

LABOR IN POLITICS

Gompers Outlines Purpose of New Movement—Easley Points Out How Labor Can Make Its Power Felt—Sinclair Predicts Hard Times Soon—Sherman Reviews What Republicans Have Done—Stokes on Economic Inequalities—Bishop Potter's Warning.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT ON UNION LABOR

I STRONGLY believe in trade unions, wisely and justly handled, in which the rightful purpose to benefit those connected with them is not accompanied by a desire to do injustice or wrong to others. I believe in the duty of capitalists and wage workers to try to seek one another out, to understand each other's point of view, and to endeavor to show broad and kindly human sympathy one with the other.

“WHAT Should Labor Do in Politics?” This question is brought home to the American people this Labor day with especial relevancy because this year for the first time in the history of the modern trade union movement in this country organized labor has gone into politics on a comprehensive national scale.

Heretofore the leaders of union labor have sedulously avoided even the semblance of identifying themselves or their organizations with political parties. Suddenly has come a complete about-face attitude. Trade unionism is making the revolutionary experiment of seeking to have none except labor's friends placed on guard in the halls of congress and in the legislatures of the various states.

What the outcome will be no one knows. Even the labor union leaders themselves do not appear to be entirely clear as to just how far organized labor ought to go in politics. Their ideas appear to be centered on retiring from the law-making bodies those whom they regard as labor's enemies and of electing in their stead unionism's avowed friends. The future, they declare, will take care of itself.

Practical politicians of both the old parties are watching labor's new move with anxious eyes and are fearful for the outcome. Invariably they run like deer at the mere invitation to discuss the unions' invasion of the field of politics—and this applies also to some in the public eye who have not been classed with the “practical” politician.

A few republicans and democrats, however, among whom are Representative James S. Sherman of New York, chairman of the republican congress campaign committee, and Everett Colby, state senator in New Jersey and republican reformer, declare the workingman's vote should be cast with the republican party. Mayor Adam, Buffalo's rugged democratic mayor, asserts labor is not to be blamed if it protects itself in politics, but condemns any one in public life who is a better friend to a class than to the mass.

The socialists, including the two recent wealthy converts, J. G. Phelps Stokes of New York, and Joseph Medill Patterson of Chicago, and Upton Sinclair, author of “The Jungle,” see labor's only political salvation in the socialist party. Economists, the clergy, publicists and others view the new question in varying lights.

The ideas of all on “What Should Labor Do in Politics?” are here-with presented:

SAMUEL GOMPERS.

Purpose of Labor's Present Political Activity is to Secure Legislation Deemed Necessary.

Under our modern industrial system and through the numbers, power, aggressiveness and manifold of our trades union movement, much of the burdens of age borne by the type of “the man with the hoe” has been lifted. The bent form and the receding forehead have been changed to the upright attitude, and there has been developed a higher manhood with a better life today and a better prospect for the days to come. In strong contrast to the absolute mastery of employers and the servility of the workman of the past is the dignified and respected position now attained and maintained by labor.

Public opinion in this country has been compelled by the trade union movement to take a better and more comprehensive view of the rights of labor and to consider and even commend the rational, natural movement of the workers of America for self-protection by associated effort.

Many of our schools, colleges and universities now have classes in which the great labor problem in all its phases is investigated and discussed. Newspapers and magazines devote columns to the presentation of labor news and dissertations on the rights and claims of organized labor. Very many of these, it is true, are not always favorable to the position or contentions of labor, but it is a hopeful sign, brimful of opportunities and possibilities, when this most potent subject, in all its ramifications, is being discussed. The greatest danger to the politics of the country would be should little or no thought be given to the great problems and principles in which they are so much interested. Investigation and discussion can only aid in the triumph of the great cause of labor—the cause of humanity.

It is because so little thought and consideration have been given by congress to the desires of labor as regards matters of legislation that labor has this year entered upon a determined and aggressive campaign to secure a larger and a distinctive share in the governmental affairs of the republic.

Labor makes no demand upon government or society which is not equally accorded to all the people of our country. It can and will be satisfied with nothing less.

Congressmen and senators in their frenzied rush after the almighty dollar have been indifferent or hostile to the rights of man. They have had no time and as little inclination to support the reasonable labor measures, the enactment of which we have urged, and which would benefit the vast majority of all our people without an obnoxious provision to any one.

Attention is called not only to labor's officials, many of whose indifference and hostility to the interests of labor, but also to the interests of the large mass of all our people. The great iniquity of which we have urged, and which would benefit the vast majority of all our people without an obnoxious provision to any one.

It is not of those who would exclude all employers from the category of “the world's productive laborers. All stages of productive activity and of idleness can be found among both employers and employed. Every individual of organization having paid agents is an employer. The trade unionists and socialists, whether as individuals or acting through their organizations, are no exceptions, and it occasionally happens that employer and employed work together justly in the promotion of common interests. In a sense, an exchange of service for produce, if upon terms previously arranged, is employment, and freedom to make such exchange is clearly desirable.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE GLOBE'S SYMPOSIUM.

GAINS BY LABOR IN TWENTY YEARS

LABOR DAY of 1906—the 20th since the day became a legal holiday, the 25th since its first actual observance—finds the workers of America vastly better off in many respects than they have ever been in history.

According to many labor leaders and economists, workers today are better paid by from 10 to 40 percent, and in some cases almost as high as 70 percent, than two decades ago. Their hours are shorter, and it is asserted they are better fed, better clothed and better housed; that their children are better educated; that their environment is happier, and that they have more leisure to enjoy the benefits of all the refining influences of life.

Twenty years ago there were few labor laws. Now there are many in almost every state. In 1886 the entire body of law in New York state in the interest of wage earners consisted of less than half a dozen statutes, mostly unimportant. Today there are scores of important laws providing protection and safeguards for labor of every sort.

In the infancy of Labor day workers were poorly organized. Today upward of 2,000,000 of toilers are on the rolls of trade unions.

Reports of the state labor bureaus show that capital and labor in many important industries are working in closer harmony and that trade agreements have in numerous instances supplanted the strike and lockout methods of settling industrial disputes. Some close observers, among whom was the late Senator Hanna, have within a few years predicted that the era of strikes is nearing its end.

Public opinion 20 years ago was almost hostile to labor. Now it is largely enlisted on the workers' side and, with the employer and the employe himself, is active in providing many betterments for the masses of toilers.



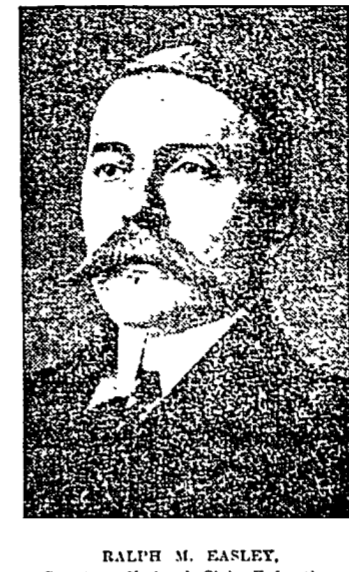
SAMUEL GOMPERS, President American Federation of Labor.



HENRY C. POTTER, Episcopal Bishop of New York.



UPTON SINCLAIR, Socialist and Author.



RALPH M. EASLEY, Secretary National Civic Federation.

EVERETT COLBY.

New Jersey Senator and Reformer Thinks Laborer Can Accomplish Most in His Own Party.

I don't think it ought to be necessary for the laboring man to get in politics. He should be in politics now. To my mind it does little good for the voter of one party to go over to the other party, because both are controlled by the same influences and prevent so far as possible the enactment of laws in the interest of the people. To join an independent movement would do no lasting good. If I feel, therefore, if the laborer goes into his own party primary, whether it be democratic or republican, he can accomplish more than by changing parties or joining some independent faction.

J. G. PHELPS STOKES.

Millionaire Socialist Declares Labor Must Secure Control of Land and Machinery of Production.

Only in proportion as labor makes its demands effective by cooperation is its condition improved. Such cooperation is now needed in the political field as much as in any other.

The basic fact which labor must face is that it is denied access to land and to the machinery of production, unless it will produce sufficient not merely for its own support but for the maintenance also of the vast array of those who live in complete or partial idleness upon the surplus product of its toil.

I am not of those who would exclude all employers from the category of “the world's productive laborers. All stages of productive activity and of idleness can be found among both employers and employed. Every individual of organization having paid agents is an employer. The trade unionists and socialists, whether as individuals or acting through their organizations, are no exceptions, and it occasionally happens that employer and employed work together justly in the promotion of common interests.

The line in the class struggle is more correctly drawn between those who consume more wealth than they are willing to produce, and those who, if they would, are compelled to produce more than they require.

JAMES S. SHERMAN.

Chairman of Republican Congress Campaign Committee Tells What His Party Has Done.

Most decidedly should the laboring man take an interest in politics and legislation, for it is because of the laws affecting labor enacted during the last half century that our working classes



JAMES S. SHERMAN, Chairman Republican Congress Campaign Committee.



JOSEPH M. PATTERSON, Socialist Commissioner of Public Works, Chicago.



J. G. PHELPS STOKES, Millionaire Socialist.

have reached a standard of living and an enjoyment of the good things of life unknown to a larger part of the laborers in other countries.

Owing to our opportunities and advantages the laboring man of today becomes the employer and capitalist of tomorrow. Many a landowner of today was a farmer a few years ago. Nearly all our prominent iron and steel men began in the mill, and most of our textile officials once worked at the loom.

Then the republican party, after it has given the laboring man full employment and constantly increasing wages, for that work, he has made the duty of foreign wars cover the difference in labor cost. That is what protection means—high wages—protection against cheap foreign labor.

It would take too long to enumerate even the principal labor laws enacted by the republican party, but I may mention those against slavery, against the coolie trade and peonage, the restriction of immigration of paupers and criminals and Chinese exclusion, the law against convict labor and importation of contract labor, the protection of seaman and various vessel and inspection laws, the acts requiring safety appliances on railroads, the first eight-hour law and many subsequent ones, the act creating the U. S. bureau of labor and the department of commerce and labor, the acts creating boards of arbitration and the incorporation of national labor unions.

I might mention the homestead laws and the many acts since down to the employers' liability act of the last session, showing that in almost every republican congress something has been done to improve the conditions of labor and elevate the laborer. There is much still to be done and the laboring man should study well the history of the two great parties and be able to determine intelligently and fairly which should have his vote and influence.

UPTON SINCLAIR.

Socialist Author Warns Laboring Men the Country is on Verge of Hard Times.

The American nation is at present facing the greatest crisis in its history. Corruption, which has been feeding

upon the body politic for a generation, is now admitted to be threatening its very life. Our public-spirited and thinking men, who for decades have been wrestling with this corruption, have failed universally.

They have failed because they did not appeal to labor; because labor was asleep. And now at last labor is beginning to wake up. The workingman as beginning to realize the part which he plays in the political game. It is his business to furnish the vote. He sells it to the political boss, perhaps for a dollar or two, perhaps just for a kind word and a little buncombe. So the political boss gets the offices; and then he sells the privileges of government to the capitalist, who uses his advantage to squeeze more money out of the workingman.

All thinking men among our capitalists are agreed that we are on the verge of hard times such as the country has not yet known. When those times come, several millions of men will be out of work, the unions will fall like houses of cards, and the workingman will be in on the streets. I tell him about it in advance, because I know that if a dollar or two, perhaps just for a kind word and a little buncombe. So the political boss gets the offices; and then he sells the privileges of government to the capitalist, who uses his advantage to squeeze more money out of the workingman.

It is time that you workingmen had enough of being buncoed by political bosses and trust magnates. It is time that you thought of putting your own representatives into congress to look after your interests, and to restore democratic institutions to America.

HENRY C. POTTER.

Episcopal Bishop of New York Points Out Danger of Unwise Action by Unions.

You will make an opportune use of Labor day, in the interests of labor unions especially, if you will urge upon the attention of the unions in their public expressions some intimation:

First—Of their disapproval of acts of violence designed to vindicate the rights of labor; and

Second—Of their sympathy with those essential principles of individual freedom on which the republic rests.

It is those which many people believe labor unions menace and invade; and it is greatly to be desired that those who represent the unions and speak for them should make plain that the unions stand for the principle of individual freedom in regard to all questions of work and pay.

selves which is recognized as in defence of the individual liberty of the citizen.

JOSEPH M. PATTERSON.

Socialist Public Works Commissioner of Chicago Says His is Only Workingman's Party.

Mr Workingman, isn't it a fact that whoever first said “the interests of capital and of labor are identical” was a liar? Don't you know from your own experience a good many times when your interests were not identical with those of your employer?

Have you ever been on a strike? If so, that was plainly one time when your interests were quite opposite to his, wasn't it?

Compare the condition of the workers in unorganized industries with the condition of the workers in organized industries. This shows that your interests, instead of being the same, are opposed, doesn't it?

Now don't you think that you ought to go into politics, too? Merely in self-defense, if nothing more.

When you conclude to go into politics (as you will have to some day), you will probably see that the wisest thing for you to do is to join the socialist party, which is the only workingman's party in the world of any consequence.

The socialist vote started in 1871 with 101,000 all over the world. It has been steadily increasing until this year it is \$500,000. The rate of increase for the past dozen years has been about half a million a year.

You may say you do not care to wait until the socialists gain complete power. You want immediate relief. Then elect a socialist or two to the legislature, to congress. You will find he works and votes most effectively for every single measure of immediate relief for labor. Put a socialist on the bench. You will find he is not called an injunction judge—unless by the other side.

The motto of the socialist party will interest you. It is: “Workers of the world, unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains and a world to gain.”

tion of an independent political party at this time. On the contrary, its policy has much in common with that of the municipal voters' league in Chicago, which resulted in changing the city's public council to a fairly representative and decent body.

The league in that instance found it necessary to secure the nomination of true friends to the right of labor he should be supported and no candidate nominated against him.” This was the policy of the Chicago voters' league.

If you can't secure through either of the dominant parties, or in any other way, the balance of power in congress, or legislative houses, the organization of employers or other groups of interests to work for their own advantage.

“What should labor do in politics?” Just this: Dismantle the machinery of the political parties and destroy the blind following of political machines. The very keynote of the labor union idea has always been to prevent the unions from tying up to any party. As I understand it, the present movement is not to form a political party, but rather to see to it that men are elected to congress and the legislatures who are honest, free and independent.

Once you put the political machine out of business, you will get legislation favorable to all the people. This sentiment is gaining ground with great rapidity everywhere and is not confined to the toilers. The tide is rising so fast against the “boss” and all his works that it would be unparalytic if labor did not lend its great force and influence to the universal movement for a different order of things.

In its present campaign I would have labor get control of the machinery of the old parties wherever possible and, where this cannot be done, nominate independently. To defeat a man now in office who has been an enemy of labor, I would elect “a stick.” If necessary, such a man should be humiliated as much as possible.

It is charged that labor is seeking to build up class legislation. What we are really trying to do is to break down class legislation, from which the country has already too long been suffering.

Capital as a class takes care to protect itself in politics. Labor as a class is not to be blamed if it takes care to protect itself in politics. But capital and labor, either or both, are to blame and are to be condemned if they should resort to tactics that are dishonorable or methods that are dishonest.

Man who wins in the long run is the man who plays the clean, straight game. Theodore Roosevelt and William J. Bryan are notable examples of this truth.

I have no patience with the statement that labor should not have its particular friends in public life. Capital has its particular friends in public life, and no man in public life or in politics has any right to be a better friend to a class than to the mass. It is wrong to stand for the devices of a part of the people against the interests of the people as a whole. I believe labor, and by labor I mean the workingmen of the country, should do its best to get the best of its number into public life, and that these men in turn should serve their fellow-workingmen most by standing steadfast for what is right whether it is endorsed by labor or capital or by every one or by no one at all.

WILLIAM D. MAHON.

President of Association of Street Railway Employees Advises Destroying the Political Machines.

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JAMES J. MURPHY.

President of Typographical Union No. 6 Thinks Stopping Abuse of Injunctions an Important Reform.

Speaking merely as an individual and not in any sense as representing my organization, it has always been my belief that every trade unionist should be affiliated with a political movement of some character. While in England and some other countries the unions have gone into political movements as