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EDITORIAL

## THE GREAT SOCIAL REVOLUTION.

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**T**HE statement of Rev. Henry Van Dyke, professor of English literature in Princeton, that, "A great social revolution is in sight," while remarkably significant as an expression of modern conservative thought in this country, is utterly misleading in its implied facts. The great social revolution is not, as the reverend professor of literature conveys to his hearers, to be seen in the distance; for the simple reason that it is already here. It is not coming from afar, but is already upon us. One need not be a prophet or a seer to divine its presence. One need not, as the keen Indian on the prairie does, listen to the winds, or glue his ears to the ground to hear its distant rumble. The din of the conflict attending it can be distinctly heard in the crack of the rifles of the militia in strikes, and in the fierce outcries of the middle class in its competitive and fatal struggles with the capitalist class. Legislatures seek to prescribe the rules of war in this great social revolution; courts attempt to suppress it; the newspapers devote columns on columns to reports of its battles; the magazines discuss it and propose measures for its relief, and even the most immovable body of men feels its successive shocks as their "alarming prophecies" vividly betray. The great social revolution is not a thing of tomorrow; it is the overshadowing and most vital fact of the day!

The great social revolution in whose midst we now find ourselves did not come like the thief in the night. It has developed gradually during the past century and a half. It is caused by the slow change in industry from small, individual production to large, social production; from the small cross-road shop employing one or two men, to the mammoth corporation mills, mines, railroads, etc., employing millions in many States and countries, continents apart. The great social revolution is caused by the slow change in industry from the scattered individual ownership of paltry capital to the international

trustification of giant capital in the hands of the capitalist class.

The great social revolution has split society into warring, opposing classes, with conflicting interests. On one hand, there is a vast working class, the largest portion of society, on whose heads and shoulders rests the social structure. This class produces all the wealth, yet barely owns four per cent. of it; while its share of the wealth it produces in the form of wages is just enough for it to subsist and reproduce its kind. The wages of the men of this class either decline or remain stationary, while the value of the product and the cost of living advance by steady steps. The labor of the women and children of this class increases, both relatively and absolutely. On the other hand, there is a small class of capitalists, who, by their control of the finances of the country, own and control its industries, leaving their actual operation and management both to the men of the working class. This capitalist class dominates society. It is the master class and exploits the working class. All classes are dependent on and subordinate to it in church, university, law and legislation. It is supreme in all the institutions of the land. In between these classes is the middle class, small of capital, small of influence and small of hope. This class is crushed between the other two. It cannot meet the wage demands of the one, or the competition of the other. It is a dying class, that is being forced into the ranks of labor by the capitalist class. Such is the great social revolution. Such are its causes and results. What are its remedies?

The great social revolution, being due to the transformation of industry from small individual production to large social production, can only terminate successfully by making industry social in ownership also. The capitalist class must be abolished. It performs no useful function. By robbing the working class it precipitates strikes, panics, crises and war. By its ownership of the means of production and distribution it exercises an arbitrary and despotic control of society, crushing individuality and democracy and breeding class subserviency and government. To abolish the capitalist class is to abolish the class war and to bring the great social revolution to a successful culmination.

To achieve such a culmination is the work of the working class. It alone is essential to social progress. It alone is growing in force and power. It alone is interested in the overthrow of capitalism.

On, then, with the work of educating, agitating and organizing the working class.

On with the great social revolution!

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

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