

Social Unrest in the U.S.

LESS than two months till election day. The enormous amount of discontent bottled up and suppressed for three years, under the capitalist dictatorship behind Wilson and Co., is still gathering momentum; and after scanning primary results it seems that the best hated man in this land, and his notorious reactionary understrappers, are due to see the people sweep them and their party into well deserved oblivion.

Even though the Democrats have an alleged radical for presidential candidate, in Cox, who is ready to be all things to all men, wet in wet states, and dry in dry ones, who makes an "issue" out of the big fund alleged to be behind the Republicans (why shouldn't a party get its funds from the economic interests it aspires to serve?) yet; the people are indifferent to his pleas; the Wilson record is too much of a handicap.

Voters have short memories, but they still bear in mind the 1916 slogan: "He kept us out of war." So they are going to take revenge by electing Phonograph Harding and the G. O. P. The hatred for Wilson is shown in the election of Tom Watson to the Senate, from Georgia, a solid Democratic State (a nomination there being as good as election) who toured the States telling the voters: "If you approve of anything Wilson has done, don't vote for me." His bitter denunciation of Wilson as an "egotism" who ought to be in jail, instead of Debs, didn't cost him any votes, in a Democratic State, so one can see what is coming.

Maine goes overwhelmingly Republican, and in New Hampshire, reactionary Moses, anti-suffragist, gets nominated by large majority; (oh, those women). It is even probable that the Farmer-Labor Party will nose the Dems. out for second place in November. This party is likely to carry two or three states, and will make a good showing in several others in this northwest. They will also get most of the old Socialist Party vote; though Debs will poll a larger personal vote than Christiansen, Debs being the living symbol to all idealists here, of outraged humanity. It is difficult to say what the S. L. P. will poll, they being a dwindling party, and but poorly organized. In many places they never hold meetings from one year's end to another, where sections do exist, though their members freely scoff at all other efforts made to teach the slaves anything.

In this State of Washington, for example, the Socialist Party was once quite strong and thriving, keeping organizers out regularly, and men of good calibre too at times, were they. The entry of the U. S. into war saw a big decline in membership, diverging views on course to assume; persecution of members, etc., being responsible. The balance split over decision to join the C. L. P. Persecution of C. L. P.'s followed, and it is doubtful whether there can be said to be such an organization left. Groups exist in several places. Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, etc., calling themselves Socialist Party, but they are unaffiliated with any national party, so far as the writer knows. The bulk of the old membership will be found now in the Farmer-Labor Party, formerly Triple Alliance. The various Socialist groups under the able tuition of J. Fisher, are forming Marxian clubs, for the study of economics, history, philosophy, from the Marxian or commonsense viewpoint.

This is good business and great interest is being manifested by all who attend, larger numbers continually coming. S. L. P.'s as stated, are totally unable to appreciate the value of such things, because forsooth; industrial organization is not at all times set forward as the prime prerequisite to the Revolution particularly, the former only Industrial Union, the W. I. I. U., which stand is now modified so far as to claim the O. B. U., Garment Workers, and so on, as its children. Anyway, some place must be found in the scheme of things for the W. I. I. U., or else it simply can't be good.

Apropos of the Revolution, that many good people are continually looking for, it would not be

amiss to here point out that the process of changes they are worried about is now going on, only, it has not yet reached that peculiarly agitated, visible, shape, which so many people imagine is all there is to change, and dubbed Revolution.

The processes of wealth production here, are far in advance of the average human's ideas. He dimly sees something is wrong, when wealth is turned out so easily, and wasted so prodigally, as for instance at Hog Island; yet because his ideas or consciousness still linger in the old frontier days, and persistently tell him that he can get ahead if he tries, he keeps on trying. He has an awful "hangover."

Again: he has the idea that all wrongs may be rectified by sending "good" men to a legislature to enact just laws for the benefit of the common people.

True, ideas are a reflex of material phenomena; but ideas are not necessarily up-to-date on that account. Impressions are continually without pause, being registered in the reception rooms of the skull, impressions by the million that we are utterly unconscious of, in the sense that we perceptibly note each new arrival and classify it, pigeonhole it, compare it to some prior impression, and produce the thought result. Impressions crowd in ever more swiftly these days of lightning news service, a veritable flood is poured through our sense gates, to be moulded into ideas—some day, not now—but later.

All the impressions do influence our actions, and quite unconscious to our thinking selves, it can be called automatic. It is only the trained individuals among us that keep our ideas approximately up-to-date, and only a few of these have the materialist key to unravel the maze we wander in.

And all of us as we get older get "out of date," the body gets older, breaks down, the brain cells disintegrate, new impressions though received, are not utilized with the old speed; the habit of thinking gets wearisome; the old formed ideas become a sheet anchor to cling to, while all about, is uncomprehended chaos, till the end is reached, and body, cells, impressions and all, go back to the dust and the sod.

Some recorded reflections are passed on, and become of use to the new "lords of the universe." To the extent they are utilized as material to be examined, and ideas re-extracted and renovated, or give birth to some better idea, by comparison with present day experience, it is good.

But when the old record becomes a guide to the mental footsteps of those who should know better; without criticism, because criticism of the past is sacrilege, and blasphemy, it becomes the Alp that crushes the brain of the living.

But the latter is the rule. The human will not only try a thing once, but when it comes to looking ahead, and adapting himself to conditions as men of reason would do, he will even sooner try everything not only once, but many times.

Driven to association with his fellows though he is, Mr. Average Man still mentally lives in the days when he was a law unto himself, or the early impressions of his youth's teachings still guide him, he being so much the more receptive, and the gray matter easily moulded then. In the minds of the vast majority of the people here, private property, even in utilities socially used, is a most sacred thing. Hence, all the symptoms of present day unrest, and signs of the coming birth agony manifested in the political field, outside a few groups, avoid touching the root cause of the troubles.

The landowning farmers hate high taxes, and want high prices for their produce, so join the non-Partisan League, elect men pledged to achieve the unachievable, and restlessly await results.

Organized craft union labor, fuming under the relentless downward pressure of "high" prices and smarting because they can't keep wages even level with prices, now forms political alliance with the group of farmers who want higher prices, to capture political power, and oust the lackeys who serve

the villain, Mr. Middleman, the scoundrel who is responsible for all their suffering. He charges labor like Sam Hill, and gives Farmer a mere hand out.

That's the guy. Let's get him!

Students of Marx. Now, I ask you?

—And legions of self-styled Socialists, unversed in political economy, "raised" on "Appeal" slop, and saturated with "Direct Action" slush besides, have rushed in to help; sure, it is a working class party and is going in the "right" direction.

"Oh, yes; we'll vote for Debs, but this is the Party that's come to stay, we'll make it revolutionary."

It will fail, as all similar movements have failed, because of irreconcilable interests, and the big fact that they are opposing the evolutionary process, but don't know it.

The slaves will doubtless then say, "To hell with politics," and try solidarity in an O.B.U.: that can tie up a whole industry at once, and force the boss to loosen up on his ill-gotten gains.

They too, will fail. But they will try this way, that road, back and forward for years before they are seized with the correct idea, to produce wealth for themselves, instead of handing it to the boss class, demanding or begging for more of what they gave away entirely.

To those whose "deferred hope is making the heart sick," we can only say, keep your eyes open, and explain the position of the rival classes to each other. That is better than running around hoping for the revolution. The revolution is going on, the switch to the G. O. P., to the F. L. P., or O. B. U., or any other combination of the alphabet is indication that the populace is seeking, but has not yet found.

As no relief from the misery prevalent is possible under the wage system, or while private ownership of the means of production exists, it follows, that some time, some way, and somehow, the working class will be faced with the alternative of revolt or death of civilization itself.

Whether at that time they have a political party, or a well organized industrial union, or both; they will be confronted with the necessity of a trial of strength between the power and physical force in their working class organizations, and what can be mustered by the capitalist executive committee on the other hand. And before they reach the point where such a revolutionary situation exists, much has to be done.

This thing cannot be started; it is going on, has always gone on; it is the continuation of a process of life development that must have existed before man and his fusses were known of.

It is Evolution.

We cannot start what is taking place. We can make the process of evolution, the expropriation of wealth, and class exploitation, clear to all we can reach.

That is the purpose of Marxian groups.

The more we reach, the easier the society birth when it comes, because more trained midwives will be on the job.

We reach the masses in political campaigns. We explain in the unions why they must change their object, seek the abolition of slavery, instead of its palliation.

We welcome solidarity, but we want class consciousness, and the knowledge springing from study, more.

We are not worrying about the name given to the action that will be taken in that decisive moment when the last slave class squares accounts with its masters.

It is a long way off in these United States, yet, but it is fatedly bound to come. Let us work to increase the number and power of the teachers of Marx, that the clashes that occur, marred with bloody slaughter for the ignorant, inexperienced working class, may be few in number, and the guide of reason be to some extent substituted for stern experience.

F. S. F.