

The Class Struggle.

While, on the industrial field, the workers have been steadily losing ground, a new alignment of the forces has been taking place. The battle is shifting from the industrial to the political field. Here it becomes a class struggle. No longer a struggle between sellers and buyers of the commodity labor-power, but between slaves and their masters. Between those who produce wealth and those who own the means of production.

Into the struggle on the industrial field the workers cannot enter as a class. Being all sellers of the one commodity, labor-power, they are rivals, not allies. They struggle there against one another, whether singly or in bodies. As with the sellers of any commodity, competition forces combination to a certain extent, so with the workers. As sellers of labor-power they combine as trades unions, making an effort to support one another in enhancing the price of their commodity. But still they struggle against one another. A victory for one is a defeat for another. Were they all welded into one organization there would yet remain the unemployed to whom hunger would dictate the necessity of competing with, and not aiding, the employed workers in their struggle. To form the workers, employed and unemployed, all into one union would be but to transfer the competition from without to within the organization. And were such an organization even to achieve success it could achieve nothing but failure, for the rise in wages would be counterbalanced by the consequent rise in prices. The money wage might be increased but the real wage would remain the same.

In the industrial field defeat is inevitable. The workers are crushed not only in spite of their numbers but because of them. They must compete as job hunters, sellers seeking a buyer. They are not a class thus apart from their employers for they, too, are sellers of wares. They, too, must war with one another as well as with the workers.

The class line can only be drawn between the possessors and the dispossessed. Here the interests of all the members of each class are identical. It is to the interest of all the dispossessed to regain possession; of all the possessors to retain it. Between them alone is the class struggle and political power is the weapon. The class that has not that weapon is absolutely at the mercy of the class that has. By means of the state the workers have been held in subjection and by means of the state they shall be emancipated. The state it is that guarantees to the master class, ownership in the means of production. Not a title deed but is issued under the aegis of the government, and it is the government that must protect and defend the owners in the enjoyment and possession of their property. The government it is also that can revoke all these titles. The state is the sword of the master class. It lives by the sword and by the sword it shall perish.