

# Socialist Columns

"The injury to one of us is the concern of all of us."

In quoting this I do not mean to say that it ought to be the concern of all of us, nor that we socialists are going to make it the concern of all of us, but that it is now and always has been the concern of all of us.

Man does not live to himself alone. Even before his birth he is influenced by the conditions surrounding him, and is what he is because of those surroundings. No man alone can rise out of the conditions of the age in which he lives. All must rise together. This is an incontrovertible fact.

As far as conditions are competitive one rises only as some one else relatively falls. A savage may overpower his enemies, but the injury to them only binds the chain of savagery about himself. Today a man may gain industrial control over the lives of others, and gather riches by the exploitation of their labor, but the resultant misery, ignorance and degradation of the numerous exploited classes establishes conditions which reflect upon himself and out of which no amount of money can entirely lift him.

The ancient castle with its moat and defenses and its defenders in armor provided only a very limited and uncertain security to the old feudal baron. How much better to have abolished the necessity for such defenses. Who would not rather be a common citizen of today having a mutual interest, with millions of others, in the co-operative public defenses of a great nation than to be the most successful feudal baron that ever lived?

And who would not rather be a common citizen in an industrial democracy, having a common interest in great industrial plants, sure public defenses against hunger, cold and disease, and sure guarantee of the opportunity to develop a higher, broader life, than to be the proudest industrial baron in this age of financial feudalism?

Baron's defenses have crumbled, kings have lost their heads, and at best their heads "uneasy lie." So too financial defenses have been broken down, fortunes have vanished in the fierce financial warfare. There is no security, and the groans, curses and threats of the defeated, the sickening degradation known to exist almost "next door" fostering vices worse than were ever known to savagery, constitute a social condition from the polluting influence of which even the millionaire and his family cannot escape.

Not the least of its effects is that deadening of the sensibilities concerning those conditions around us. We take them as a matter of course. These things have always existed and we assume must always exist, just as the serfs of feudalism took their conditions as a matter of course. The majority of us seem unable to grasp the idea that social evolution is bringing about, all the time from age to age is bringing about a complete change in social conditions.

You say—"Oh this is not such a bad world" (when you get used to it and we are all used to it.) You don't like the street orator's language when he insists that by this competitive system some are robbing the others. You are like the fox in the fable who said: "Don't say stole, cat, it is not nice. Say, obtained by superior ability." And so it is. Some obtain by much superior ability, while those of inferior ability may starve. And it is not the ability to produce but the ability to GET, that counts.

You say that in this great and glorious country there is the same opportunity for all, and if a fellow fails it is his own fault. Well, I guess that is true in a sense, in the same sense that all would have the same chance in a free-for-all fight. If a fellow gets his eyes blacked and otherwise disfigured it is his own fault. It is because of his inferior ability. But why should we have a free-for-all fight? And what better reason can be named for a free-for-all-scramble for riches?

We have a government organization to stop the one, why not to stop the other.

Where labor questions are involved the New York Times always sits wailing by the waters of capitalism. "It views with alarm" each new demand made by the working class, and it cries aloud against the inroads the working class makes.

In its editorial summary of the British coal strike it says: "The greatest strike England ever experienced, possibly the greatest in history of labor, is coming to an end with neither side satisfied. The government has not pacified the appetite of its labor allies, which grew with every concession. The strikers have dragged the nation through the hardships of an alien invasion without advantage to any one. The losses are many millions, and fall mostly on innocent third parties, while the sums involved in the minimum wage are inconsiderable."

Of course it is utterly impossible that the Times should be able to understand why the miners should not be satisfied with the minimum wage bill, the sums involved in which are inconsiderable. They should

gladly, humbly and instantly have taken the inconsiderable advance offered them and gone back to the dismal pits out of which so many of them are taken as bleeding, mangled corpses.

Their stubbornness has resulted in three things: a break between the labor members and the other groups in the present government; suffering for that handy unknown quantity, "innocent third parties," and, worst of all, an appetite which grew with every concession.

That is really an excellent statement of what happened in England and is happening all over the world. It is a great and glorious indication of the widening line of advance, the great spreading army of the working class, that is sweeping on to a new order of things.

Labor is no longer a pathetic, trembling Oliver Twist, quaveringly asking for a little more gruel. Labor is demanding a full meal, not as an object of charity, not as one who may have it graciously granted or be refused, but as one who having produced it knows he is entitled to it.

The class is not and cannot be satisfied with a "readjustment." They know that a truce can last only for a short time. Inevitably, as soon as the work is begun under the new agreement, there come the exactions and extortions of capitalism. It's always after surplus value. That is its role in the scheme of society and as long as the working class is exploited, as long as through its labor it produces and is robbed of a great part of its product, so long must there be industrial warfare.

"Yes, I have been a socialist for some time, but was not conscious of it. A great many people don't know where they are at until after they are shown, and then it is as plain as a society woman. Why the other day," Ad continued, "I ran across a friend of mine on the train—a distant relative, Will Tinker—and he was very bitter against socialism. I fully agreed with him, and the more he denounced socialism and socialists the more I swore. I had the commandment all torn to tatters in a very few minutes. Finally when my inning came I said: 'Of course, everybody knows something is wrong.' Tinker agreed."

"But it seems to me the socialists might evolve a remedy that was not enough to convict one of imbecility."

Tinker was delighted. "If they would only advocate the public ownership and control of the tools of production and distribution, it would end the hated trusts, beating them at their own game, and would put industry on the same basis that has worked so well in politics in free America."

"By George" said, Tinker, "that is an inspiration."

"If things of this kind were owned and operated by the whole people, for their benefit, it would end the profit system, since the public could take no profit off itself." Will hailed me as the originator of the greatest idea of modern times, and insisted that I owed it to the world to make it known, as it would prove the salvation of men in the crisis to which things are hurrying. It was a struggle for me to cast aside the glory that was being heaped upon me by Tinker, and to tell him that I was not the originator of the plan, that I had found it in a paper that had been coming to me, but I did it, and Tinker at once became very anxious to subscribe. I informed him that owing to the novelty and value of the idea subscription price was a little high, but he was anxious to pay it. So I collected two dollars and sent his subscription to the Appeal.

## Proposals for Street Work

Sealed proposals will be received at the office of the recorder of the city of St. Johns, until Apr. 16th, 1912, at 8 o'clock p. m. for the improvement of Seneca street from the northerly side line of Fessenden street to the southerly side line of St. Johns Avenue in the manner provided by ordinance No. 457, subject to the provisions of the charter and ordinances of the city of St. Johns and the estimate of the city engineer on file. Engineer's estimate is \$4,247.36. Bids must be strictly in accordance with the printed blanks, which will be furnished on application at the office of the recorder of the city of St. Johns. And said improvement must be completed on or before 60 days from the last publication of notice of proposals for said work.

No proposals or bids will be considered unless accompanied by a certified check payable to the order of the mayor of the city of St. Johns, certified by a responsible bank for an amount equal to ten per cent. of the aggregate proposal. The right to reject any and all bids is hereby reserved.

By order of the council,  
F. A. RICE,  
Recorder of the city of St. Johns.  
Published in the St. Johns Review March 29, April 5 and 12, 1912.

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