

Sweep of the Social Revolution (November 9, 1907)

To the student of economic science and the observer of the trend of social development it seem clear enough that the capitalist system is honeycombed with corruption and that for this appalling condition there is no remedy other than its complete and final overthrow.

The masters of finance and captains of industry offer daily and convincing evidence that they have but one incentive in “business” and that is to exploit the nation, control its destiny in their own selfish and grasping interest, and cringingly subjugate the working class.

To arrive at this conclusion it is only necessary to read the daily reports of the capitalist organs themselves. Chicanery, fraud, stock-watering, and wholesale looting are everywhere rampant. Railroads, insurance companies, mines, and other vast financial and industrial interests are plundered and wrecked in the most shameless manner by the very men who are held up as models of good citizenship. The stock exchanges are simply gilded dens where gambling and jugglery are recognized as respectable only because carried on by “eminent” financiers and promoters on a very large scale. Many of these gentlemen — indeed, the most successful and influential of their number, have within the last year or two been guilty of such criminal and lawless acts as to shame the footpad and burglar by comparison.

What a commentary upon a system which breeds such corruption and spawns such a brood of thieves in high places!

But the vicious and criminal practices of these eminent personages do not stop here. They must not be interfered with by the laws of the land, and accordingly they must control the powers of government, and this they can only do, being numerically an insignificant minority, by debauching the politics of the nation.

Do they wish to steal a franchise worth millions from the people? They corrupt the municipality by the brazen purchase of its representatives.

Have they seized upon a railroad and “reorganized” it by the issue of millions of worthless bonds to unload upon the people? They have a special law passed by the legislature, legalizing their nefarious theft and plunder.

Are there certain vast interests to be “consolidated” for the purpose of robbing the stockholders? Enormous fees are paid to the most eminent legal (?) retainers to manipulate the underground wires and see the job safely consummated.

In the meantime the same financial and industrial looters fix the prices of living necessities at such extortionate rates that the people are literally held up and robbed without the slightest means of redress.

And for all these conditions the people have only themselves to blame. Foolish indeed are they to indulge the illusion that there is to be any relief under the existing capitalist system.

The Republican and Democratic parties are alike the corrupt promoters of this vicious and dishonest system.

Nor are conditions yet at their worst. Far from it. It is indeed a strange prosperity that is now upon us. The question is pertinent, if this be the fruit of prosperity we are now enjoying, what shall the harvest of adversity be when it comes upon the land?

During the past few days there have been unmistakable signs in financial institutions and commercial circles that we are approaching a crisis. The frantic efforts now being made to stem the tide and avert the inevitable crash will avail for but a limited time. The collapse is bound to come, and with it a period of indescribable depression and gloom. Banks for years regarded as strong and secure institutions have been compelled to close their doors in increasing numbers and throughout the country there is a vague apprehension of impending disaster.

Now the question arises, and a most serious one it is, what is to be done to meet the exigencies of the extraordinary situation which now confronts the people? First of all, they must be made to understand as far as possible the full extent of the venality and corruption which have fastened themselves upon our industrial and social fabric and are sapping the body politic and threatening the life of the nation. To this end the most thorough exposure of the actual state of affairs has become an imperative necessity.

It is to this stupendous task that the *Appeal to Reason* has consecrated itself with all the vigor and strength its resources can command, and to what extent it has already succeeded along this line is sufficiently apparent in the bitter and malignant enmity it has aroused in the high circles of the chief looters and their mercenaries, and the fierce determination on their part to use all the powers of government to stifle its protesting voice and remove it from the path of capitalistic piracy.

In the next place, the people must have their eyes opened to the fundamental fact that there is no possible way to put an end to the spoliation of labor, the political corruption and civic immorality, without striking at the root of these evils and removing the cause that produces them.

There is little to be gained by limiting our activities to the mere evils themselves which inflict capitalist society. As long as the source of these unspeakable wrongs remains undisturbed the effects, though temporarily curbed, must again express themselves and with added malignity and extent.

Now what is the cause, the prolific parent of the many festering ills which we behold all about us if we but have eyes to see?

The answer can be given in a single word: *Capitalism*.

It is capitalism, that system of society which is based upon wage-slavery, which has divided the people into two classes, the one consisting of a mass of poverty-stricken, ignorant slaves and the other of a coterie of arrogant, heartless, and polluting parasites.

Between these two classes there is war — ceaseless, aggressive, and uncompromising.

Capitalism has its foundations in wage-slavery and there can never be social peace nor political purity while the great mass of the people who work for wages are in bondage and despoiled of what is produced by their honest labor.

It is these facts which must be clearly understood and boldly avowed — the facts of the class struggle which is today shaking the foundations of all the civilized world.

The next question is, how shall we most effectively prepare the people, after they have grasped the fact of the class struggle, for the herculean task of putting an end to it?

The answer may again be expressed in a single word: *Organization*.

But what kind of organization? Ah, that is the point of vital importance, and upon it more than all else depends the success of the conflict and the emancipation of the people.

As the great struggle is essentially a struggle of the working and producing masses to free themselves from the domination of the exploiting capitalist class, it at once becomes clear that since their economic interests are identical, so must be their political interests, and that they must accordingly organize both their economic and political power along class lines to wage the war for their emancipation.

The economic organization of the working class is of prime importance in this struggle, but to be effective it must embrace and unify all the workers so as to bring them into harmonious and effective action in every battle that is waged for better conditions, and for their ultimate freedom by the overthrow of wage-slavery.

The unfortunate fate of the telegraphers in the recent strike demonstrated the futility of a mere trade union, but partially organized, arrayed against a powerful monopoly, and since this same disastrous outcome is of such frequent occurrence trade unionists must recognize the imperative demand of complete class unity based upon the principles of industrial unionism.

Had all the telegraphers been organized in one union and struck at the same time, they would have won. The fact is too obvious to require comment, and hence there should be no delay in combining all the workers in one economic body to fight the common enemy and overthrow the power that binds them fast in the grip of wage-slavery.

But the economic power of the producing mass against the exploiting class can only be made effective when backed by their combined political power along the same lines. To this end there should be immediate and widespread desertion from the capitalist-controlled Republican and Democratic parties; and, in fact, all who work and all who sympathize with the workers and producers should combine in the Socialist Party, the only party that politically expresses their economic interests; the only party standing squarely arrayed against capitalist despotism and depravity; the only party avowing the class struggle and pledged to the overthrow of wage-slavery.

These are the principles of the *Appeal* and upon these principles it will wage the conflict to the bitter end.

And it is for advocating these principles that hundreds of thousands of brave and loyal men and women all over America are marching under its flag, while their enemy, the capitalist parasites, are traducing it with increasing venom and vituperation as a vicious and treasonable sheet that ought to be crushed beneath the hoof of despotic power.

The recent exposures made by the *Appeal* have not only fanned into fiercer frenzy the Wall Street bandits and their servile vassals, but they have now openly declared that it shall be suppressed. Scores of their subsidized sheets are denouncing the *Appeal* with unabated fury as “a vile

organ of anarchy” and demanding that its publishers shall be imprisoned and its publication suppressed.

A letter just received from one of the most eminent lawyers says in part: “I believe you are ‘in for it’ and that you will all be indicted. The administration has determined to tone down the *Appeal* or entirely suppress it.”

The *Appeal* may be suppressed, but it will never be “toned down.” Far rather it should die fighting loyally the battles of the oppressed and suffering people than that it should basely abandon its principles to prolong a dishonored existence.

The complaint is made and sometimes repeated by socialists that “the *Appeal* is sensational.” It is true. No attempt is made to deny it. But for this truth the *Appeal* is not responsible.

The fact is that it is the truth that is sensational. And the *Appeal* fearlessly prints the truth and challenges anyone to show where and when it has done otherwise.

The charge that the *Appeal* is sensational is mere subterfuge, inspired by the common enemy and repeated by a few disgruntled rivals.

It is not because it is sensational, but because it speaks the truth, fearlessly, persistently, and uncompromisingly, that the *Appeal* is threatened with direct punishment.

What the future may hold for the *Appeal* we do not know; the next two or three weeks will determine to what extent the pending federal cases are to be prosecuted. But this we do know, that the *Appeal* will fight for what it believes to be the right to the last trench.

Can there be any turning back?

Would any Army member see the old *Appeal* tainted with treason and blackened with infamy?

Not one! No, not one!

We know too well the loyalty of the Army of workers who have made the *Appeal* what it is; who have been with it from infancy to power and have followed its standard through the valleys and up the highlands, and who would never consent to its desecration while the sun shines or the rivers roll seaward.

In the crisis we are soon to face we shall expect the Army to do its duty and shall not be disappointed.

The most heroic service ever given is now required. We do not believe the *Appeal* can be suppressed and we are quite sure it cannot be if it can

be made to reach a sufficient number of the people. Such an outrage would then be at the peril of those who attempted it.

The people thwarted the Idaho kidnapping conspiracy and the people can and will prevent the suppression of the *Appeal*. In no hour of the *Appeal's* existence has there been more pressing demand that it shall reach the people, and this is to be understood as referring to the cause the *Appeal* represents.

The Army and the hosts of the *Appeal's* friends will see to it, we are confident, that in the next few weeks it shall find its way into the hands of the producing millions, and this done the conspiracy to suppress it will prove the gloomiest failure ever attempted by the plundering pirates of honest toil.

Conscious of the justice of the cause it has espoused and determined at all hazards to maintain its position of loyalty to honest labor and of implacable hostility to labor's enemies, the *Appeal* rings out its defiance to the conspirators who are seeking its suppression and challenges them to *dare haul down its colors*.

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