperity, than any privileged class of men, however refined and cultivated, have ever been, or, by any possibility, can ever become. Governments over societies the most advanced are still in a transitional stage; and they are necessarily and logically moving . . . in the direction of democracy; that form of self-government which represents and expresses the average intelligence and virtue of free and educated people.

—Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society*

## 1940 FOREWORD

Can democracy be reconciled with totalitarian compulsion? The natural reply, already forming on your lips, is NO! Yet “democracy”—the phrase, not the substance—is being used in America today to promote the very antithesis of democracy. It was “democratic” to introduce to America the hated European system of internal passports via alien registration. Conscription, the most “abominable of despotisms,” as Daniel Webster described it, that form of involuntary servitude that is the very foundation of totalitarian regimes, became the essence of “democracy” simply by calling it so. By the same token, in this age of double-talk, to assert one’s rights to those freedoms presumedly guaranteed by the Constitution frequently becomes “treasonable.”

How far this outrageous farce may be carried was foreshadowed during the closing days of the Seventy-Sixth Congress when Representatives brazenly proposed direct compulsion for labor and applauded the suggestion that the “American people . . . exercise a bit of this force business” against those who refuse to conform. It was a bold incitement to mob violence—again, in the name of “democracy.”

On that occasion Representative Hoffman of Michigan blurted out the ominous potentialities of conscription. He said:

“You ask, What is the remedy? [For strikes, etc.] The remedy is easy, and we *have it in our hands if we want to use it*. . . . I will support an amendment to the conscription law which will conscript these men in the factories and require them to render service to their country the same as the soldier in the field. (Applause.) And why not?” (*Congressional Record*, Nov. 25, 1940.)

Why not, indeed? That, too, would be “democratic.” Have not these “democratic” Congressmen said so?

It is true that it is only a philistine conception of “democracy” which can be reconciled with totalitarian compulsion. This “democracy” cannot be defined as government “of, by and for the people.” It can only be defined in nebulous

## FOREWORDS

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terms, such as those used by the knighted British labor leader, Sir Walter Citrine, before the 1940 convention of the A.F. of L. “Democracy” is “not a form of government” at all. “It is a way of life. It is a spiritual quality,” he said.

Thus the “spiritual quality” is presumedly to be retained, while the liberties we have heretofore associated with democracy are one by one uprooted and new disabilities are put upon us.

Surely, if ever a word needed redefining, it was “democracy.” It was natural and imperative that a Marxist should undertake this task, first because he treasures the degree of democracy man has thus far achieved; secondly, because he is devoted wholly to the mission of bringing democracy into full flower. Millions of workers today harbor doubts concerning the “democracy” of recent measures adopted by the capitalist Political State under the pretext of “defense.” Those who read this historical definition will learn that their doubts are well founded. They will learn that *beyond doubt* democracy is being debased to evil ends. And they will acquire the knowledge with which to help combat the most monstrous swindle of our age.

*Eric Hass*

November 28, 1940.

## 1971 FOREWORD

The title of Arnold Petersen's *Democracy—Past, Present and Future* clearly implies a concept of development. It is not one that postulates a beginning, maturity and decline or death, but that views the democratic process in terms of evolution as man evolved as a social being, and as his means of livelihood, and of wealth production, evolved from the primitive to the highly complex. This concept recognizes periods of retrogression and of defeats, but it nevertheless sees the process as one of growth, sometimes of a distorted growth that provides its own lessons that will assist the man-guided evolution of democracy to full maturity and perfection through Socialism.

Arnold Petersen pays much more than a formal tribute to democracy in this work. He relates a history of the beginning of democracy in man's earliest origins as a social being in primitive communist society. He records what may be called the rediscovery of democracy in political and private-property society. And he outlines the social and material forces that have brought mankind to the threshold of the new Socialist era in which *industrial* democracy will universalize the rule of the people. He shows that this will be done on a material basis that will ensure democracy's perpetuation, and make of it an everyday practice of the useful producers of the Socialist society.

Man of primitive society could not have survived without the democracy of the gens (commonly called "clan"), or without his primitive communism, with its obligation of all to contribute to the common store of the requirements of life. The history of man's development from the nonpolitical, communistic society of primitive life to the beginnings of private-property and class-ruled society tells us that democracy—political democracy—was necessary at the latter stage of development, too.

The author's story of Solon, Cleisthenes and the ruling-class democracy of ancient Greece, like the story of the Roman Republic's development, presents us with a story of historic necessity. Athens could have political democracy for

its citizens, and complete subjection for the citizens' slaves. Historic developments show that political democracy could, and does, exist alongside of economic despotism, and that the more the latter developed the more political democracy retrogressed. We know that in our own country the tradition and practices of political democracy continue while the mass of the people are as subject to economic despotism as the slaves of Athens were. And, of course, as in Germany, Italy, Brazil, modern Greece and other lands, the reality of economic despotism proved to be the cause of the abandonment of political democracy for political despotism. Arnold Petersen's work relates part of this history—and shows the danger of its repetition in this country.

In his chapter on "The Economic Basis of Industrial Democracy," the author brings the reader to the period—the present—in which the private-property and class-rule necessities of the past have become socially obsolete and socially destructive. History does indeed show that these things were necessities to social development. Despite the parasitism implicit in the few having more than the many, and in ruling the many as the means of holding on to and increasing their wealth and relative security, the inequality did provide the leisure for some (including surrogates for the possessors of wealth) to develop art, literature, history, mathematics, mechanics, astronomy, and so on, leading to the accumulation of knowledge and to a further development that, in turn, led to the real golden age of science in this capitalist era.

Capitalism, as Marx and Engels said, produced wonders that surpassed the wonders of the ancient world. But its wonders of manufacture and commerce produced the monstrosities of capitalist war, of almost universal exploitation, and of insecurity. It proved to be far more wasteful of humanity than Rome was of the people its ruling class robbed, enslaved and killed.

Capitalism's development led by its Industrial Revolution to the social need for a new economic and democratic order. It also led to this by its retrogressions from the idealism of political revolutions against monarchical and feudal restrictions on the new capitalist economy that was developing in the feudal economy. The evolution through thousands of years to this need for Socialism is told in this work, capped by the author's explanation of how democracy can be revitalized through genuine Socialism. The knowledge and logic called upon to tell this story of mankind and his society, and to tell it with realistic hope

rather than with despair, are products of Marxism-De Leonism. Studied, this work can help to raise the reader's sights to the certainties of the cooperative and democratic society of Socialism. The certainties include the raising of man's stature, the solution to his problems of taking care of his needs, and the institution of the means—through Socialist Industrial Unionism—of governing himself so that never again will men rule and exploit other men.

The reader will note in studying this work that its discussions of the particular problems at the time of its original publication are as timely now as they were then. The reader will, therefore, learn about the meaning of current events, as well as about the past, the present and the future course of democracy, and of society. If he learns his lessons well, the reader can become a more potent link in the evolutionary, and revolutionary, chain of action that will lead to a better social world.

*John Timm*

February 25, 1971

I.

INTRODUCTION

The time is out of joint, but unlike Hamlet we do not cry—

“Oh cursed spite,  
That ever (I) we were born to set it right!”

The time is out of joint, and we who were born to assist in setting it right hail with joy the opportunity of doing so. There is none so dull but that he knows that there is something fundamentally wrong in the world today—none so illiterate but that he finds words to express his alarms, his fears and, sometimes, his hopes. But, unfortunately, there are but few who have any inkling of what is really wrong—or, knowing, will risk present security and comfort in order to right the wrong. And fewer still there are who know how to snap back again into joint this dislocated age. And one of the reasons for that is the pernicious habit of men to consider the political and economic institutions of their own period as being of and for all time, and even when they concede the possibility or advisability of change, the concession is made with the sole thought of preserving the essence of the current social order, though it may be (as *is* the case now) the very cause of the disjointed world. And so, in great crises, men will tinker with externals, with this or that symptom of an organic social disease—a disease that is fatal, a disease that can neither be cured nor endured—with the result that, on the one hand, there is a momentary strengthening of, or at least a temporarily revived, body politic (otherwise doomed), with a deferment of the ultimate or inevitable dissolution, and, consequently, an increase in the violence of the spasms and death-throes of the dying social organism.

And this is what is happening today.



The world is not out of joint because there arose in Germany a perverted wretch of a creature named Hitler, or a strutting mountebank and power-drunk egomaniacal despot in Italy, or a scheming, calculating, petty bureaucracy in Russia, or an overriding military despotism in Japan. And so forth. No, on the contrary, these governmental gangsters, petty dictators and sabre-rattling martinets arose precisely because the world is out of joint. The distinction is vital, and not a mere rearrangement of words. For if we fully realize that the puny autocrats who at the moment seem to enjoy mass approval in their respective countries are not the churners-up of the waters, but are themselves but the flotsam and jetsam, the scum, as it were, that has risen to the surface of the turbulent social sea of our time, we shall have no difficulty in understanding that the problem calls for more than a mere settlement of accounts with these wretches—in short, that it is the conditions which created them and made them possible, rather than the creatures themselves, with which we must deal.

These conditions are, of course, of more than local significance and peculiarity. The symptoms being worldwide, the conclusion is inescapable that the cause is worldwide, and it follows, then, that the remedy, whatever particular form it may take, must be universal in character. The Socialist Labor Party has designated worldwide capitalism as the cause, and each and every incident of major importance taking place today confirms the conclusion that capitalism is directly responsible for the world's chaos and bloody disorders, that no other conclusion can stand the test of reason and scientific analysis, that no other conclusion makes sense. And our remedy, our remedy for getting the world to snap back into joint, is Socialism, the Industrial Republic of Labor, the international brotherhood of man, based on an economy of plenty and social equality. And we proclaim this to be the true democracy, the only democracy that will work, the only democracy wherein the people will really rule, and under which neither despotism nor anarchy can make an appearance, nor (if attempted) possibly survive.

## II.

### THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF BOURGEOIS “DEMOCRACY”

But, we are told, we *have* true democracy in this country today. What’s wrong with it? And if the questioner is a native “Fifth Columnist,” or an “American Columnist” (that is, a member of the reactionary outfit, “The American Column”), or just a common ordinary capitalist press columnist, he is apt to add that if you don’t like this democracy (or this country) go back where you came from—even if you are a native-born Indian! Now, as to not liking this democracy, we might tentatively reply that it is not so much a case of not liking this democracy, but rather a case of not liking the economic basis on which it rests and which determines the practical working out of this democracy. For, contrary to common belief, we Socialists are far more passionately attached to democracy than are most of those who swear by “our way of life,” whatever that may be. And as to going back to where we came from—and without taking this naive *riposte* too literally lest we restore all the country to the Indians!—we might remind our columnists of whatever denomination that a somewhat similar invitation was extended by the slave power in this country to the critics of chattel slavery. If you don’t like slavery, stay out of the slave states—go back to where you came from, go up North! The trouble with that advice was that slavery followed on your heels, it had a way of refusing to stay where it supposedly belonged, being forever in quest of new territory, new fields in which to root the abominable evil of human slavery. And so with the economic system which its defenders misname democracy—wherever you go you find it, although in some countries it may be less vicious than in others, while in other countries it operates without the base alloy of hypocrisy!

But undoubtedly we do have a sort of democracy in this country, a very limited democracy, which, however, whatever may have been its original

virtues and usefulness, now fails to justify its designation, except to those who are satisfied to accept shadow for substance, or form for content. And so we must ask ourselves: What is true democracy—has there ever been such a thing, and (assuming that we haven't got it now) shall we ever have it again? We answer, yes, there has been a true democracy; we have not got it now, for the once healthy democracy inherited from our fathers has been worn down to the bone. But, when the workers make up their minds, we *will* have it again!

The true democracy which the race once enjoyed was the democracy of the ancient communes, in this country among the Indians, in Europe notably among the Greeks, before the advent of private property. It was a democracy of equality, but it rested on universal poverty, and having achieved its efflorescence, remained stagnant and suffered decay and corruption. Hence its downfall. The democracy to come—Socialist Industrial Democracy—will likewise be one of universal equality, but it will rest on an economy of affluence, of super-abundance. Hence, it will (contrary to the ancient communal democracy) afford leisure and culture for all; it will for that reason be incapable of stagnation, and will thus not suffer decay and corruption, but rather grow and expand both materially and culturally, multiplied by all the modern factors that make for human happiness and well-being.

We see, then, that so far as forms are concerned, there is nothing absolute about democracy. Like the abstraction *truth*, democracy must be related to the economic basis of the given society, the essential characteristics of which it necessarily reflects. Emerson well said that “No truth (is) so sublime but it may be trivial tomorrow in the light of new thoughts.” As the truth of one age may become the falsehood of a succeeding age, so the democracy of one age may become the despotism of a succeeding age, though the shell of democracy survives, and though the name *democracy* is retained. Truth, it has been well said, is that which fits all the facts in the case. Democracy may be said to be that *popular rule* which fits the economic facts and material potentialities of a given period. The essence of democracy, however, the enduring quality of democracy, is that it is rule by the people, whatever be the particular forms through which it is expressed, and whatever may be the current purposes and designs for which it is exercised and applied.

DEFINITIONS OF "DEMOCRACY"

But to get a clearer understanding of democracy, let us examine briefly some of its forms of manifestation, and let us review some of the definitions given of it. Let us begin with the formal definitions. The Standard Dictionary tells us that democracy is "government by the people; a system of government in which the sovereign power of the state is vested in the people as a whole, and is exercised directly by them or their elected agents."

Nominally, that fits the political democracy of the United States. But let us look at Webster's definition of democracy, given as being "government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is retained by the people and exercised either directly (*absolute* or *pure* democracy) or indirectly (*representative democracy*), through a system of representation and delegated authority periodically renewed as in a constitutional representative government, or republic."

The term democracy derives from the Greek word "deme" which is the designation applied to a geographical unit in Attica<sup>1</sup>—that is, "deme" is the political unit, the township, evolved by the Greek state-builder Cleisthenes who lived some 500 years B.C. "Deme" is now defined as "a district," "the people." In passing, it is of interest to note Lewis Henry Morgan's commentary on Cleisthenes and his epochal innovation, the deme, or the township. While crediting Cleisthenes's forerunner, Solon, with launching the idea of a political society, it took, said Morgan, nearly a century "before the idea of a state was fully developed in the Athenian mind." Referring to Cleisthenes as "a man of the highest genius," he reminds us that Cleisthenes divided Attica "into a hundred demes, or townships, each circumscribed by metes and bounds, and distinguished by a name." And Morgan adds: "Every citizen was required to register himself [how very modern!], and to cause an enrollment of his property in the deme in which he resided. This enrollment was the evidence as well as the foundation of his civil privileges."

Thus was organized the first political democracy, as definitely distinguished from the earlier communal democracy which had broken down. As we see, the civil privileges of the Athenian citizen rested on private property, whereas the denizen of the ancient commune owned no individual or private property.

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<sup>1</sup> The province of the ancient city-state of Athens.

However, from the word *deme* was derived the word *demos*, which definitely means “the people.” To designate this political society as the rule of the people, the word “Kratos” (meaning authority or rulership) was added (“Demos-Kratos”), hence “democracy.” Democracy, then, means, and can only mean, rule of and by the people, such relationship originally being meaningless except as directly related to the economic life and material possessions of the citizen.

The Greek political democracy has been analyzed by Aristotle in considerable detail, and in certain respects we find similarities between the Athens democracy and the democracy launched in the United States in 1776. They were similar in that both contained vast numbers of slaves who were considered property, or instruments of production, rather than human beings. In Athens, out of a total population of 500,000, only 90,000 were citizens who could vote and participate in public affairs. Of the remainder, 365,000 were slaves, and 45,000 aliens or freed slaves who possessed no civil rights. The slaves, in fact, were scarcely considered human beings. Speaking of property and various instruments of production, Aristotle observed that “indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life.” This conception, grotesque as it sounds to us, was held by the Athenians as being perfectly natural. With that conception, and in view of the economic development at that time, “the people” of Athens numbered at most 135,000 out of the 500,000, and the citizens numbered, as said, 90,000. When the ancients, therefore, spoke of equality in a democracy, they meant that equal rights prevailed among the 90,000 citizens. “If liberty and equality . . .,” said Aristotle, “are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost.”

“All persons,” then, obviously did not include the majority of Athens’s population of 500,000 “souls”; “all persons” meant the small minority of 90,000! It is in the light of this we must understand and appraise Athenian democracy, the democracy which, as Aristotle also observed, “arose from men’s thinking that if they are equal in any respect, they are equal absolutely.” If the 90,000 were not equal in all respects (in civil rights and duties), there would not be a democracy. It might then be, for example, an oligarchy, or a monarchy, or a tyranny, or “aristocracy or government of the best.” But only “democracy and

*demos* in their truest forms are based upon the recognized principle of democratic justice that all [i.e., “all persons”—in Athens less than one-fifth of the population] should count equally; for equality implies that the rich should have no more share in the government than the poor, and should not be the only rulers, but that all should rule equally according to their numbers. And in this way men think that they will secure equality and freedom in their state.” (Aristotle, *Politics*.)

Freedom and equality—resting on an enslaved majority!

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Two thousand four hundred years have passed since the noble men of Athens struggled with the problems which still confront us today. In the bigger things as in the smaller things we find certain aspects of the problem the same. Aristotle could sagely observe: “Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime.” Though we may dislike the association here of crime with revolution, the statement is nevertheless true. Twenty-four hundred years after Aristotle, the great dramatist, Henrik Ibsen, could likewise say:

“He who would grow a bed of crime,  
Let him with poverty manure it.”

And Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s efforts to curb the predatory instinct in our modern plutocrats, to make them give up a bit more of their superfluities so that the petty businessmen might have a bit more, and so that the workers’ miseries might be abated somewhat, thus enabling them to drag out a miserable existence a few years longer, link across the centuries with similar efforts and remonstrances of the Athenians, struggling with similar unsolvable problems—unsolvable, that is, within the framework of private property socially used and needed. Summing up the problem in the light of past experience, Aristotle observes that “the regulation of property is the chief point of all, that being the question upon which all revolutions turn. This danger [he adds] was recognized by Phaleas of Chalcedon, who was the first to affirm that the citizens of a State ought to have equal possessions. . . . Plato in the ‘Laws’ was of opinion that, to a certain extent, accumulation should be allowed, forbidding, as I have already observed, any citizen to possess more than five times the minimum qualification.” (Aristotle, *Politics*.)

Here speak the New Dealers of the mighty state of antiquity! These ancient New Dealers have long since gone the way of all flesh, as will presently those of our generation, futility and defeat attending their efforts. The problem which defied the attempts to solve it twenty-four hundred years ago will defy attempts of the New Dealers and plutocrats alike of our age to solve it. For it cannot be solved their way. It can only be solved the Marxian way, and it *shall* be solved the Marxian way.

ARISTOTLE TO MADISON

The American bourgeois democracy at its inception, as stated, resembled the ancient democracies in several respects. The problem of how to account the slave—that is, whether as property or human being—had to be solved. In economics the slave was property—no doubt about that. Just as in Athens, in aspects of economics, there was no essential difference between a chattel slave and a tame animal! But in politics the question was a different one. For the South wanted to include the slaves as persons in the total population in order that their representation in Congress might be larger. As we have seen, that problem did not worry the Athenians, for they excluded slaves altogether as persons, and would probably have looked upon any citizen as a lunatic if he had objected! To make a long story short, an agreement was finally reached among the “founding fathers” that it would require five Negroes to equal three white persons. An amusing solution if one can forget about the deep, stark tragedy underlying this arrangement.

Apart from the slavery question, another question confronted the democracy-builders, both in Athens and in the United States. As in Athens, so in the United States, the problem of giving the vote to propertiless, though, of course, free citizens, and the possible effects of so doing on the property rights of the wealthy minority, troubled Aristotle as much as it troubled James Madison. In two passages, remarkably alike, though penned at periods almost 2,300 years apart, these two profound political thinkers pose this problem. Said Aristotle:

“How is this [political] equality to be obtained? Is the qualification to be so distributed that five hundred rich shall be equal to a thousand poor? And shall we give the thousand a power equal to that of the five hundred? . . . Democrats

say that justice is that to which the majority agree, oligarchs that to which the wealthier class; in their opinion the decision should be given according to the amount of property. In both principles there is some inequality and injustice. For if justice is the will of the few, any one person who has more wealth than all the rest of his class put together ought, upon the oligarchical principle, to have the sole power—but this would be tyranny; or if justice is the will of the majority, as I was before saying, they will unjustly confiscate the property of the wealthy minority.” (Aristotle, *Politics*.)

James Madison, eighteenth century political philosopher and nineteenth century statesman, said:

“Under every view of the subject, it seems indispensable that the mass of citizens should not be without a voice in making the laws which they are to obey, and in choosing the magistrates who are to administer them, and if the only alternative be between an equal and universal right of suffrage for each branch of the government and a confinement of the *entire* right to a part of the citizens, it is better that those having the greater interest at stake, namely, that of property and persons both, should be deprived of half their share in the government than that those having the lesser interests, that of personal rights only, should be deprived of the whole.” (*Letters and Other Writings of James Madison*, Vol. IV.)

Neither Aristotle nor Madison could solve the problem satisfactorily, and the reason was the same in both cases: The mass of wealth was in the hands of the minority and the majority of the people had little or no property, though, to be sure, the opportunities for acquiring wealth were infinitely greater than they were in the days of Aristotle, and infinitely greater by far than they are today. If the problem had increased, say, tenfold, from the days of Aristotle to Madison’s day, it has increased a thousandfold in the one hundred fifty years that have passed since Madison’s day to ours. With wealth concentrating into ever fewer hands, the point having been reached where now 59 per cent of the wealth is owned by one per cent of the population while 87 per cent of the population now own only eight per cent of the wealth, the solution of the problem can no longer be deferred.<sup>2</sup> The reason for the inability of Aristotle and Madison to solve it and the reason why it *can* and *must* be solved now have

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<sup>2</sup> Report Federal Trades Commission, 1926.



been related elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> The solution of the problem lies in the principles and program of the Socialist Labor Party. If that program is not put into effect, society will lapse into barbarism, a barbarism already foreshadowed in the rise and momentary triumph of the Fascist-Nazi despotisms. Failure to translate the S.L.P. principles into concrete reality can result only in the establishment of the despotic collectivism of Industrial Feudalism (Fascism). The *only* answer to the threat of despotic collectivism is the democratic collectivism of Socialism (the Industrial Union form of Government). The former collectivism spells death to the freedom of the individual. The latter collectivism insures new life to, and enlargement of, individual rights and liberties. As Georg Brandes has so succinctly put it: "Collectivism, deprived of the fundamental principles of fraternity and self-government, is by the very nature of things a liberty-sapping doctrine." Fraternity and self-government are obviously ruled out in the Fascist regime of despotism. It is just as obviously included, and in the very nature of things guaranteed, in the collectivist Commonwealth of Labor.

"DEMOCRACY" AND "REPUBLIC"

Certain persons, claiming to believe in what they call individual liberty, have arisen recently who, with much show of learning, have told us that this country was not formed or intended as a democracy at all, but as a republic, and we are to conclude that in their practical application the two were entirely different. The patent absurdity of this claim is instantly realized by anyone familiar with the subject and the meaning of words. It is quite true (as James Madison pointed out<sup>4</sup>) that if principles be ignored, and if the meaning of "republican form" be sought "in the application of the term by political writers, to the constitutions of different States, no satisfactory (answer) would ever be found." And he goes on to cite Holland and Venice as states where the people were subject to absolute or despotic rule though denominated republics; and Poland, in which country, he added, prevails "a mixture of aristocracy and monarchy in their worst forms," and England where, he continued, there is "one republican branch only, combined with an hereditary aristocracy and monarchy"—yet, all these have at one time or another "been dignified with the

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<sup>3</sup> See *Constitution of the United States: Founding of the Bourgeois Republic*, by Arnold Petersen.

<sup>4</sup> *The Federalist*, No. 38.

same appellation”—i.e., republic. Brushing these aberrations aside, then, Madison offers this definition of a republic:

“We may define a republic to be, or at least bestow that name on, a government which derives all its powers directly or indirectly from the great body of the people, and is administered by persons holding their offices during pleasure, for a limited period, or during good behavior.”<sup>5</sup>

The definition of *republic* by the Standard Dictionary, though much shorter, follows substantially the Madison definition and, as we see, that definition does not depart in essence from the definition of democracy. For all practical purposes, then, the two terms may be said to mean the same thing. Alexander Hamilton, co-author with Jay and Madison of *The Federalist* papers, emphasized this fact when he made the following comment:

“The genius of *republican* liberty seems to demand on one side, not only that all power should be derived from the people, but that those intrusted with it should be kept in dependence on the people. . . .”<sup>6</sup>

And returning to Madison, we find him saying anent democracy and republic:

“The first question that offers itself is whether the general form and aspect of the government be strictly republican. It is evident that no other form would be reconcilable with the genius of the people of America; *with the fundamental principles of the Revolution.*” (Emphasis mine.)<sup>7</sup>

And where do we find these “fundamental principles of the Revolution” enunciated? Where but in the Declaration of Independence? And has there ever been a document of similar character and official recognition where the principles of democracy—political democracy, to be sure—have been more clearly or more forcefully stated?

A conclusive answer to those who seek to make a distinction between the terms “Republic” and “Democracy” as used in America may be found in the fact that Thomas Jefferson, the outstanding champion of democracy, was originally called a republican, and the party espousing the principles of Jeffersonian democracy was called the Republican party, as distinguished from the opposition party, the Federalists!

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<sup>5</sup> *The Federalist*, No. 38.

<sup>6</sup> *The Federalist*, No. 36.

<sup>7</sup> *The Federalist*, No. 38.

The reactionary assailants of democracy insist that the revolutionary fathers had no *intention* of establishing a democracy, and that (through Jefferson and others) there subsequently developed opposition against what was supposed to be what they did intend to establish—i.e., a republic—the result of this opposition supposedly being a corruption of their intentions, namely, democracy! Hence, Jeffersonian democracy, supposedly the arch foe of liberty!! One of these reactionary writers, one John Corbin, whose book on this subject, *Two Frontiers of Freedom*, has been discussed and reviewed at considerable length recently, vigorously denounces democracy and sneers at the rule of the people; and though he professes to reject the autocracy of the European bandit dictatorships, he does, in fact, embrace their principles, as indeed he who denounces democracy must necessarily do. Referring to the revolutionary fathers, he says: “The government they founded was as different from democracy as day is from night—namely, a Republic.” And he adds:

“The dictators are right that the trouble with the world is democracy. It is equally true (though they do not say this) that democracy has always been the arch enemy of freedom.”

The United States Constitution is by this reactionary enemy of democratic principles conceived to be the antithesis of democracy, or, rather, he conceives the Constitution as the corrective of democracy, not as the instrument to protect and safeguard it. The Constitution, being a compromise (and a necessary one under the circumstances), the charge is not wholly without some justification, though not in the sense implied by this arrogant enemy of democracy, and in the main the charge is false. The charge, in any event, is not true in any finally determining sense, least of all as applied to the condition of that time, nor is it true with respect to the intentions of the revolutionary fathers. We have just seen how emphatic both Hamilton and Madison were in insisting that a democracy, in keeping with the fundamental principles of the Revolution, was their aim. It is amusing then, to say the least, to find that this reactionary defamer of the American Revolution names Madison and Hamilton as opponents of democracy, while Thomas Jefferson (among others) is included among those who supposedly corrupted the noble work of Washington, Madison and Hamilton by introducing democracy in the American system of government.

Another writer, an economic illiterate and vulgar reactionary, who does a weekly turn “with a bookworm” in the New York *Herald Tribune*, seconds Mr. Corbin’s attempts at misrepresenting and defaming the revolutionary fathers. The following, taken from her recent comments on the theme of Corbin’s book, sufficiently demonstrates the vulgarity of the lady’s conception of democracy: “Democracy [she says] is simply majority rule, the totalitarian state.” It will be news to Hitler, Mussolini and the rest of the totalitarian fraternity that majority rule prevails in their gangster realms—and that they are really passionate adherents of democracy! A reactionary, even a defender of reactionary vulgarism, need not necessarily be an imbecile. But here we certainly have a choice specimen of vulgar reaction and imbecility in wedded bliss!

In another reference the same writer, with the now familiar brazen misrepresentations of the revolutionary fathers, repeats in substance the same imbecility:

“The constitution [she writes] was devised as a safeguard against the deadly principle of democracy (majority right)—and to preserve the vital principle of liberty (individual right).”

One has to go back to the utterances of the most violently reactionary among eighteenth century Tories to find anything to match this gem dropped by our blatant Lady Chatterbox. It was Edmund Burke (curiously enough defender of the American revolutionists, but vilifier of the French Revolution, and the French revolutionary leaders)—Edmund Burke, British orator, who, in referring to the struggle to overthrow the monarchy in France, and to establish a political democracy, exclaimed:

“A perfect democracy is therefore the most shameless thing in the world.”

How comforting it must be to our present-day reactionary assailants of democracy to know that their hearts beat in perfect unison with that of the man who descended to the lowest levels in attacking and defaming that inspiring exemplification of human struggle for liberty, that magnificent blow at black reaction and ruling class parasitism, the great French Revolution!

#### WHEN THE PEOPLE ARE NOT PEOPLE

Democracy, I repeat, is then not something that one can approve or condemn unqualifiedly. First, we must understand what we mean by

“democracy”; secondly, we must understand what is meant by people, and *when* people are *not* people! And, thirdly, we must relate democracy to the economic basis of a given society, since obviously democracy, meaning rule of the people, must reflect the people’s material needs, and the possibilities and means of satisfying these needs.

How stand matters today with respect to what generally is understood by the term democracy? We need not ponder the question at length, for it is obvious that democracy as understood by the revolutionary fathers has little or no meaning as applied to the practical needs of the majority of the people. Conceived, among other basic things, as a means to protect property, and the fruits of labor, at the time of the American Revolution—that is, at a time when the acquiring of property (however unequally distributed at any given period) was still possible on the part of the average citizen, it is obvious that that same democracy cannot mean now what it meant then, since the mass of the people are not only now without property, but also (in the phrase of Madison) “without the means or hope of acquiring it.” That which 150 years ago furnished the basis of, and gave meaning and rationality to, the American idea of democracy having disappeared, no honest, thinking person would insist that that form of democracy can any longer serve and satisfy the needs of the majority of the people today. Just as in early communal society democracy formed an inseparable part of the economic way of life of the denizens of that democracy; just as in 1776 (and the years that followed until the great industrial revolution made its effects felt everywhere), the early American, or bourgeois, democracy was inseparably a part of the economic way of life of our fathers, so today democracy, to have any meaning other than to serve as a mask for economic despotism, must constitute an inseparable part of the way of life of the vast majority of the people today.

But what is the “way of life” of the people of today—meaning primarily the vast majority, or the wage workers? We know that it is not the way of life of the people 150 years ago. We know that the way of life of the Ford workers, for instance, is not the way of life of Henry Ford and his kin and retainers. Mr. Ford owns vast wealth; his workers own nothing outside themselves. Mr. Ford *buys* labor power, and he naturally wants to buy it cheap; his workers *sell* labor power, and they just as naturally want to sell it at the highest price possible. His workers sell their labor power (which in effect means selling themselves) in

the labor market; Mr. Ford, not being a vendor of labor power, sells in the automobile market—that is, he sells the products of his workers in the appropriate commodity market, just as the workers do in theirs. Just as no one would ask a Ford wage slave: “How well did you do in the automobile market today?” so no one would ask Mr. Ford: “Did you sell successfully in the labor market today?” (And, incidentally, there was, of course, neither an automobile market nor a labor market in the days of the fathers—reference to either would have been just so much gibberish to Washington, Jefferson and Madison!)

And as it is with Mr. Ford and his wage slaves, so it is with every other capitalist and his wage slaves—the way of life of the one is the exact opposite of the other. Since democracy necessarily *must* be related to the economic, that is, the basic way of life, how *can* our present form of democracy mean the same thing to classes with diametrically opposed economic interests? The fact is, of course, that except as a means of effecting peaceably fundamental social, political and historically unavoidable changes, present-day political democracy can have no meaning to the vast majority, the working class. So divorced from actual participation in governmental affairs has the majority of the people become, that it is taken for granted that it is not within the province of the workers, for instance, to understand the business of government today, and the majority has, in fact, surrendered political power in all important matters to politicians and so-called statesmen. And the workers themselves, frequently—too frequently—impatient with what they call politics (capitalist politics), make statements implying that it is not their business to meddle in statecraft, and they are quite content to let the lawyers and the professional politicians do their thinking and acting for them. This is a natural consequence flowing from the fact that to the working class political democracy, by and large, has lost the sense of reality, since it has no direct or immediate relation to the thing which concerns them above all, namely, their jobs, their industrial relations and problems.<sup>8</sup> William C. Bullitt, American Ambassador to France (or what is left of it), in his recent pro-conscription and pro-war speech, unwittingly offered confirmatory evidence on this head, with particular reference, of course, to that attitude of contempt which the ruling class has

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<sup>8</sup> “Man is very much a creature of habit. A thing that rarely strikes his senses will generally have but little influence upon his mind. A government continually at a distance and out of sight can hardly be expected to interest the sensations of the people.”—The Federalist, No. 37.

assumed in respect to the workers' ability to exercise democratic functions in governmental affairs. Said Mr. Bullitt in his speech delivered in Philadelphia on August 18, 1940:

“Control of government by public opinion is the essence of democracy. And it has always been our belief that free speech and a free press and a free education would enable us to form and express our opinions sufficiently swiftly not only to permit but to compel our government to act quickly and effectively. *But the problems of world affairs have become so complex, in this day of volcanic change, that the average citizen has the greatest difficulty in understanding them and judging what is best for his country before it is too late.*”

Precisely so, except that Mr. Bullitt might have been a bit more candid and acknowledged that it is not merely difficult, but virtually impossible, for the average citizen to understand what these doings are all about, because they have no relevancy to the things that are vital to at least 90 per cent of our people today, their jobs, their economic problems, their means of making a living.

It might be added, incidentally, that Mr. Bullitt also proved how worthless to the ruling class is the democracy to which they sing such pæans when to do so serves their economic purposes, or their class interests. Without mentioning names, he referred to that section of the French ruling class which prepared the way for the fascist invader, and which cared no more for the political democracy of France than Hitler did. The collapse of capitalist-bourgeois France constitutes an important lesson in the history and working out of what our own capitalists and their spokesmen call “our way of life.”

This attitude of contempt toward the “average citizen” (which is to say, in the main, the working class) with regard to his understanding of, and interest in, affairs of government, suggests a startling parallel to the attitude of the ancient Athenians toward slaves and freedmen. As we have already noted, in the latter instance neither slaves, nor freedmen were, for the purpose of governing, considered persons. In the former instance, when ruling class spokesmen refer to “public opinion,” “the public,” and to “the people,” they really do not mean what they say. By “public opinion” they mean ruling class opinion, by “the public” they mean the ruling class, and by “the people” they

mean “the best people”! And so forth. As Marx, in his profound observation, puts it: “The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.” Or, to turn it around, and paraphrase it slightly, “The ruling class of each age ever imposed its class notions and views upon the mass of the people as the ruling ideas and views of that age.”

RULING CLASS CONTEMPT FOR FREE SPEECH

As to the still surviving usefulness of political democracy (and it is indeed a usefulness of vital significance), all efforts of the present-day ruling class are directed at restricting, abolishing, or otherwise rendering nugatory, the exercising of that vital remnant of democracy, and they attempt to do this in the very name of that democracy which, without that exercise, would become as meaningless and useless as it in practical affairs had already become! It is by no means an unusual thing for politicians or other servants of the plutocracy and the industrial feudalists to speak in terms of contempt of free speech, for instance, at the very same time that they boast of their liberalism and their adherence to democracy. During the first World War there was organized in this country a body calling itself the “American Defense Society.” In a book written in 1917 by one of the leaders of that organization, one Dr. William T. Hornaday, we find this significant statement:

“The people of the United States are bowing down in besotted worship to the ridiculous fetish idol called Free Speech.

“One night a few Butte men of sand decided that at least one of the I.W.W. leaders should literally reach the end of his rope. Taking the rope with them, six of them called at leader Little’s hotel, took him from his bed, and in a most quiet and orderly way imaginable hanged him to a railroad bridge in the suburbs of Butte until he was dead.”

Just like that! Substitute the hangman’s noose for free speech! And lest you tell me that that was in 1917, let me cite the recent utterance of one of our voluble New York “statesmen,” George U. (“Rubberhose”) Harvey, who on August 13 delivered himself of a tirade against free speech, saying:

“Free speech and all that damned nonsense just provides an excuse for letting those who want to overthrow the government have their way.” (*Herald Tribune*, August 14, 1940.)



Free speech, according to the Harvey conception, is only for those who agree with gentlemen of his stripe and their political caveman's idea of democracy! Political and economic illiterates will never understand that free speech, the essence of democracy, has no meaning except as the means to settle differences of opinion, and, in great social crises, to arrive at decisions that meet the needs of society, on the terms of majority opinion. "Man is not free, when he is not thinking," said Friedrich Hegel, the famous German philosopher. Obviously, then, man is still less free when he cannot freely express his thoughts. The sort of freedom which vulgar politicians cherish is the kind described also by Hegel, i.e., "the power to sell one's vote, and to purchase a seat in parliament." And these deadly enemies of liberty and democracy call themselves liberals! How well Ibsen summed up the matter when (in referring to those political cave dwellers who suppressed utterance) he said: "The liberals are the worst enemies of liberty."<sup>9</sup>

DISTORTED DEMOCRACY

But perhaps, after all, they do sincerely believe that theirs is the true democracy—the democracy of the barracks!—and that it really serves "the people," the "best people," of course! Perhaps unwittingly, even in their ignorant and vulgar way, they are revealing their kinship to those earlier ruling classes who simply took for granted the slave status of their workers, considering them as little different from "tame animals"! And why not? If they can conceive the drudgery of the Ford shop, with its unlimited autocracy, as constituting "the way of our democratic life"; if men slaving in the steel mill infernos are conceived to be enjoying real democracy; if the horrors of the tenant farmer, the unspeakable existence of the share-croppers, the endless grind of wage slaves generally—if all this is democracy, then why should not the Prussian ideal, the slave state, be considered democracy? If the robot-like acts of the Ford wage slaves are acts of persons enjoying democracy, why is not the goose-stepping of Nazi-Prussian militarism the self-determined gait of a free and happy people? And why is not, then, the denial of free speech to those who really need it the most the very essence of democracy? Indeed, why not?

However, if present-day democracy has all but vanished, what, then,

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<sup>9</sup> Letter to Brandes, April 4, 1872.

becomes of the *principle* and *substance* of democracy—in what form, and for what purpose can they, should they, survive?

### III.

## THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

The old form of democracy reflected a way of life which, in its essence, has gone forever. The private property, to which it related in its origin, exists no more. That property, though private still in point of ownership, has become social in form and operation, and under capitalism the vast majority stand bereft of it. The blacksmith shop of 150 years ago furnished the means of a living to him who owned and operated it—like Longfellow’s village blacksmith, who, “mighty man,” free and independent—

“His brow wet with honest sweat,  
(he) earns whate’er he can,  
And looks the whole world in the face,  
For he owes not any man.”

Where is he today? What has become of his “village smithy”? That “village smithy” has become the United States Steel Corporation, the Weir and the Girdler steel mills, and the sturdy blacksmith has become the exploited steel wage slave in these industrial infernos, in which he has not a particle of vested interest nor the slightest part of governance. He who owns these modern “smithies,” but who never wields “a heavy sledge,” nor ever sees “the flaming forge,” nor hears “the bellows roar” (except possibly as an occasional visitor)—the owner of this mighty blacksmith shop sits, not “under a spreading chestnut tree,” but more likely under a spreading palm tree, in whose shade he guzzles cool drinks, while his slaves—the descendants of the sturdy blacksmith of 150 years ago—ceaselessly toil in the driving sweat of their weary bodies.

And as with the “village smithy,” so with all other crafts and shops once individual in ownership and operation. The one-time wheelwright and the

wagoner now slave in the Ford plants; the shoemaker at the bench once making a complete shoe or boot now is a cog in a boot and shoe factory, toiling at starvation wages for the profit of another; and the one-time self-sustaining tailor is a mere number in a huge clothing factory, while the proud and independent farmer is a poor and wretched tenant-farmer or share-cropper—none of them any longer free and sturdy craftsmen, able to look “the whole world in the face,” but angry or trembling wage slaves, fearful of losing the jobs they do not own—the jobs that are owned by their capitalist masters who, with a word or a pen-stroke, can plunge thousands into misery and want by throwing them on the streets, thus manifesting possession of a power which an Oriental despot might well have envied them!

Indeed, just as the once free American has become a wage slave in the factory hells and mill infernos owned by the capitalists, so have these latter become industrial autocrats, in a sense and to a degree that laugh to scorn our claims to democracy in America today! In short, the political democracy, theoretically surviving and nominally exercised by the propertiless workers, is practically cancelled by the industrial autocracy *de facto* in existence today. “You take my life when you do take the means whereby I live,” groaned Shylock, and so it is. He who owns the means of life, the things to which we must have access in order to live, owns our lives, owns them in a sense and to an effect as real as if actual chains bound us to the master and his machine. Again, where, in the presence of such actual industrial despotism, does our vaunted democracy fit in—how does it retain sense and substance in such a situation? The answer again must be that that democracy, in the vital, practical needs of the everyday way of our lives, possesses neither sense nor substance, nor relevancy, to the vast majority of the people, the wage workers. That is to say, it has lost sense and substance to what is, in fact, *the* people, and only the parasitical few, the capitalist owners, and their slave-drivers and medicine men, enjoy the benefits of this so-called democracy.

#### HOW REVITALIZE DEMOCRACY?

What, then, I repeat, must we do to revitalize the democratic principle? How must we translate it into modern terms that give it meaning? How must we apply it so that again it acquires sense and substance? And in what manner

may we transform the present way of life of the working class—which is the way of economic slavery—into a way of life that will be in keeping with our standards of civilization, a way of life that will spell true freedom and true, all-around democracy? That it cannot be done piecemeal, nor under the old forms, and within the framework of a society based on private property, we know. For wherever it has been attempted to graft this new vital democracy on the old dying tree of class democracy, the result has been reaction, retrogression, or frustration and disillusionment, ever the forerunners of the man on horseback. It was tried in France in 1871 and the immediate result was black reaction, and a setback to the cause of French labor from which it never fully recovered. It was tried in Germany after the World War—though indeed it was in a limited way—and Hitlerism was the answer. It was tried in Russia, and Stalinism was the fruit, though, to be sure, the drama—or perhaps tragedy—of Soviet Russia has not yet been played to the end of the last act.

LEISURE, AFFLUENCE AND CULTURAL PROGRESS

Political society arose on the ruins of communal society, which perished because equality on the basis of universal poverty inevitably results in stagnation, with eventual reversal to the most primitive way of life. Leisure and affluence are prime requisites for the insuring of social and cultural progress, and if leisure and affluence are not available to all, then they must be assured to the few at the expense of the many. This is the course history took after the dissolution of the ancient commune, a course it had to take if progress were to be served. But that course inescapably spelled slavery, classes, and the rise of the organ to keep the oppressed class down, the Political State. From that time to our present day, government has constituted a force apart from the economic organism as such—a force superimposed from above, as it were, incapable of integration with the productive functions, and, of course, never intended to be so integrated. The very nature and function of political government precluded anything of the kind. Consequently, political government has always constituted an extra burden, or charge, on the economic or productive organism, a necessary burden, of course, since without political government, in a society resting on an economy of scarcity, retrogression, anarchy and eventual disintegration would inescapably follow. But political

government today is no longer needed, for the reason that we now have an economy of amplitude. It is no longer necessary to set aside a small class, in leisure and guaranteed economic security, in order to insure preservation and promotion of the arts and general culture. All can now enjoy leisure and plenty, hence *all* may be carriers of culture, with no dangers of a relapse into barbarism, and with the danger of social disintegration eliminated. But although political government need no longer be maintained—indeed, political government has become solely an incubus on society, and an obstruction to social progress—a governing, or central directing and coordinating, body *is* required lest society (leisure and affluence notwithstanding) nevertheless suffer disintegration. Since the primary task is, and ever must remain, that of producing and insuring a constant supply of the things needed to insure life, well-being and happiness for the dwellers in human society, and since a superimposed organ of force is no longer needed, it follows that the government required is simply one that directs the processes of production and distribution of articles for use, and which insures maintenance and replacement of the productive mechanism. The answer is the *industrial administration of things*, as Frederick Engels called it, or the *Industrial Union Government*, as Daniel De Leon called it, and as the Socialist Labor Party today designates it, varying it with the appellations *Industrial Republic of Labor*, *The Industrial Commonwealth of Labor*, *Industrial Democracy*, or simply *Socialism*.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY—COMPLETE DEMOCRACY

Like its forerunner, political democracy, *Industrial Democracy* will be organized on a representative basis. Having dispensed with the old, worn-out Political State, which derived its representation from geographic units (town, county, state), geographic or territorial demarcations and boundary lines are now discarded. Industrial Democracy, then, derives its representation from industrial units, and from industry generally. It will be organized from the bottom up, that is, in an ascending scale of organization—single plant or group of plants, Local Industrial Union of a given industry, National Industrial Union of the given industry, and finally the All-Industrial Congress, representing all industries. This All-Industrial Union Congress will be the governing board, or the Industrial Government of the Socialist Republic. Its task would, in the

words of De Leon, be “the easy one which can be summed up in the statistics of the wealth needed, the wealth producible, and the work required.” In short, how much of this or that article do we need, how much can be produced of that article with present equipment, and how many hours of labor will the workers have to render on the basis of need and capacity? The answers lie close at hand.

The workers, in the ascending scale of industrial organization, will elect their own foremen and managers, their representatives to the local and national unions, and finally to the All-Industrial Union Congress, with the power of recall never surrendered, and complete democracy—Industrial Democracy—prevailing. This democracy—though necessarily representative—will be a complete democracy such as the world has never before enjoyed—one is tempted to say a “pure” or “perfect” democracy, though it may be best not to yield to the temptation by reason of the manner in which defenders of the acquisitive society have misrepresented these terms. Certainly it will be an infinitely purer and vastly more “perfect” democracy than any the human race has ever known. And with its institution the golden age of mankind will begin. “With the institution of political society under Cleisthenes,” wrote Morgan, “the gentile organization was laid aside as a portion of the rags of barbarism.” In the same spirit, and rendering full tribute to capitalism and preceding acquisitive social systems for the services rendered the cause of civilization, however terrible the cost, civilized man of the (we hope) near future can say: “With the institution of Industrial Union society, as conceived by De Leon, the political society is laid aside as a portion of the rags of primitive civilization.” True democracy, not qualified democracy, nor a democracy cancelled by the limitations inevitably imposed by a class society resting on an economy of scarcity, will be at last enthroned and made secure by that strongest of bonds, the bond of the enlightened material interests of man, united in a common brotherhood made possible by the rendering unnecessary of individual acquisitiveness, and the rendering superfluous of petty motives of personal selfishness.

#### WORLD-WIDE COLLAPSE OF BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

The present world-wide, titanic conflict is nothing else than the collapse of what we have called bourgeois democracy. The World War, fought in desperate

fury, utter savagery, and in ruthless disregard of human and material values, constitutes the proof of the collapse of the bourgeois democratic era, becoming at the same time the instrument of its complete destruction. The war is the continuation and the culmination of the competitive commercial and economic warfare which preceded it. And unless the workers organize to preserve and extend democracy, clothing it in its new industrial, administrative garb, the temporarily rejuvenated barbarism of Fascism and Hitlerism will eventually crush this now essentially useless form of democracy, thereby possibly thrusting society back into a new dark age, the duration of which may be for a long time. For there is no longer any middle course possible. Under the terrific impact of the savage war, established institutions, ancient landmarks, old traditions and loyalties, old faiths and illusions are swept off the board as if they had never been! Mankind presently stands bewildered, and must soon choose between the two roads: Back to barbarism via fascism, or onward to the higher civilization and brotherhood of man via Socialism. There is no halfway settlement possible, and man cannot stand still. It is either *onward*, or *backward*. We believe, and hope, it will be *onward*.



#### IV.

### CONSCRIPTION, PHENOMENON OF DEGENERATED BOURGEOIS “DEMOCRACY”

Our own ruling class, trembling with fear at the prospects of having its “civilization” (capitalism) destroyed by the Hitler scourge is feverishly struggling for a solution, struggling to escape what seems like impending doom as an independent ruling class. The spokesmen of the plutocracy are screaming themselves hoarse in an effort to corral the workers into military and industrial regimentation. Many of the arguments advanced by the plutocracy reveal the sham nature of the democracy which they acclaim, and the form, or shell, of which they would eagerly discard if threatened with the true and infinitely higher democracy of the Socialist Commonwealth. So desperate have they become that they boldly presented the demand for military and industrial conscription in peace time, an unprecedented assault upon the country’s traditions of liberty that might have precipitated a bloody uprising if advanced even a year ago. With an audacity born of their panic, and nurtured by their contempt for the intelligence of the proletariat, they do not hesitate to corrupt and distort history, and to misrepresent unscrupulously the founders of the republic in order to present convincing and supposedly authoritative testimony in behalf of the conscription bill which, incidentally, they were compelled to modify because of the storm of protests its utter fascist and undemocratic character evoked. The ultra-plutocratic New York *Herald Tribune*, for instance, in a recent issue, with a shamelessness unsurpassed even in these days of unprincipled lying and falsification, quoted Thomas Jefferson, purportedly in favor of conscription. Yet, not in even the remotest sense could anything which the paper cited from Jefferson’s writings be construed as favoring conscription. Jefferson merely repeated what had been said so often before and since, that every citizen should have the right to bear arms, and that all the citizens ought

to be trained to use these arms. Indeed, the *Herald Tribune* even quotes Jefferson as saying that only such an armed nation could dispense with a standing army, thereby knocking the argument in favor of a conscript, standing army into a cocked hat! In a letter written in 1814 (in which, incidentally, Jefferson makes references to England strikingly similar to the references England and the United States now make to the Nazi gangster government) Jefferson discussed the question of national defense, and rejecting the suggestion of a standing army, said: “The Greeks, by their laws, and the Romans by the spirit of their people, *took care to put into the hands of their rulers no such engine of oppression as a standing army.*”<sup>10</sup>

Our conscription defenders are usually fond of quoting from Washington’s Farewell Address in support of this or that reactionary plan, but, strangely enough, none of them has as yet discovered this passage so illuminating to the subject in hand: “Hence likewise,” said Washington, “they [the United States] will avoid the necessity of those overgrown Military establishments which, under any form of Government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which [are to be regarded] as particularly hostile to Republican Liberty.” And even the far from liberal Hamilton spoke of “standing armies [that] are dangerous to liberty. . . .”

#### MADISON ON MILITARISM

But no one spoke more forcefully against war and standing armies and the conscription implied than our fourth President, James Madison. In a strong statement denouncing war and military establishments, he said:

“ . . . *armies*, debts and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few. . . . no nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.”<sup>11</sup>

And at the Constitutional Convention in 1787 he warned against “a standing military force,” which, he said, “with an overgrown executive will not long be safe companions to liberty. The means of defense [he continued] against foreign danger have been always the instruments of tyranny at home.”

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<sup>10</sup> “In Virginia a draft [conscription] was ever the most unpopular and impracticable thing that could be attempted. Our people, even under the monarchical government, had learned to consider it as the last of all oppressions.”—Thos. Jefferson, in a letter to John Adams.

<sup>11</sup> *Works of Madison*, IV.

Ponder this well: “*The means of defense . . . have been always the instruments of tyranny at home!*” Powerful words, prophetic words, these! But Madison continues: “Among the Romans it was a standing maxim to excite a war whenever a revolt was apprehended. Throughout all Europe [he added] *the armies kept up under the pretext of defending, have enslaved the people.* It is perhaps questionable [he concluded] whether the best concerted system of absolute power in Europe could maintain itself in a situation where no alarms of external danger could tame the people to the domestic yoke.”

WOODROW WILSON ON CONSCRIPTION

Even the President who led this country into the first World War (before he succumbed to the enormous pressure exerted on him)—even Woodrow Wilson, supposed idol of Franklin D. Roosevelt, denounced conscription in eloquent terms. In his second annual message delivered before Congress in Joint Session, December 8, 1914, President Wilson discussed the subject of national defense, with particular reference to conscription. In taking up the subject, he said:

“It cannot be discussed without first answering some very searching questions. It is said in some quarters that we are not prepared for war. What is meant by being prepared? Is it meant that we are not ready upon brief notice to put a nation in the field, a nation of men trained to arms? Of course we are not ready to do that; AND WE SHALL NEVER BE IN TIME OF PEACE SO LONG AS WE RETAIN OUR PRESENT POLITICAL PRINCIPLES AND INSTITUTIONS. And what is it that it is suggested we should be prepared for? To defend ourselves against attack? We have always found means to do that, *and shall find them whenever it is necessary without calling our people away from their necessary tasks to render compulsory military service in time of peace.*”

And identifying his opposition to conscription in peace-time with the “finer passions” of the American people, he went on:

“We never have had, and while we retain our present principles and ideals we never shall have, a large standing army . . . we shall not turn America into a military camp. We will not ask our young men to spend the best years of their lives making soldiers of themselves. . . . And especially when half the world is

on fire we shall be careful to make our moral insurance against the spread of the conflagration very definite and certain and adequate indeed.”<sup>12</sup>

Conscription in America in time of peace is now a fact. How will the defenders of conscription escape the logic of President Wilson’s condemnation of peacetime conscription? According to Woodrow Wilson’s dictum, America has now abandoned its historic “principles and ideals,” and America is now turned “into a military camp.” And this happened under the administration of one who has hailed Woodrow Wilson as his guide and mentor!

YOUTH NOT RESOLD ON WAR

Perhaps the two most brazen assertions of the conscription advocates and warmongers were (1) that the masses were clamoring for conscription, and (2) that conscription is the very essence of democracy! As to the first, this brazen falsehood was proved such by the flood of protests against the conscription bill that poured into the Senate and the House, and which forced the militarists into a retreat that threatened to become a rout. A writer in the pro-administration New York *Post* recently (August 12, 1940) reported his findings with respect to the popularity of conscription, and discovered what no honest and discerning person had doubted, that conscription is rejected overwhelmingly by the people. This writer quotes a young college man as saying (speaking for himself and his classmates):

“We are pretty thoroughly sold in college that war was a hell of a business and never benefited anybody except people who made a profit out of it: I guess now this is a new kind of war, only Dorothy Thompson and the rest of you haven’t completely resold us.” And he added (undoubtedly with the irreverent irony of youth): “The best thing you can say about this new war is that if we win it, things will stay the same [!!] And a lot of us don’t think very highly of the way things are.”

And probably with a thrust at the artificial and shabby new “patriotic” song by the inventor of ragtime, the young man added:

“But you can’t expect Irving Berlin to write a very stirring marching song about how swell it is to go out and die for the status quo!”

True talk, this! To die for the status quo is to die in defense of the chains

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<sup>12</sup> *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 76–78.

we wear! To die for what our plutocratic masters call “democracy” is to die for the preservation of capitalism, for the protection and extension of trade and world markets. This is the sordid business we are asked to lay down our lives for!

Cartoonists, sometimes unwittingly, often express the truth about such questions in a manner that centers attention on the essential points. The *Herald Tribune* cartoonist, “Ding,” succeeded in doing this in a recent cartoon entitled “Fighting for our Freedom.” The cartoon shows on the top a scene from the American revolution, revolutionary soldiers ensconced behind barricades exchanging shots with the red-coats. It is marked “1776.” The lower section, marked “1940,” shows a flock of young men and women rushing pell-mell toward a building with a sign reading “Marrying Parson,” an arrow marked “Draft Exemption” pointing to the building, and a larger sign bearing the legend “National Defense—Universal Service Draft.” Cartoonist “Ding,” an ardent conscriptioner, we may be sure, brought out two important facts otherwise overlooked or suppressed by the press and other spokesmen of capitalism—the fact that in 1776 the average alive American *knew* that he had a stake in the Revolution, and was eager to fight for the cause; and the other fact that in 1940 the average American knows, or certainly strongly feels, that he has no stake in *this* war—that, on the contrary, he is definitely opposed to war and conscription, and is even willing to take a life-sentence in matrimonial servitude in order to escape both!

However, if these warmongers were so sure that the majority favored conscription, why did they not submit this vitally important question to the referendum of the voters at the November election? Surely, if they thought they were right, they could have lost nothing, and they would have gained a great deal if their contentions had been upheld by the majority of the people. But they did not do this, and the reason is that they *knew* that their claim constituted a huge swindle.

As to the second, if conscription, military and/or industrial, is democracy, then the ant-hill is a democracy, and Hitler’s and Mussolini’s armies are democracies, and goose-stepping is indeed the relaxation of free and liberty-loving men! It has been the favorite pastime of opponents of Socialism (beginning with Herbert Spencer) to charge that Socialism would be the

“coming slavery,” and one of the reasons usually trotted out was that Socialism would reduce all to one common, dead level, this, of course, constituting the very antithesis of democracy. Those visualizing such a prospect would shrink back in horror. Yet, nothing can, in the language of Artemus Ward, be deader nor the common level of conscripted armies.<sup>13</sup> So we see that the supposed dead level at one time constitutes the very opposite, indeed the mortal enemy, of democracy, while at another time that same dead level (of conscript armies) becomes the very soul, the very flower, of democracy!

CONSCRIPTION, A BRAZEN COUP

This successful attempt to fasten on the American people peace-time military conscription (which, if America finds itself at war, probably will be followed by industrial conscription) was one of the boldest, one of the most brazen, ever planned by the predatory ruling class of America. That it is unconstitutional goes without saying, and, barring war, it seems certain that the United States Supreme Court would so declare it, unless the court should go off at a Dred Scott tangent! Horace Greeley, in his massive Civil War chronicle (*The American Conflict*) in 1863 bitterly denounced the draft, saying: “. . . the Draft itself—*any* Draft—was unconstitutional, needless, and an outrage on individual liberty and State rights. . . .” And he went on to quote *The World* (New York) as declaring:

“The idea of a military conscription being itself profoundly repugnant to the American mind, it might have been supposed that unusual steps would have been taken by the friends of that resort [i.e., the friends of conscription] to present it with utter frankness, and in the light best adapted to dissipate the popular hostility. Nothing of the sort was done. . . . It was not only a conscription, but an act passed by conscription.”

DEFEND ECONOMIC DESPOTISM?

This might have been written about the recent arrogant and impudent manner in which the conscriptioners forced this anti-democratic, this Hitleristic measure, down the throat of the American people. And declaring this

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<sup>13</sup> [Look this up. Something doesn't seem right. Also, see WP original.]

choice morsel of Prussianism to be the very jewel of democracy at that!

They will taunt us: But surely you oppose the Hitler “way of life,” and so you would certainly want to defend the country, its “glorious democracy” and institutions, against Hitlerism, and how are you going to do this without a disciplined, trained army? Our answer to that is that we detest Hitlerism (which most of the conscriptioners and warmongers do not), and that we will fight it to the death, but we prefer to start and finish that fight within our own borders. We have hundreds of thousands of Hitlers right in our midst, and it will keep us quite busy to finish the fight, and, when once we have finished that job, we shall have a democracy without alloy, a democracy we *can* and *will* defend with enthusiasm, against any Hitler outside our borders, if by that time there are any Hitlers left. To defend our own economic despotism in any manner whatsoever would be to defend the very things to whose destruction we have dedicated our very lives. “When freemen unsheath the sword, it should be to strike for Liberty, not for despotism!”<sup>14</sup>

Yes, we do not deny that even our greatly qualified democracy is superior to the unspeakable hell of Hitler’s Reich, and if the choice were limited to United States capitalism, and the utterly decayed capitalism of the Axis powers (Hitlerism), we should, no doubt, support the lesser evil. But there is a third choice—industrial democracy—and we know also that conscription and war will turn this country into a similar, if not worse, hell of Hitlerism and Fascism. And so, again, we should be defending the very thing of evil which we would destroy. That sleek and oily champion of plutocratic interests, Walter Lippmann, protestingly exclaims that there is not “one scintilla of historical truth in the assertion which is so frequently heard that free nations transform themselves into totalitarian states when they recognize the need for organization, discipline and authority”—by which three designations Mr. Lippmann means the short and ugly word “conscription.” And he argues that “the downfall of the democracies has been due to their weakness; they have been disintegrated from within and then conquered from without, because they failed to discipline their liberties and to establish authority in their democracy.” Cunning words, and partly true words, but true in what respect? First, in that those who did the disintegrating from within were the very plutocratic

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<sup>14</sup> 1843 Platform, Liberty Party.

elements for whose American counterparts Mr. Lippmann labors so valiantly; and, secondly, that the weakness was the weakness caused by the decay and collapse of capitalism and capitalist institutions. *And there is no way of "curing" that weakness except by adopting Hitlerism*—leaving out of account, of course, Socialism. That is what happened in Germany, that is what happened in Italy, Spain, etc., etc., and in a somewhat different sense and set of circumstances, that is what happened in Russia. And the same weakness is inherent in United States capitalism, and the same result will be produced here if and when the choice must be made between capitalism and Socialism, and Socialism should fail of establishment; and it will then happen whether a Hitler knocks on our gates or not.

#### DISCIPLINE OF THE BARRACKS

It is not democracy which the plutocrats and their poodles are anxious to defend. Oh, no, it is their economic system, their way of life, about which Mr. Willkie, that Wall Street paladin of democracy, also spoke so feelingly the other day at Elwood, Indiana! And the discipline and authority these plutocrats and plutogogues shout about is the discipline of the industrial barracks; the authority is the authority which wage slaves are supposed to owe the benevolent autocrats of industry. It is significant that these pleas and intellectually dishonest arguments are identical to those advanced twenty-five years ago, during the period of preparedness propaganda then carried on by the same elements that now are straining for military conscription and industrial servitude. Pleading for conscription then, the late Major General Leonard Wood assured his masters and associates that conscription would make of the young men "better citizens morally because they will have learned to respect the law and the constituted authority."

Get it? *Law and Constituted Authority!* Respect for constituted authority—free citizens in a free democracy salaaming before the servants they themselves placed in office! What General Wood meant, what Lippmann means, is that the workers must accept their industrial servitude meekly, they must not strike, they must work long hours at small pay, they must not question the prevailing order of things—in short, they must be good industrial serfs! And that is the status they are asked to defend against Hitler—the glorious "status quo" for which they are asked to lay down their lives!



## V.

### SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY, GOAL-CONSCIOUS CARRIER OF INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

The immediate future in America is not going to be a pleasant one—except for the politicians, perhaps, the war camarilla, and the despoilers of labor generally. What little freedom is still left is likely to be curtailed even more, until the time may come when, as the character in the play put it, “about the only freedom we got left is the freedom to choose which one of our rights we’ll go to jail for.”<sup>15</sup> With conscription a fact, the first step has been taken to fasten industrial serfdom on the workers. The S.L.P. has ceaselessly warned against just such a situation. We have been ignored, or laughed at, and even now, while the chains are being forged before the very eyes of the workers, they pay no heed. Just as the huge elephant permits puny men to chain it, so giant labor, potentially all powerful, permits puny politicians—conspirators against their liberties and against American libertarian laws and principles—to chain him, though with a brush of his hand he could dispose of the lot of them as one brushes aside a mosquito.

History repeats itself, it is said, and not always as a farce, but rather as a tragedy made infinitely more tragical. We know we are in for it, and we must face the situation as only well-posted and wide-awake men and women can do—that is, unflinchingly, unafraid, and determined to cling to principle, and to maintain our organization, at this fated historic hour the only determined, goal-conscious carrier of the new democracy—Industrial Democracy—until sanity returns to this distracted generation. Since principle and organization are one, we cannot abandon one without abandoning the other. Hence, the matter for practical consideration is the preservation and strengthening of our

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<sup>15</sup> Sidney Howard: *They Knew What They Wanted*.

Party, the husbanding of our resources. For these clouds will pass, and the sun of freedom will some day shine on a race of men who have learned that freedom springs from knowledge and understanding, just as courage resides in the head rather than in the heart.

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY PRESS MUST BE PRESERVED TO SPREAD THE TRUTH

Of immediate importance is the safeguarding of our press, that most precious weapon in the hands of civilized man. Voices have been raised from the camp of the enemy that the two old parties adequately supply the needs of the people at this time. What this means is clear—the workers are expected to cling forever to the shoddy bankrupt outfits which again and again have betrayed them. And the industrial feudalists, the plutocrats and their allies and servants, apply the same principle to the press. “Read the lies in our paper,” they say in effect: “why bother about the truth and facts when lies have brought us to our present eminence!” Well, we repeat the timeless truism, that Truth alone can make us free. And that until Truth and Freedom are established, resting on the broad basis of economic equality and total absence of exploitation, there can be no democracy worthy the name, no world fit to live in by civilized man.

The S.L.P. press, and in particular the *Weekly People*, must be preserved at all cost. Fain would the powers that be silence the eloquent voice of the S.L.P.—fain would they put a gag upon our lips did they but know how! Wendell Phillips, in thundering his denunciation of the foul murder of Lovejoy, answered the detractors of the free press—those who had argued that Lovejoy had no right to express opinions differing from accepted views. “The gentleman,” he said, “says Lovejoy was presumptuous and imprudent—he ‘died as the fool dieth.’ And a reverend clergyman of the city tells us that no citizen has a right to publish opinions disagreeable to the community! If any mob follows such publication, on *him* rests its guilt! He must wait, forsooth, till the people come up to it and agree with him! This libel goes on to say that the want of right to speak as we think is an evil inseparable from republican institutions! If this be so, what are they worth?”

Echo answers: What are they worth! Of what use are our vaunted rights if we are not to exercise them in accordance with the light given us to judge what

is for the best of all? Are we to view the Declaration of Independence—noblest of immortal documents—and say: This once stirred the hearts of men and brought freedom into the world! Now it is only a museum-piece to be treasured as we treasure the ancient marble and dust of the Acropolis?—Or are we to take it, perhaps with rude, but reverent hands, and say: This *is* our charter of freedom! Here and now we infuse it with the breath of new life—the spirit is the same, for that spirit is immortal. But the purpose is new, the application is different, the goal is enlarged. And by this charter of freedom we stand—as our revolutionary fathers won political liberty and independence by its terms, so we, if we be worthy sons of noble sires, shall win industrial and economic freedom by its terms and enjoinders! “Timid men,” said Thomas Jefferson, “prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty.” We claim “the boisterous sea of liberty”! Let the timid men embrace the beastly creed of fascism, of Hitlerism, of Henry Fordism! We want none of their barbaric industrial creed, none of their deadening state-ism. The Political State is not merely the outward symbol of class-rule; it is not merely the token of oppression; it is not merely the instrument of coercion—it is all these, and more: It is the destroyer of our manhood, the debaser of our intellects, the reducer of our human dignity and the perverter of the noblest sentiments! It is all these things, first by its original nature and purpose, and secondly, by virtue of the fact that to original iniquitous, however necessary and justified, purpose, there has been added the fact of outlived usefulness. It exists on borrowed time, it smells of the tomb. To history’s graveyard we consign it!

We of the Socialist Labor Party are charged with being uncompromising, unyielding in our clinging to principles. As to principles, we *are* uncompromising, we *are* unyielding. As to means and measures, we say that they must be in keeping with the goal, but also that the end must not be invoked to justify means that are unworthy of the end which is the goal of Socialism. Lincoln told us, and we agree, that “important principles may and must be inflexible,” and that “compromises of principles break of their own weight.” This is profoundly true, and those who contend otherwise are deceiving themselves if they are not deceiving their fellows.

When disillusioned dreamers, doubting Thomases, or impatient enthusiasts ask us: What *is* the matter with the working class? When they ask us: Why do

not the workers organize to establish that new, that higher, form of democracy which some day must and will prevail? We answer: There is nothing the matter with the workers, except that they are exploited and browbeaten, fleeced and swindled and tricked out of their rightful heritage. And we say that it is in human nature to refuse indefinitely to submit to exploitation, to refuse indefinitely to submit to being browbeaten and swindled, and that in their search for the way out of their misery and slavery, and with our never-ceasing help and guidance, the workers are bound to strike the trail that the Socialist Labor Party has blazed for them, and which will lead them to the summit of working class emancipation and the liberation of the human spirit. That trail will lead to social and economic equality, which is to say, to the true, to the real, equality—not the “equality” which concerns itself with mere *externals* or trivialities. And that equality is the condition for peace and happiness. Solon, the lawgiver, 2,500 years ago laid down the maxim that “Equality causes no war.” We say that it will guarantee peace, the quest of all men whose minds have been stirred, whose consciences have been touched by the great evil of our generation, and its ramified consequences, the exploitation of the workers by the capitalist class, in short, wage slavery, capitalism. “I believe in the spirit of peace,” said William Lloyd Garrison, “and in the sole and absolute reliance on truth and the application of it to the hearts and consciences of the people. I do not believe that the weapons of liberty ever have been, or can be, the weapons of despotism. I know that those of despotism are the sword, the revolver, the cannon, the bombshell; and, therefore, the weapons to which tyrants cling and upon which they depend are not the weapons for me, as a friend of liberty.”

This is as profoundly true now as it was one hundred years ago. As we of the Socialist Labor Party seek to terminate the class war in the only way this can be done, that is, by abolishing capitalism and wage slavery; as we strain to organize the useful workers for their great historic mission; as we labor to build the foundation for the noble democracy of the future, we at the same time oppose with all our strength the mad war now laying waste the earth, destroying our best manhood and womanhood, while especially we resist to the utmost the involvement of this country in that savage war.

## VI.

### CONCLUSION

The sensitive German poet, Ernst Toller, who died a victim of Prussian militarism and of Hitlerism, wrote that “man’s stupidity has no bounds at all.” We might paraphrase that and say that the hypocrisy, arrogance and impudence of a ruling class have no bounds at all! Through the intellectually dishonest logomachy of plutocracy’s hired “landsknechts” of the pen, conscription becomes democracy; capitalist private wealth is similarly transformed into commonwealth, and the most brutal, the most sordid, of all wars, the one that sins more deeply than any previous war against human dignity, human rights, against all that is sacred to civilized man, becomes a holy war, so pronounced, and so blessed, by the priests of established creeds! A London bishop, the Rt. Rev. Geoffry Francis Fisher, as reported in the press (*Herald Tribune*, August 12, 1940), declared that this war (in part carried on against the Italian bandit state)—this war is “a war of freedom and religion, but a war, too, of hopeful creation.”

“Freedom”! “Religion”! “Hopeful Creation”! “Freedom”—a war which on *all* fronts is waged *against* freedom! “Religion”—a war which everywhere is destroying the very spirituality and dignity of man! “Hopeful Creation”—a war which in vast areas all over this earth is causing untold destruction! And down in Africa, a herd of wretched conscripts—probably poor, superstitious peasants—as shown in a newspaper photograph, are kneeling before a Catholic priest, receiving communion “before they go into battle against the British”! So says the caption. The same God who is asked to grant victory to British arms against poor Italian peasants and workers is also asked to bestow victory on Italian arms against poor British workers and farmers! And they call this religion, the gospel of the Christ who is said to be the Prince of Peace! How long will civilized man suffer such hypocrisies, such blatant blasphemies! When will the workers say, of capitalist slavery and its beneficiaries and high priests,

what Wendell Phillips said fourscore years ago of slavery:

“An intelligent democracy says of slavery, or of a church, ‘This is justice, and that iniquity; the track of God’s thunderbolt is a straight line from one to the other, and the church or state that cannot stand it must get out of the way.’”

Raucous noises fill our ears; reason is for the most part in exile; the hairy apes at the moment have the upper hand; the spent and exhausted body of the old political class democracy totters to its grave, even before its successor, Industrial Democracy, has yet taken shape. Yet, the blessings of peace with plenty shall at last be our enduring heritage; reason shall finally be permanently enthroned in the universal, all-embracing democracy of the future, and the surviving apes shall be placed in security where their brute power can no longer harm us. For powerful as are the devotees of brute force now, they are in the long run the essence of weakness. As the great German philosopher, Hegel, said (and would that the German workers, at least, would heed his words):

“Material superiority in power can achieve no enduring results: Napoleon could not coerce Spain into freedom any more than Philip II could force Holland into slavery.”

ORGANIZATION—THE MAGIC KEY

No, brute force can by itself neither establish freedom nor slavery. Knowledge of economic laws, understanding of social forces, and ORGANIZATION—these are the magic keys which will open to mankind the portals of true, imperishable democracy. As our German poet said:

“Bounded is the sea,  
And the earth is small;  
Man’s stupidity  
Has no bounds at all.

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“Yet, if he chose, the earth  
And all her fruits were his;  
And lucky be the man  
Who now unlucky is.”

Men are dying by the countless thousands in Europe today in defense of a dying social system, or in defense of the dark creed that was rejected almost a half millennium ago. What a tragedy! Indeed, is it possible for anything to exceed in tragedy and futility this: that men should die for the dying, or the inglorious dead, and perish on the altar of burnt-out faiths?

We of the Socialist Labor Party will hold fast. In all this darkening world, where one tiny flickering light of freedom after another is extinguished, we will hold aloft the torch of world freedom, residing now solely in the ideal of Marxism. We will carry on to the last, knowing that so long as there is a spark left from that torch, there is still a chance to set the world aflame in freedom and new life. And who can doubt that, despite the present ascendancy of the forces of darkness—who can doubt that we shall yet witness the dazzling light of working class freedom and human emancipation? For the ancient tree of democracy is not dead, and it shall not perish. Rather shall it grow and yield a more golden fruit of freedom than any which man has known since the days of Solon and Cleisthenes—the true and complete freedom which can only be realized through Industrial Democracy and the conquest of the industrial ballot. Looking back on the age-long struggle of man against slavery, recalling the countless heroes and martyrs who died in order that that tree of democracy might spread its branches shelteringly over all peoples in ever higher and fuller measure, who can doubt that we shall witness the passing of strife and conflict among the children of earth, and that we shall witness the materialization of the ideals for which the hearts of men have bled, and for which the mightiest intellects and noblest spirits have strained, since time immemorial?

Ours is the privilege to be the actors in the greatest drama in all human history. And ours, peculiarly, is the duty, and the responsibility, to arouse the working class to take the leading part in this drama, and to play it to a successful and glorious finish!

*(The End)*

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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