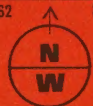


# HELEN KELLER: HER SOCIALIST YEARS

Writings and Speeches / Edited, with an introduction by PHILIP S. FONER

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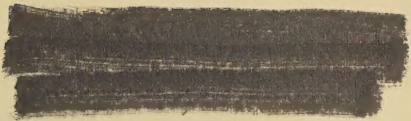


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Her Socialist Years

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HELEN KELLER  
Her Socialist Years

WRITINGS AND SPEECHES

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Philip S. Foner

*Professor of History, Lincoln University*



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## Introduction

by Philip S. Foner

Almost everyone knows that Helen Keller was stricken as an infant by a disease that left her deaf, blind and mute; that she was brought out of her prison of despair and frustration by Anne Sullivan, and that she triumphed over her disabilities and made her life an inspiration to the entire world. But very few persons know that Helen Keller was for a time one of the best known figures in the American Socialist movement, a champion of the working class and of its struggles against industrial barbarism, a consistent foe of militarism and war, and a militant crusader for a new society. Turning the yellowing pages of radical newspapers and magazines from 1910 to the early 1920's, one frequently finds the name Helen Keller beneath speeches, articles, and letters dealing with major social questions of the era. The vision which runs through most of these writings is the vision of socialism. In the *New York Call*, daily organ of the Socialist Party, Hattie Schlossberg wrote on May 4, 1913:

"Helen Keller is our Comrade, and her socialism is a living, vital thing to her. All her speeches are permeated with the spirit of socialism. . . .

"If ever there was a superwoman that woman is Helen Keller. By her indomitable will she wrought a miracle, and when one ponders over her achievements, the brain is dazzled by the possibilities of the human mind. To us Socialist Helen Keller ought to be doubly precious, for she is our Comrade—let us glory in that."

Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880, in Tuscumbia, Alabama. Her father, Captain Arthur H. Keller, formerly a Confederate officer, was publisher of the *North Alabamian*. Her mother, Kate Adams, 20 years younger than her husband, had come South from Massachusetts. Kate Adams' family included both a brigadier-general in the Confederate

Army and Edward Everett, who shared the platform with Lincoln at Gettysburg.

All that Helen Keller ever remembered of the little town of Tuscumbia, with its two thousand inhabitants, was a glimpse of "broad green fields, luminous sky, trees and flowers." When she was barely 19 months old, she came down with a high fever. It appeared to be only a brief illness. But after it she was never to hear or see again. She was, as she described herself, "a phantom living in a no-world."

It was Alexander Graham Bell who gave the Kellers hope for their stricken child after doctors had declared her a hopeless case, doomed to live out her life in silence and darkness without participating in the society around her. Dr. Bell, whose mother and wife were both deaf and who had invented the telephone largely to assist the deaf to hear sounds, suggested to the Kellers that they write to the Perkins Institution, the famous training school for the blind in Boston, and ask about a teacher for their daughter. It was at Perkins Institution that the deaf-blind child, Laura Bridgman, under the guidance of Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, had learned to communicate with others, an achievement which Charles Dickens had described in his *American Notes*.

Michael Anagnos, Dr. Howe's successor at the Perkins Institution, received the request from the Kellers for a teacher, and chose Anne Sullivan. Miss Sullivan, who was herself half-blind when she entered Perkins, had studied for six years at the Institution. Upon her graduation, though doubting her ability, she began a life devoted to the service of the deaf-blind.

Miss Sullivan arrived at Tuscumbia on March 3, 1887. Then began a series of battles between Miss Sullivan and the young Helen Keller until Teacher (as Helen always called her) transformed a child who looked and acted like a little savage into a gentle, gay, radiant personality, eager to learn to spell words. The world has come to know this story through the splendid play and movie, "The Miracle Worker." But Miss Sullivan's accomplishments were not a miracle. They were the result of courage, determination,

inspiration, talents, and common sense. Of course, it was her pupil's own determination to learn and her remarkable powers and growing mind that made possible the astounding results of this famous relationship.

After the celebrated experience at the pump where Miss Sullivan let water run onto Helen's hands and, through the manual alphabet,\* spelled the word "water" until the connection was made, the pupil learned more and more words, read a great deal, spelling out the words with her hands, and then learned to write. At Perkins Institution, where she went for organized classroom study, she spoke to children in the language of the manual alphabet. Then, studying with Sarah Fuller, principal of the Horace Mann School for the Deaf in Boston, she learned to speak. At the age of ten, Helen Keller was able to read, write and, even though she could not speak clearly,† she could tell Teacher, "I am not dumb now."

As the news spread of the deaf-blind girl's achievements—she learned German, Latin, Greek and French—Helen Keller became a world celebrity. Her decision to go to college, Radcliffe College in fact, was a leading news event of the day. With funds supplied through a campaign initiated by Mark Twain, an admirer and friend, Helen Keller entered Radcliffe in 1900 at the age of twenty. Teacher sat next to her in classes, reporting the lectures to Helen with her hands. She also read books to Helen five hours or more a day until an ophthalmologist warned Miss Sullivan to rest her eyes or else run the risk of permanent blindness.

In 1904 Helen Keller graduated *cum laude*. She had already published two books: The first issued in 1902, *The Story of My Life*, immediately became a best-seller and was

\* The manual alphabet had been invented by Trappist monks in Spain who had taken a vow of silence.

† Hattie Schlossberg, who heard Helen Keller speak in 1913, wrote: "I was not prepared for what did come. The effect of her first words was startling. Her voice is indescribable. It seems to come from somewhere in the depths of her. It sounds weird and uncanny at first, but this feeling passes away as soon as one gets accustomed to the tone. I did not experience this sensation of hollowness at all when I heard her the second time." (*New York Call*, May 4, 1913.)



to be published in about 50 languages; the second, written in her final year at Radcliffe, was called *Optimism*. She was also by now a frequent contributor to magazines, receiving a good fee for her articles. Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan settled in Wrentham, Massachusetts, about 26 miles from Boston. To the old farmhouse which they purchased came many of their friends, among them John Macy, a young Harvard instructor who had helped Helen organize and edit *The Story of My Life*, and had learned the manual alphabet in order to be able to talk to her. In 1901 Macy had joined the staff of the *Youth's Companion*, and remained as associate editor for eight years. He was a brilliant writer and critic, interested in the social issues of the day.

On May 2, 1905, Macy and Anne Sullivan were married. It was agreed beforehand that the three—Helen, Anne and Macy—would live together so that if anything happened to Anne, he would take care of Helen. As a member of the household, Macy became an important part of Helen's life. Although he did not become a member of the Socialist Party until 1909, Macy was already filled with anger over "the asinities of the present system."\* He had a great sympathy for the organized efforts of the workers to change their degraded status, and passionate hatred of the slum conditions in which most workers were forced to live.

Helen Keller had already begun to do some thinking along the same lines. She had walked with Anne Sullivan through industrial slums and had been appalled to learn that whole families were crowded in hideous, sunless tenements, that children were sent to work in mills from the age of six, and that so many working-class households lived on the very edge of starvation. Her special interest in the blind made her aware that it was not mere accident that caused the wide incidence of blindness, especially among workers and their children. She discovered that "too much of it was traceable to wrong industrial conditions and greed of employers. And

\* In 1916 Macy published *Socialism in America* in which he announced: "I am a member of the Socialist Party and of the Industrial Workers of the World, but I have no official position in either." (p. ix.)

the social evil contributed its share. I found that poverty drove women to the life of shame that ended in blindness."

Helen Keller learned nothing at college that deepened her understanding of why these conditions prevailed. "Schools seem to love the dead past and live in it," she declared years later. "They [the teachers] did not teach me about things as they are today, or about the vital problems of the people."

In February, 1908, the Macmillan Company of New York published H. G. Wells' *New Worlds for Old*. Anne Sullivan read it, and while she was not convinced by Wells' arguments in favor of socialism, she thought that Helen would find the book interesting because of its "imaginative quality" and "electric style." Helen found the book more than just interesting. Wells, who described himself as "a socialist, but . . . by no means fanatical or uncritical adherent," depicted in detail the wretched condition of working-class children under capitalism who "grow up through a darkened, joyless childhood into a gray, perplexing, hopeless world that beats them down at last, after servility, after toil, after crime it may be and despair, to death." He described, too, the plight of workers who toiled "for a bare subsistence all their lives." The socialist asked a basic question: "What freedom is there today for the vast majority of mankind?" He answered: "They are free to do nothing but work for a bare subsistence all their lives, they may not go freely about the earth even, but are prosecuted for trespassing upon the health-giving breast of our universal mother."

Socialism alone, Wells argued, could solve these problems. "Socialism lights up certain once hopeless evils in human affairs and shows the path by which escape is possible." It would certainly solve the inferior, degraded status of women in the male-dominated capitalist society. "The socialist would end that old predominance altogether. The woman, he declares, must be as important and responsible a citizen in the state as the man. She must cease to be in any sense or degree private property."

All this made sense to Helen Keller. It offered an explana-



tion for the social evils of her day and a logical solution.\* Moreover, Wells pointed out the role she herself could play in the movement for a new and better society. "Over and above the propaganda of its main constructive ideas and their more obvious and practical application," he wrote, "an immense amount of intellectual work remains to be done for socialism. The battle for socialism is to be fought not simply at the polls and in the market place, but at the writing desk and in the study." Helen Keller could use her pen and her voice for the cause even though she could not participate in day-to-day activities.

Once introduced to socialism, Helen Keller determined to read all she could on the subject. Macy, at her request, fed her book after book from his library, and she read Marx, Engels and Kautsky. She obtained Socialist periodicals from Germany printed in braille for the blind, and *Value, Price and Profit* by Karl Marx from England. A friend read to her the contents of American Socialist publications which were not yet printed in braille.

In 1909 Helen Keller joined the Socialist Party in Massachusetts. (She was to be made honorary member of many Socialist locals throughout the country.) Although a letter from her appeared in the Socialist weekly, *Appeal to Reason*, in December 1910, the fact that she endorsed the Socialist movement did not become public knowledge until early in 1912. On February 10, 1912, the *Cleveland Citizen*, a Socialist weekly, carried the following announcement:

"Of the thousands of telegrams and letters that have poured into Berlin congratulating the Socialists upon their splendid victory in recent elections, none created a more profound impression than a letter from Helen Keller, the famous deaf, dumb and blind woman of Wrentham, Mass., who wrote to the *New Times* of Berlin, and in subscribing for that paper declared that she was heartily in accord with the Socialist movement and hoped that a Socialist paper for the blind would be started."

\* Later Helen Keller viewed Wells' book as a rather weak presentation of the principles of socialism, but she always acknowledged its importance in introducing her to the movement.

The story was picked up by the commercial press and soon the name Helen Keller and socialism were being linked together. Then on July 6, 1912, the *Cleveland Citizen* reported: "Helen Keller, the famous blind and deaf author, has been appointed by Mayor Lunn of Schenectady, New York, as a member of his cabinet. Miss Keller has been an enthusiastic Socialist for several years." Lunn was the Socialist Mayor of Schenectady, and even though the report of Helen Keller's appointment proved to be premature, the fact that she had been "an enthusiastic Socialist for several years" was prominently featured in the press.

In an editorial entitled, "Helen Keller and Socialism," the *Cleveland Socialist* of October 5, 1912 noted:

"The value of such an adherent to the cause of Socialism, lies to no small extent in the fact that its opponents, after admitting the wonderful intellectual development of Miss Keller and insisting for years upon her marvelous intelligence, cannot possibly attribute her Socialist ideas to ignorance, stupidity, viciousness, envy or maliciousness of character, qualities which are often made the explanation of Socialism in the case of individuals possessed of all the normal senses. They may not admit directly that her Socialism is the result of her high intelligence, but they cannot as directly deny it. On the other hand, the Socialists may with justice make the claim, without any fear whatever of a reasonable objection."

The opponents of Socialism, however, used a different approach.

Editorials charged the Socialists with using a poor blind and deaf girl for her prestige value. In reply, Helen Keller wrote "How I Became a Socialist" (published in the *New York Call* of November 3, 1912) in which she told of her conversion to Socialism. And she was proud to be a Socialist! "I am no worshipper of cloth of any color, but I love the red flag and what it symbolizes to me and other Socialists. I have a red flag hanging in my study."

The charge that the "poor deaf and blind Helen Keller" was being exploited by the advocates of social change was always met head-on by Miss Keller. She put it effectively in her letter to Senator Robert M. La Follette in announcing

her support for his presidential candidacy in 1924 on the Farmer-Labor ticket:

"So long as I confine my activities to social service and the blind, they [the newspapers] compliment me extravagantly, calling me 'archpriest of the sightless,' 'wonder woman' and 'a modern miracle.' But when it comes to a discussion of poverty, and I maintain that it is the result of wrong economics—that the industrial system under which we live is at the root of much of the physical deafness and blindness in the world—that is a different matter. It is laudable to give aid to the handicapped. Superficial charities make smooth the way of the prosperous; but to advocate that all human beings should have leisure and comfort, the decencies and refinements of life, is an Utopian dream, and one who seriously contemplates its realization must indeed be deaf, dumb and blind."

On January 1, 1911, the *New York Call* said of Helen Keller: "Her liberal views and wide sympathies ought to shame those who have physical eyes, yet do not open them to the sorrows that compass the mass of men." In the next decade this viewpoint was to be increasingly heard. Helen Keller spoke and wrote frequently in behalf of workers on strike.\* She defended the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) when the militant organization was under attack by anti-labor employers and government officials, and, in the face of nationwide hostility to the Wobblies, announced that she was an "Industrialist," one of the names applied to the IWW. She delivered sharp blows against militarism, and as the United States was moving closer to entrance into World War I, she spoke in the East and across the country against further involvement in what she was convinced was an imperialist conflict. She questioned the sincerity of those who

\* Helen Keller participated personally in the strike led by Actors Equity in 1919. On August 18 she was to have appeared on the stage of the Lyric Theatre in connection with the showing of the motion picture, "Deliverance," a highly imaginative film of her life. But since the actors were on strike, she refused to appear and announced that she would "rather have the film fail than aid the managers in their contest with the players." (*New York Call*, August 18, 1919.) She marched with the strikers and spoke at their strike meetings.

claimed they were seeking to make the world safe for democracy while here in the United States, "Negroes may be massacred and their property burned." When the country was in the grip of wartime hysteria, she denounced military conscription and hailed Eugene V. Debs, leader of the Socialist Party, as a true patriot for having dared to challenge the warmarkers.

Of one thing Helen Keller was certain: socialism would eventually triumph. "We must not lose our courage no matter how many powers are united against us," the *New York Call* of February 6, 1913, quoted her as telling one of its reporters. "We must keep battering at the stone wall of ignorance and prejudice and mental blindness, breaking it bit by bit, and eventually break it down." A year later, in her preface to Arturo Giovannitti's poems, *Arrows in the Gale*, she again affirmed this belief: "The seeds of the socialist movement are being scattered far and wide, and the power does not exist in the world which can prevent their germination."

When the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in November 1917, Helen Keller felt that her faith was justified. She had never been impressed by the argument of reformist socialists that the way to achieve a socialist victory was by a peaceful, piecemeal process, electing socialists to offices until the movement could take control of the government. She had moved close to the IWW precisely because she felt that the Socialist Party, controlled by the reformists, was "sinking in the political bog" and because she could "not subscribe to a social policy of small, immediate advantage." "Let us try revolution and see what it will do now," she declared in 1916. Now a year later, a proletarian revolution had come to Russia, and to Helen Keller it seemed to be ushering in a new day for all mankind. Speaking to the Intercollegiate Socialist Society chapter at New York University in late November 1917, she greeted the Bolshevik Revolution and welcomed "the revolutionary forces at work at the present time." Three years later, December 31, 1920, at New York's Madison Square Garden, she declared:



"In the East a new star is risen! With pain and anguish the Old Order has given birth to the New, and behold in the East a man-child is born! Onward, comrades, all together! Onward to the campfires of Russia! Onward to the Coming Dawn!

"Through the night of our despair rings the keen call of the New Day. All the powers of darkness could not still the joy in faraway Moscow. Meteor-like through the heavens flashed the golden words of light, 'Soviet Republic of Russia.' Words sun-like—piercing the dark, joyous, radiant, love-words banishing hate, bidding the teeming world of men to awake and live! Onward, Comrades, all together, onward to the bright redeeming Dawn!"

When Helen Keller decided after 1921 that her chief life work was to be devoted to raising funds for the American Foundation for the Blind, her activities for the Socialist movement diminished. She rarely spoke for the cause in public after 1922, but in her private letters she revealed that her faith remained firm. On November 10, 1923, she wrote to Art Young, the great socially conscious artist and cartoonist: "Just now the world is full of tragic premonitions. . . . Perhaps, though, there is more hope in the situation than we think. Under the turmoil and wreckage the Great Idea may be hastening slowly, with circumspection and invincible tread. May not Russia be the implement shaped by the ages to uproot the jungle which we have made of the earth God gave us to cultivate and to enjoy? Anyway, Russia has become a towering beacon to a world grappling with an unknown destiny. . . ." In her autobiography, *Mainstream: My Later Life*, published in 1929, she made it quite clear that she still retained her faith in a future without war and poverty through socialism. Her support of the working class remained as firm as ever. The *New York Times* of November 13, 1931, reported her as telling a meeting of Alabamans in New York's Hotel Astor: "Whenever there is a strike it shows that men and women are overburdened by hardship. Only through organization can the workers escape industrial slavery."



It came as no surprise that the books of Helen Keller were publicly burned by the Nazis in 1933!

When the Rand School of Social Science, the Socialist Party's educational center in New York City, announced "A Third of a Century Fund Drive," in 1940, Helen Keller was among the first to respond. Her check was small, but it was "none the less a token of the fervor that glows unquenchable in my heart for mankind's liberation."

On March 10, 1940, upon receiving a copy of Art Young's autobiography, Miss Keller wrote the author:\* "We who believe in faithfulness unto the end honor you as a Comrade and as an American artist who uses his gift to blast tyranny and oppression. . . .

"I could write pages about events and mutual friends that are appealingly lighted up by your Art Young rays—Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Bill Haywood, Eugene Debs, Giovannitti, Ettor and other workers in the Mesabi Range strike.† . . . Nothing matters so long as man's dauntless spirit and inventive brain pushes society onward.

"There abides with me a gratifying sense that casting my lot with the workers, even if only in dreams and sentiments, has given symmetry and dignity to my womanhood and enabled me to face unashamed the spiritual challenge which is quite as searchingly fiery as the economic ordeal."

Helen Keller did not forget her past associates in the Socialist and labor movements, even during the terrifying, witch-hunting years of McCarthyism. On July 24, 1957, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the former IWW organizer who was now a leader of the Communist Party, spent her 65th birthday in the Federal Women's prison at Alderson, West Virginia, doing her three years under the Smith Act. She was not allowed to receive a letter from her old comrade in the radical movement, Helen Keller, who wrote: "Loving birthday greetings, dear

\* I wish to thank Mr. Lou Cohen of Argosy Bookshop (New York) for furnishing me with Helen Keller's letters to Art Young.

† For a discussion of the strike of the iron ore miners of the Mesabi Range, Minnesota in 1916, see Philip S. Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, vol. IV, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, New York, 1965, pp. 486-517.

Elizabeth Flynn! May the sense of serving mankind bring strength and peace into your brave heart.”

As these words are written, Helen Keller lies near death's door. Peace to the brave heart who served mankind so well.

JANUARY 1967

HELEN KELLER  
Her Socialist Years

“The aim of all government should be to secure to the workers as large a share as possible of the fruits of their toil. For is it not labor that creates all things?”

—FROM LETTER OF HELEN KELLER TO SENATOR ROBERT M. LA FOLLETTE, AUGUST 1924

“Hellen Keller is blind, deaf and dumb, yet in her blindness she sees oppression, in her deafness she hears the cry of outraged humanity, and in her speechlessness she voices the demand for justice.”

—CLEVELAND *Press* REPRINTED IN FREDERICK UPHAM ADAMS, *A Crime Without Name*, PAMPHLET, JANUARY 30, 1911



## How I Became a Socialist

For several months my name and socialism have appeared often together in the newspapers. A friend tells me that I have shared the front pages with baseball, Mr. Roosevelt and the New York police scandal. The association does not make me altogether happy but, on the whole, I am glad that many people are interested in me and in the educational achievements of my teacher, Mrs. Macy. Even notoriety may be turned to beneficent uses, and I rejoice if the disposition of the newspapers to record my activities results in bringing more often into their columns the word Socialism. In the future I hope to write about socialism, and to justify in some measure the great amount of publicity which has been accorded to me and my opinions. So far I have written little and said little about the subject. I have written a few letters, notably one to Comrade Fred Warren which was printed in the *Appeal to Reason*. I have talked to some reporters, one of whom, Mr. Ireland of the *New York World*, made a very flattering report and gave fully and fairly what I said. I have never been in Schenectady. I have never met Mayor Lunn.<sup>1</sup> I have never had a letter from him, but he has sent kind messages to me through Mr. Macy. Owing to Mrs. Macy's illness, whatever plans I had to join the workers in Schenectady have been abandoned.

On such negative and relatively insignificant matters have been written many editorials in the capitalist press and in the Socialist press. The clippings fill a drawer. I have not read a quarter of them, and I doubt if I shall ever read them all. If on such a small quantity of fact so much comment has followed, what will the newspapers do if I ever set to work in earnest to write and talk in behalf of socialism? For the present I should like to make a statement of my position and correct some false reports and answer some criticisms which seem to me unjust.

First—How did I become a Socialist? By reading. The first



book I read was Wells' *New Worlds for Old*. I read it on Mrs. Macy's recommendation. She was attracted by its imaginative quality, and hoped that its electric style might stimulate and interest me. When she gave me the book, she was not a Socialist and she is not a Socialist now. Perhaps she will be one before Mr. Macy and I are done arguing with her.

Mr. Wells led to others. I asked for more books on the subject, and Mr. Macy selected some from his library of socialist literature. He did not urge them on me. He merely complied with my request for more. I do not find him inclined to instruct me about socialism; indeed, I have often complained to him that he did not talk to me about it as much as I should like.

My reading has been limited and slow. I take German bimonthly Socialist periodicals printed in braille for the blind. (Our German comrades are ahead of us in many respects.) I have also in German braille Kautsky's discussion of the Erfurt Program.<sup>2</sup> The other socialist literature that I have read has been spelled into my hand by a friend who comes three times a week to read to me whatever I choose to have read. The periodical which I have most often requested her lively fingers to communicate to my eager ones is the *National Socialist*.<sup>3</sup> She gives the titles of the articles and I tell her when to read on and when to omit. I have also had her read to me from the *International Socialist Review* articles the titles of which sounded promising.<sup>4</sup> Manual spelling takes time. It is no easy and rapid thing to absorb through one's fingers a book of 50,000 words on economics. But it is a pleasure, and one which I shall enjoy repeatedly until I have made myself acquainted with all the classic socialist authors.

In the light of the foregoing I wish to comment on a piece about me which was printed in the *Common Cause* and reprinted in the *Live Issue*, two antisocialist publications. Here is a quotation from that piece:

"For twenty-five years Miss Keller's teacher and constant companion has been Mrs. John Macy, formerly of Wrentham,

Mass. Both Mr. and Mrs. Macy are enthusiastic Marxist propagandists, and it is scarcely surprising that Miss Keller, depending upon this lifelong friend for her most intimate knowledge of life, should have imbibed such opinions."

Mr. Macy may be an enthusiastic Marxist propagandist, though I am sorry to say he has not shown much enthusiasm in propagating his Marxism through my fingers. Mrs. Macy is not a Marxist, nor a socialist. Therefore what the *Common Cause* says about her is not true. The editor must have invented that, made it out of whole cloth, and if that is the way his mind works, it is no wonder that he is opposed to socialism. He has not sufficient sense of fact to be a socialist or anything else intellectually worthwhile.

Consider another quotation from the same article. The headline reads:

"SCHENECTADY REDS ARE ADVERTISING; USING HELEN KELLER, THE BLIND GIRL, TO RECEIVE PUBLICITY."

Then the article begins:

"It would be difficult to imagine anything more pathetic than the present exploitation of poor Helen Keller by the Socialists of Schenectady. For weeks the party's press agencies have heralded the fact that she is a Socialist, and is about to become a member of Schenectady's new Board of Public Welfare."

There's a chance for satirical comment on the phrase, "the exploitation of poor Helen Keller." But I will refrain, simply saying that I do not like the hypocritical sympathy of such a paper as the *Common Cause*, but I am glad if it knows what the word "exploitation" means.

Let us come to the facts. When Mayor Lunn heard that I might go to Schenectady he proposed to the Board of Public Welfare that a place be kept on it for me. Nothing was printed about this in *The Citizen*, Mayor Lunn's paper. Indeed, it was the intention of the board to say nothing about the matter until after I had moved to Schenectady. But the reporters of the capitalist press got wind of the plan, and one day, during Mayor Lunn's absence from Schenectady, the *Knickerbocker Press* of Albany made the announcement.

It was telegraphed all over the country, and then began the real newspaper exploitation. By the Socialist press? No, by the capitalist press. The Socialist papers printed the news, and some of them wrote editorials of welcome. But *The Citizen*, Mayor Lunn's paper, preserved silence and did not mention my name during all the weeks when the reporters were telephoning and telegraphing and asking for interviews. It was the capitalist press that did the exploiting. Why? Because ordinary newspapers care anything about socialism? No, of course not; they hate it. But because I, alas, am a subject for newspaper gossip. We got so tired of denying that I was in Schenectady that I began to dislike the reporter who first published the "news."

The Socialist papers, it is true, did make a good deal of me after the capitalist papers had "heralded the fact that I am a Socialist." But all the reporters who came to see me were from ordinary commercial newspapers. No Socialist paper, neither *The Call*<sup>5</sup> nor the *National Socialist* ever asked me for an article. The editor of *The Citizen* hinted to Mr. Macy that he would like one, but he was too fine and considerate to ask for it point-blank.

The *New York Times* did ask me for one. The editor of the *Times* wrote assuring me that his paper was a valuable medium for reaching the public and he wanted an article from me. He also telegraphed asking me to send him an account of my plans and to outline my ideas of my duties as a member of the Board of Public Welfare of Schenectady. I am glad I did not comply with this request, for some days later the *Times* made me a social outcast beyond the range of its righteous sympathies. On September 21 there appeared in the *Times* an editorial called "The Contemptible Red Flag." I quote two passages from it:

"The flag is free. But it is none the less detestable. It is the symbol of lawlessness and anarchy the world over, and as such is held in contempt by all right-minded persons."

"The bearer of a red flag may not be molested by the police until he commits some act which the red flag justifies. He deserves, however, always to be regarded with suspicion.

By carrying the symbol of lawlessness he forfeits all right to respect and sympathy."

I am no worshiper of cloth of any color, but I love the red flag and what is symbolizes to me and other Socialists. I have a red flag hanging in my study, and if I could I should gladly march with it past the office of the *Times* and let all the reporters and photographers make the most of the spectacle. According to the inclusive condemnation of the *Times* I have forfeited all right to respect and sympathy, and I am to be regarded with suspicion. Yet the editor of the *Times* wants me to write him an article! How can he trust me to write for him if I am a suspicious character? I hope you will enjoy as much as I do the bad ethics, bad logic, bad manners that a capitalist editor falls into when he tries to condemn the movement which is aimed at his plutocratic interests. We are not entitled to sympathy, yet some of us can write articles that will help his paper to make money. Probably our opinions have the same sort of value to him that he would find in the confession of a famous murderer. We are not nice, but we are interesting.

I like newspapermen. I have known many, and two or three editors have been among my most intimate friends. Moreover, the newspapers have been of great assistance in the work which we have been trying to do for the blind. It costs them nothing to give their aid to work for the blind and to other superficial charities. But socialism—ah, that is a different matter! That goes to the root of all poverty and all charity. The money power behind the newspapers is against socialism, and the editors, obedient to the hand that feeds them, will go to any length to put down socialism and undermine the influence of socialists.

When my letter to Comrade Fred Warren was published in the *Appeal to Reason*, a friend of mine who writes a special department for the *Boston Transcript* made an article about it and the editor-in-chief cut it out.

The Brooklyn *Eagle* says, apropos of me, and socialism, that Helen Keller's "mistakes spring out of the manifest limitations of her development." Some years ago I met a

gentleman who was introduced to me as Mr. McKelway, editor of the Brooklyn *Eagle*. It was after a meeting that we had in New York in behalf of the blind. At that time the compliments he paid me were so generous that I blush to remember them. But now that I have come out for socialism he reminds me and the public that I am blind and deaf and especially liable to error. I must have shrunk in intelligence during the years since I met him. Surely it his turn to blush. It may be that deafness and blindness incline one toward socialism. Marx was probably stone deaf and William Morris was blind. Morris painted his pictures by the sense of touch and designed wall paper by the sense of smell.

Oh, ridiculous Brooklyn *Eagle*! What an ungallant bird it is! Socially blind and deaf, it defends an intolerable system, a system that is the cause of much of the physical blindness and deafness which we are trying to prevent. The *Eagle* is willing to help us prevent misery provided, always provided, that we do not attack the industrial tyranny which supports it and stops its ears and clouds its vision. The *Eagle* and I are at war. I hate the system which it represents, apologizes for and upholds. When it fights back, let it fight fair. Let it attack my ideas and oppose the aims and arguments of Socialism. It is not fair fighting or good argument to remind me and others that I cannot see or hear. I can read. I can read all the socialist books I have time for in English, German and French. If the editor of the Brooklyn *Eagle* should read some of them, he might be a wiser man and make a better newspaper. If I ever contribute to the Socialist movement the book that I sometimes dream of, I know what I shall name it: *Industrial Blindness and Social Deafness*.

—NEW YORK *Call*, NOVEMBER 3, 1912



## In Defense of Fred Warren

Dear *Appeal*:<sup>6</sup> I inclose a check to be used for subscriptions to the *Appeal to Reason*. I am prompted to this by indignation at the unrighteous conviction of the editor, Mr. Fred Warren.<sup>7</sup>

I believe that the conviction is unrighteous, although I have arrived at this conclusion with some hesitancy. For a mere woman, denied participation in government, must needs speak timidly of the mysterious mental processes of men, and especially of ermined justices. No doubt any layman would give offense who should be guilty of the indiscretion of criticizing the decision of a high court. Still, the more I study Mr. Warren's case in the light of the United States Constitution, which I have under my fingers, the more I am persuaded either that I do not understand or that the judges do not. I used to honor our courts, which I was told were no respecters of persons. I was glad and proud in the thought of our noble heritage—a free law open to all children of the nation alike. But I have come not only to doubt the divine impartiality ascribed to our judiciary but also to question whether our judges are conspicuous for simple good sense and fair dealing. . . .

Are not these the facts: Several years ago three officers of the Western Federation of Miners were indicted for a murder committed in Idaho.<sup>8</sup> They were in Colorado, and the governor of that state did not extradite them. They were kidnapped and brought to an Idaho prison. They applied to the Supreme Court for a writ of habeas corpus, on the ground that they were illegally held because they had been illegally captured. The Supreme Court replied: "Even if it be true that the arrest and deportation of Pettibone, Moyer and Haywood were by fraud and connivance to which the governor of Colorado was a party this does not make out a case of violation of the rights of the appellants under the Constitution and the laws of the United States."<sup>9</sup>

Some years before this event ex-Governor Taylor, of Kentucky, was indicted for murder, and was wanted in his state. Mr. Warren offered a reward for the capture of Mr. Taylor and his return to the Kentucky authorities. I understand that it is not an unusual thing for a citizen to aid in this manner in the apprehension of a fugitive from justice.

To what twistings, turnings and dark interpretation must the judges of the Circuit Court be driven in order to send Mr. Warren to prison! As I understand it, a federal law defining the kind of matter which it is a crime to mail has been stretched to cover his act. What was the act? The offer of a reward was printed on the outside of envelopes mailed from Girard by Mr. Warren. This was construed as threatening, because it was an encouragement to others to kidnap a man under indictment. This the Supreme Court had by implication declared to be an innocent act; for in the case of Pettibone, Moyer and Haywood, the accomplished act itself was held to be no infringement of the rights of a citizen.

One need not be a Socialist to realize the significance, the gravity, not of Mr. Warren's offense, but of the offense of the judges against the Constitution, and against democratic rights. It is provided that "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of the press." Surely this means that we are free to print and mail any innocent matter. What Mr. Warren printed and mailed had been established by the Supreme Court as innocent. What beam was in the eye of the justices of the circuit courts? It is evident that their several decisions do not stand in the same light. It has been my duty, my life work, to study physical blindness, its causes and its prevention. I learn that our physicians are making great progress in the cure and the prevention of blindness. What surgery of politics, what antiseptic of common sense and right thinking, shall be applied to cure the blindness of our judges, and to prevent the blindness of the people, who are the court of last resort?

## Social Causes of Blindness

*Speech in Behalf of the Massachusetts Association for Promoting the Interests of the Blind, Boston, February 14, 1911*

I rejoice that the greatest of all work for the blind, the saving of eyesight, has been laid so clearly before the public. The reports of progress in the conservation of eyes, of health, of life, of all things precious to men are as a trumpet blast summoning us to still greater effort. The devotion of physicians and laymen, and the terrible needs of our fellowmen ought to hearten us in the fight against conquerable misery.

Our worst foes are ignorance, poverty and the unconscious cruelty of our commercial society.<sup>10</sup> These are the causes of much blindness, these are the enemies which destroy the sight of little children and workmen, and undermine the health of mankind. So long as these enemies remain unvanquished, so long will there be blind and crippled men and women.

To study the diseases and accidents by which sight is lost, and to learn how the surgeon can prevent or alleviate them, is not enough. We must strive to put an end to the conditions which cause the disease and accidents.

This case of blindness, the physician says, resulted from ophthalmia. It was really caused by a dark, overcrowded room, by the indecent herding together of human beings in insanitary tenements. We are told that another case was produced by the bursting of a wheel. The real cause was an employer's failure to safeguard his machines. Investigation shows that there are many clever safeguards for machinery which ought to be used in factories, but which are not adopted because their adoption would diminish the employer's profits.

Labor reports indicate that we Americans have been slow, dishonorably slow, in taking measures for the protection of our workmen.

Does it occur to you that the white lace which we wear is darkened by the failing eyes of the lace maker? The trouble is that we do not understand the essential relation between poverty and disease. I do not believe that there is any one in this city of kind hearts who would willingly receive dividends if he knew that they were paid in part with blinded eyes and broken backs. If you doubt that there is such a connection between our prosperity and the sorrows of the poor, consult those bare but illuminated reports of industrial commissions and labor bureaus. They are less eloquent than oratory. In them you will find the fundamental causes of much blindness and crookedness, of shrunken limbs and degraded minds. These causes must be searched out, and every condition in which blindness breeds must be exposed and abolished. Let our battle cry be: "No preventable disease, no unnecessary poverty, no blinding ignorance among mankind."

—NEW YORK *Call*, FEBRUARY 15, 1911

## To an English Woman-Suffragist

I thank you for the copy of "Votes for Women." Mr. Zangwill's address interested me deeply.<sup>11</sup> You ask me to comment on it, and though I know little, your request encourages me to tell you some of my ideas on the subject.

I have thought much lately about the question of woman-suffrage, and I have followed in my Braille magazines the recent elections in Great Britain. The other day I read a fine report of an address by Miss Pankhurst at a meeting in New York.<sup>12</sup>

I do not believe that the present government has any intention of giving women a part in national politics, or doing justice to Ireland, or the workmen of England. So long as the franchise is denied to a large number of those who serve and benefit the public, so long as those who vote are at the beck and call of party machines, the people are not free, and the day of women's freedom seems still to be in the far future. It makes no difference whether the Tories or the Liberals in Great Britain, the Democrats or the Republicans in the United States, or any party of the old model in any other country, get the upper hand. To ask any such party for women's rights is like asking a czar for democracy.

Are not the dominant parties managed by the ruling classes, that is, the propertied classes, solely for the profit and privilege of the few? They use us millions to help them into power. They tell us, like so many children, that our safety lies in voting for them. They toss us crumbs of concession to make us believe that they are working in our interest. Then they exploit the resources of the nation not for us, but for the interests which they represent and uphold. We, the people, are not free. Our democracy is but a name. We vote? What does that mean? It means that we choose between two bodies of real, though not avowed, autocrats. We choose between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. We elect expensive masters to do our work for us, and then blame them because they work for themselves and for their class.



The enfranchisement of women is a part of the vast movement to enfranchise all mankind. You ask for votes for women. What good can votes do you when ten-elevenths of the land of Great Britain belongs to 200,000, and only one-eleventh to the rest of the 40,000,000? Have your men with their millions of votes freed themselves from this injustice?

When one shows the masters that half the wealth of Great Britain belongs to 25,000 persons, when one says that this is wrong, that this wrong lies at the bottom of all social injustice, including the wrong of women, the highly respectable newspapers cry "Socialist Agitator! Stirrer of Class Strife!" Well, let us agitate, let us confess that we are thorough-going Social Democrats, or anything else that they please to label us. But let us keep our eyes on the central fact that a few, a few British men own the majority of British men and all British women. The few own the many, because they possess the means of livelihood of all. In our splendid republic, where at election time all are free and equal, a few Americans own the rest. Eighty percent of our people live in rented houses, and one-half of the rest are mortgaged. The country is governed for the richest, for the corporations, the bankers, the land speculators, and for the exploiters of labor. Surely we must free men and women together before we can free women.

The majority of mankind are working people. So long as their fair demands—the ownership and control of their lives and livelihood—are set at naught, we can have neither men's rights nor women's rights. The majority of mankind is ground down by industrial oppression in order that the small remnant may live in ease. How can women hope to help themselves while we and our brothers are helpless against the powerful organizations which modern parties represent and which contrive to rule the people. They rule the people because they own the means of physical life, land and tools, and the nourishers of intellectual life, the press, the church and the school.

You say that the conduct of the women suffragists is being disgracefully misrepresented by the British press. Here in

America the leading newspapers misrepresent in every possible way the struggles of toiling men and women who seek relief. News that reflects ill upon the employers is skillfully concealed—news of dreadful conditions under which laborers are forced to produce, news of thousands of men maimed in mills and mines and left without compensation, news of famines and strikes, news of thousands of women driven to a life of shame, news of little children compelled to labor before their hands are ready to drop their toys. Only here and there in a small and as yet uninfluential paper is the truth told about the workman and the fearful burdens under which he staggers.

I am indignant at the treatment of the brave, patient women of England. I am indignant when the women cloak-makers of Chicago are abused by the police. I am filled with anguish when I think of the degradation, the enslavement and the industrial tyranny which crushes millions and drags down women and helpless children.

I know the deep interest which you and your husband always took in God's poor, and your sympathy invites me to open my heart to you and express these opinions about grave problems.

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MAY 14, 1911

## The Unemployed

Some time ago I received a pathetic letter from a workman in a woolen mill. I quote a part of it:

"I was employed in the worsted trade in England before coming to this country. I had worked for ten years and learned a good deal about wool, tops and noils. I came to this country in the hope of climbing the industrial ladder. I could hear pretty well, or I should not have passed the immigration officers. I got work quickly at the very bottom of the ladder. I kept my eyes open and learned everything that came my way, and in time I was transferred to the combing room to learn to be a section hand. By this time my hearing had become slightly worse. All the help in this department were either Italians or Poles, so that between their broken English and my defective hearing I was much handicapped. I have been on short time for over a year, and since the New Year I have earned \$6.71 per week. There are six of us to feed, clothe and shelter, and coal to buy. How to find a bare existence is the problem that confronts me today. I would take anything where I could earn steady pay. I have the idea that I shall yet rise out of the mire. But in the meantime I must live and support my family, and this I cannot do under present circumstances."

This workman is deaf, but his position is similar to that of many of the sightless. We have been accustomed to regard the unemployed deaf and blind as victims of their infirmities. This is to say, we have supposed that if their sight and hearing were miraculously restored, they would find work. The problem of the underpaid and underemployed workman is too large to discuss here. But I wish to suggest to the readers of this article that the unemployment of the blind is only part of a greater problem.

There are, it is estimated, a million laborers out of work in the United States. Their inaction is not due to physical defects or lack of ability or of intelligence, or to ill health

or vice. It is due to the fact that our present system of production necessitates a large margin of idle men. The business world in which we live cannot give every man opportunity to fulfil his capabilities or even assure him continuous occupation as an unskilled laborer. The means of employment—the land and the factories, that is, the tools of labor—are in the hands of a minority of the people, and are used rather with a view to increasing the owner's profits than with a view to keeping all men busy and productive. Hence there are more men than jobs. This is the first and the chief evil of the so-called capitalistic system of production. The workman has nothing to sell but his labor. He is in strife, in rivalry with his fellows for a chance to sell his power. Naturally the weaker workman is thrust aside. That does not mean that he is utterly incapacitated for industrial activity, but only that he is less capable than his successful competitor.

In the majority of cases there is no relation between unemployment and ability. A factory shuts down and all the operatives, the more competent as well as the less competent, are thrown out of work. In February the cotton mill owners of Massachusetts agreed to run the mills on a schedule of four days a week. The employees were not to blame for the reduction of work, nor were the employers to blame. The considerations of the market compelled it.

Thus, it has come to pass that in this land of plenty there is an increasing number of "superfluous men." The doors of industry are closed to them the whole year or part of the year. No less than six million American men, women and the children are in a permanent state of want because of total or partial idleness. In a small corner of this vast social distress we find our unemployed blind. Their lack of sight is not the primary cause of their idleness; it is a contributing cause; it relegates them to the enormous army of the unwilling idle.

We can subsidize the work of the sightless; we can build special institutions and factories for them, and solicit the help of wealthy patrons. But the blind man cannot become an independent, self-supporting member of society, he can

never do all that he is capable of, until all his seeing brothers have opportunities to work to the full extent of their ability. We know now that the welfare of the whole people is essential to the welfare of each. We know that the blind are not debarred from usefulness solely by their infirmity. Their idleness is fundamentally caused by conditions which press heavily upon all working people, and deprive hundreds of thousands of good men of a livelihood.

I recommend that all who are interested in the economic problem of the sightless study the economic problem of the seeing. Let us begin with such books as Mr. Robert Hunter's *Poverty*, and Edmond Kelly's *Twentieth Century Socialism*.<sup>13</sup> Let us read these books, not for "theory," as it is sometimes scornfully called, but for facts about the labor conditions in America. Mr. Kelly was a teacher of political economy, a lecturer on municipal government at Columbia University. Mr. Hunter has spent many years studying the American workman in his home and in the shop. The facts which they spread before us show that it is not physical blindness, but social blindness which cheats our hands of the right to toil.

—*Zeigler Magazine for the Blind*, APRIL 1911



## To the Strikers at Little Falls, New York

I am sending the check which Mr. Davis paid me for the Christmas sentiments I sent him. Will you give it to the brave girls who are striving so courageously to bring about the emancipation of the workers at Little Falls?<sup>14</sup>

They have my warmest sympathy. Their cause is my cause. If they are denied a living wage, I also am denied. While they are industrial slaves, I cannot be free. My hunger is not satisfied while they are unfed. I cannot enjoy the good things of life which come to me, if they are hindered and neglected. I want all the workers of the world to have sufficient money to provide the elements of a normal standard of living—a decent home, healthful surroundings, opportunity for education and recreation. I want them all to have the same blessings that I have. I, deaf and blind, have been helped to overcome many obstacles. I want them to be helped as generously in a struggle which resembles my own in many ways.

Surely the things that the workers demand are not unreasonable. It cannot be unreasonable to ask of society a fair chance for all. It cannot be unreasonable to demand the protection of women and little children and an honest wage for all who give their time and energy to industrial occupations. When indeed shall we learn that we are all related one to the other, that we are all members of one body? Until the spirit of love for our fellowmen, regardless of race, color or creed, shall fill the world, making real in our lives and our deeds the actuality of human brotherhood—until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained.

*Solidarity*, NOVEMBER 21, 1912

## The Hand of the World

*The symbol, sign, and instrument  
Of each soul's purpose, passion, strife,  
Of fires in which are poured and spent  
Their all of love, their all of life.*

*O feeble, mighty human hand!  
O fragile, dauntless human heart!  
The universe holds nothing planned  
With such sublime, transcendent art!*

—HELEN FISKE JACKSON

As I write this, I am sitting in a pleasant house, in a sunny, wide-windowed study filled with plants and flowers. Here I sit warmly clad, secure against want, sure that what my welfare requires the world will give. Through these generous surroundings I feel the touch of a hand, invisible but potent, all-sustaining—the hand that wove my garments, the hand that stretched the roof over my head, the hand which printed the pages that I read.

What is that hand which shelters me? In vain the winds buffet my house and hurl the biting cold against the windows: that hand still keeps me warm. What is it, that I may lean upon it at every step I take in the dark, and it fails me not? I give wondering praise to the beneficent hand that ministers to my joy and comfort, that toils for the daily bread of all. I would gratefully acknowledge my debt to its capability and kindness. I pray that some hearts may heed my words about the hand of the world, that they may believe in the coming of that commonwealth in which the gyves [chains] shall be struck from the wrist of Labor, and the pulse of Production shall be strong with joy.

All our earthly well-being hangs upon the living hand of the world. Society is founded upon it. Its life-beats throb in our institutions. Every industry, every process, is wrought by

a hand, or by a superhand—a machine whose mighty arm and cunning fingers the human hand invents and wields. The hand embodies its skill, projects and multiplies itself, in wondrous tools, and with them it spins and weaves, plows and reaps, converts clay into walls, and roofs our habitations with trees of the forest. It compels titans of steel to heave incredible burdens, and commands the service of nimble lackeys which neither groan nor become exhausted. Communication between mind and mind, between writer and reader is made possible by marvelous extensions of the might of the hand, by elaborate reduplications of the many-motioed fingers. I have touched one of those great printing presses in which a river of paper flows over the type, is cut, folded, and piled with swift precision. Between my thoughts and the words which you read on this page a thousand hands have intervened; a hundred shafts of steel have rocked to and fro, to and fro in industrious rhythm.

The hand of the world! Think how it sends forth the waters where it will to form canals between the seas, and binds the same seas with thoughts incorporated in arms of stone! What is the telegraph cable but the quick hand of the world extended between the nations, now menacing, now clasped in brotherhood? What are our ships and railways but the feet of man made swift and strong by his hands? The hand captures the winds, the sun, and the lightnings, and dispatches them upon errands of commerce. Before its irresistible blows, mountains are beaten small as dust. Huge derricks—prehensile power magnified in digits of steel—rear factories and palaces, lay stone upon stone in our stately monuments, and raise cathedral spires.

On the hand of the world are visible the records of biology, of history, of all human existence since the day of the "first thumb that caught the trick of thought." Every hand wears a birth-seal. By the lines of the thumb each of us can be identified from infancy to age. So by the marks on the hands of the world its unmistakable personality is revealed. Through suffering and prosperity, through periods of retrograde and progress, the hand keeps its identity. Even now,

when the ceaseless ply of the world-shuttles is so clamorous and confused, when the labor of the individual is lost in the complexities of production, the old human hand, the symbol of the race, may still be discerned, blurred by the speed of its movements, but master and guide of all that whirring loom.

Study the hand, and you shall find in it the true picture of man, the story of human growth, the measure of the world's greatness and weakness. Its courage, its steadfastness, its pertinacity, make all the welfare of the human race. Upon the trustworthiness of strong, toil-hardened hands rests the life of each and all. Every day thousands of people enter the railway train and trust their lives to the hand that grasps the throttle of the locomotive. Such responsibility kindles the imagination! But more profound is the thought that the destiny and the daily life of mankind depend upon countless obscure hands that are never lifted up in any dramatic gesture to remind the world of their existence. In *Sartor Resartus* Carlyle expresses our obligation to the uncelebrated hands of the worker:

“Venerable to me is the hard Hand; crooked and coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue indefeasibly royal as the Scepter of this Planet. . . . Hardly entreated Brother! For us was thy way so bent, for us were thy straight limb and fingers so deformed; thou wert our Conscript on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For in thee too lay a God-created Form, but it was not to be unfolded. Encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of Labor; and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know Freedom.”

But wherefore these deformities and defacements? Wherefore this bondage that cramps the soul? A million tool-hands are at our service, tireless and efficient, having neither heart nor nerve. Why do they not lift the burden from those bowed shoulders? Can it be that man is captive to his own machine, manacled to his own handiwork, like the convict chained to the prison wall that he himself has built? Instruments multiply, they incorporate more and more of the intelligence of men; they not only perform coarse drudgery,

but also imitate accurately many of the hand's most difficult dexterities. Still the God-created Form is bowed. Innumerable souls are still denied their freedom. Still the fighter of our battles is maimed and defrauded.

Once I rejoiced when I heard of a new invention for the comfort of man. Taught by religion and a gentle home life, nourished with good books, I could not but believe that all men had access to the benefits of inventive genius. When I heard that locomotives had doubled in size and speed, I thought: "The food of the wheat fields will come cheaper to the poor of the cities now," and I was glad. But flour costs more today than when I read of those great new engines. Why do not improved methods of milling and transportation improve the dinner of the poor? I supposed that in our civilization all advances benefited every man. I imagined that every worthy endeavor brought a sure reward. I had felt in my life the touch only of hands that uphold the weak, hands that are all eye and ear, charged with helpful intelligence. I believed that people made their own conditions, and that if the conditions were not always of the best they were at least tolerable, just as my infirmity was tolerable.

As the years went by, and I read more widely, I learned that the miseries and failures of the poor are not always due to their own faults, that multitudes of men, for some strange reason, fail to share in the much talked of progress of the world. I shall never forget the pain and amazement which I felt when I came to examine the statistics of blindness, its causes and its connections with other calamities that befall thousands of my fellow men. I learned how workmen are stricken by the machine hands that they are operating. It became clear to me that the labor-saving machine does not save the laborer. It saves expense and makes profits for the owner of the machine. The worker has no share in the increased production due to improved methods; and, what is worse, as the eagle was killed by the arrow winged with his own feather, so the hand of the world is wounded by its own skill. The multipotent machine displaces the very hand that created it. The productivity of the machine seems to be val-



ued above the human hand; for the machine is often left without proper safeguards, and so hurts the very life it was intended to serve.

Step by step my investigation of blindness led me into the industrial world. And what a world it is! How different from the world of my beliefs! I must face unflinchingly a world of facts—a world of misery and degradation, of blindness, crookedness, and sin, a world struggling against the elements, against the unknown, against itself. How reconcile this world of fact with the bright world of my imagining? My darkness had been filled with the light of intelligence and, behold, the outer daylight world was stumbling and groping in social blindness! At first I was most unhappy; but deeper study restored my confidence. By learning the sufferings and burdens of men, I became aware as never before of the life-power that survived the forces of darkness, the power which, though never completely victorious, is continuously conquering. The very fact that we are still here carrying on the contest against the hosts of annihilation proves that on the whole the battle has gone for humanity. The world's great heart has proved equal to the prodigious undertaking which God set it. Rebuffed, but always persevering; self-reproached, but ever regaining faith; undaunted, tenacious, the heart of man labors toward immeasurably distant goals. Discouraged not by difficulties without or the anguish of ages within, the heart listens to a secret voice that whispers: "Be not dismayed; in the future lies the Promised Land."

When I think of all the wonders that the hand of man has wrought, I rejoice and am lifted up. It seems the image and agent of the Hand that upholds us all. We are its creatures, its triumphs, remade by it in the ages since the birth of the race. Nothing on earth is so thrilling, so terrifying, as the power of our hands to keep us or mar us. All that man does is the hand alive, the hand manifest, creating and destroying, itself the interest of order and demolition. It moves a stone, and the universe undergoes a readjustment. It breaks a clod,

and a new beauty bursts forth in fruits and flowers, and the sea of fertility flows over the desert.

With our hands we raise each other to the heights of knowledge and achievement, and with the same hands we plunge each other into the pit. I have stood beside a gun which they told me could in a few minutes destroy a town and all the people in it. When I learned how much the gun cost, I thought: "Enough labor is wasted on that gun to build a town full of clean streets and wholesome dwellings!" Misguided hands that destroy their own handiwork and deface the image of God! Wonderful hands that wound and can bind up, that make sore and can heal, suffering all injuries, yet triumphant in measureless enterprise! What on earth is like unto the hands in their possibilities of good and evil? So much creative power has God deputed to us that we can fashion human beings round about with strong sinews and noble limbs, or we can shrivel them up, grind living hearts and living hands in the mills of penury. This power gives me confidence. But because it is often misdirected, my confidence is mingled with discontent.

"Why is it," I asked, and turned to the literature of our day for answer, "why is it that so many workers live in unspeakable misery?" With their hands they have built great cities, and they cannot be sure of a roof over their heads. With their hands they have opened mines and dragged forth with the strength of their bodies the buried sunshine of dead forests, and they are cold. They have gone down into the bowels of the earth for diamonds and gold, and they haggle for a loaf of bread. With their hands they erect temple and palace, and their habitation is a crowded room in a tenement. They plow and sow and fill our hands with flowers while their own hands are full of husks.

In our mills, factories, and mines, human hands are herded together to dig, to spin, and to feed the machines that they have made, and the product of the machine is not theirs. Day after day naked hands, without safeguard, without respite, must guide the machines under dangerous and unclean conditions. Day after day they must keep firm hold of the little

that they grasp of life, until they are hardened, brutalized. Still the portent of idle hands grows apace, and the hand-to-hand grapple waxes more fierce. O pitiful blindness! O folly that men should allow such contradictions—contradictions that violate not only the higher justice, but the plainest common sense. How do the hands that have achieved the *Mauretania* become so impotent that they cannot save themselves from drowning? How do our hands that have stretched railways and telegraphs round the world become so shortened that they cannot redeem themselves?

Why is it that willing hands are denied the prerogatives of labor, that the hand of man is against man? At the bidding of a single hand thousands rush to produce, or hang idle. Amazing that hands which produce nothing should be exalted and jeweled with authority! In yonder town the textile mills are idle, and the people want shoes. Fifty miles away, in another town, the shoe factories are silent, and the people want clothes. Between these two arrested forces of production is that record of profits and losses called *the market*. The buyers of clothes and shoes in the market are the workers themselves; but they cannot buy what their hands have made. Is it not unjust that the hands of the world are not subject to the will of the workers, but are driven by the blind force of necessity to obey the will of the few? And who are these few? They are themselves the slaves of the market and the victims of necessity.

Driven by the very maladjustments that wound it, and enabled by its proved capacity for readjustment and harmony, society must move onward to a state in which every hand shall work and reap the fruits of its own endeavor, no less, no more. This is the third world which I have discovered. From a world of dreams I was plunged into a world of fact, and thence I have emerged into a society which is still a dream, but rooted in the actual. The commonwealth of the future is growing surely out of the state in which we now live. There will be strife, but no aimless, self-defeating strife. There will be competition, but no soul-destroying, hand-crippling competition. There will be only honest emulation in cooperative

effort. There will be example to instruct, companionship to cheer, and to lighten burdens, Each hand will do its part in the provision of food, clothing, shelter, and the other great needs of man, so that if poverty comes all will bear it alike, and if prosperity shines all will rejoice in its warmth.

There have been such periods in the history of man. Human nature has proved itself capable of equal cooperation. But the early communist societies, of which history tells us, were primitive in their methods of production—half civilized, as we say who dare call our present modes of life civilization. The coming age will be complex, and will relinquish nothing useful in the methods which it has learned in long struggles through tyrannies and fierce rivalries of possession. To the hand of the world belongs the best, the noblest, the most stupendous task, the subjection of all the forces of nature to the mind of man, the subjection of physical strength to the might of the spirit. We are still far from this loftiest of triumphs of the hand. Its forces are still to be disciplined and organized. The limbs of the world must first be restored. In order that no limb may suffer, and that none may keep the others in bondage, the will of the many must become self-conscious and intelligently united. Then the hand—the living power of man, the hewer of the world—will be laid with undisputed sway upon the machine with which it has so long been confounded. There will be abundance for all, and no hands will cry out any more against the arm of the might. The hand of the world will then have achieved what it now obscurely symbolizes—the uplifting and regeneration of the race, all that is highest, all that is creative in man.

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## A Call for Harmony

EDITOR OF THE *Call*:

It is with the deepest regret that I have read the attacks upon Comrade Haywood which have appeared in the *National Socialist*.<sup>15</sup> It fills me with amazement to see such a narrow spirit, such an ignoble strife between two factions which should be one, and that, too, at a most critical period in the struggle of the proletariat.

What? Are we to put difference of party tactics before the desperate needs of the workers? Are we no better than the capitalist politicians who stand in the high places and harangue about petty matters, while millions of the people are underpaid, underfed, thrown out of work and dying? While countless women and children are breaking their hearts and ruining their bodies in long days of toil, we are fighting one another. Shame upon us! The enemy is at our very doors, and the hand of the destroyer does its fell work, while we leave the victims helpless, because we think more of our own theories—theories that have not even been tested!

It is well for us to disagree and discuss our differences fully and vigorously. But it is stupid to make the issues personal. If the points of controversy are ever so weighty, they are not so great as to justify the mischief which springs from the quarrels of comrades. How can the workers, whom we urge to unite, look to us Socialists for guidance if we fail to unite?

What are we organized for? What is our chief bond of unity? What is our avowed object? The welfare of the working class and the abolition of capitalism. By our fidelity to the working class and to our ultimate purpose we are to be tested. Our rise or fall depends not upon theories of party tactic, but upon what we do or fail to do in the practical contest. There are many ways to work for the coming of the Cooperative Commonwealth. But those who hope for that commonwealth and work for it, those who are on the workers' side of the battle are our comrades. They can never



cease to be our comrades, even though they withdraw from our party, or are dismissed from our party. We are the friends of all who serve the workers, of all who labor for the social revolution, for the uplifting and enlightenment of all men. When will the champions of the oppressed unite, and thus hasten the day of deliverance?

—NEW YORK *Call*, JANUARY 4, 1913

## Why President Wilson Must Fail

The tariff will keep President Wilson very, very busy for a long time, and, I believe, will end in a compromise with big business, or with its representatives in the Legislature.<sup>16</sup> We cannot have justice until the greatest trust of all—the people's trust—has succeeded these money-making trusts. And that time is coming.

I foresee the day when the people will take over all of man's products and distribute and transport them to the consumer. Man's affairs will be managed by all for the benefit of all.

That is democracy. We have never before seen democracy. It has never existed in the world. There has never been a free nation. From time immemorial men have bowed to the wills of masters. They have never rejoiced in the labor of their hands, because some master has always taken a large part of their toil for his profits. That is the most wonderful thing in the world to me—that men have continued all these centuries to allow other men to take the greater portions of their labors. Nobody robs us on the highway without the hue and cry of law—but the trusts have taken our produce, our waterways, our resources—and have converted them to their own usage. Never until the people own and manage these things will there be happiness.

But I feel most hopeful. It is all in a day's work to hope, you know.

But President Wilson, though his intentions are good, and his ability great, cannot aid us in our fight for true democracy.

President Wilson will fail because the forces against him are stronger than himself; stronger than any President has even been. He will have to fight blindly against a system that has been carefully built up—a system of trusts that have concentrated more and more the world's wealth and the world's efficiency and profit.

His own party will be against him. In lessening "big business" profit he will alienate his closest supporters.

The President has said he will hang, higher than Haman, all who disturb business conditions. The "interests," when they heard that, must have laughed in their sleeves. He cannot lay his hands on them. As fast as one trust is divided, another springs up.

—NEW YORK *Call*, APRIL 16, 1913

## To the Editor of the *New York Evening Sun*

It is you who are smashing the china in my cupboard, Mr. Editor!<sup>17</sup> What has been done to you? You fly into a tirade at everything—at the wind, at the weather and at a peaceful spinster in a New England village. Your pen is a lash which is always flecking something or somebody. Angels of Heaven, defend me from your wrath! It bursts forth more unexpectedly than summer lightning, more abundantly than summer rain, more impetuously than the wrath of a despot. It comes from one half asleep in the country like a hurricane; it uproots, it carries away, it banishes repose, it disperses sweet thoughts.

You are no longer a reasonable being. You pronounce a verdict of guilty in the absence of the accused, with closed doors, without defense, without appeal. You set out with the assumption that a piece of newspaper gossip is a fact. You make no effort to ascertain the truth. You put spur to your fancy, and your gallop is accelerated by the speed of your motion. You strike out blindly to right, to left, above, below, far and near, at random. You cut and thrust in the dark, vain, implacable man! You almost prove that it is impossible to be just and a capitalist. You want every one to think as you do, believe as you do, pray as you do, reason as you do, fall in love as you do. Let any one oppose you with a "but," an "if," a smile or a silence, and straightway that intrepid one is sacrificed before the sun.

Your aspect is disturbing, Mr. Editor, to one who "turns her attention" to the terrible evils of the capitalistic system which you serve—a system which quenches out the souls of little children, makes motherhood a sorrow, breaks men's bodies and brutalizes their minds. These commonplace truths sound harsh to your delicate ears. It is "inconvenient" that one deaf and blind from infancy, and "brought up under the capitalistic system" should utter such impious blasphemies against a system which every one knows to be humane, phil-

anthropic, Christian. Anathema upon those rash beings, feminine or otherwise, who dispense "socialistic common-places." Mr. Editor, it is you who are deaf and dumb and blind.

We are admonished not to fear giving pain to a brother who goes astray. We owe it to him to keep his duty before his conscience, in the hope that our words will awaken in his heart a beneficent trouble, a salutary disquiet which he will perhaps never avow publicly, but which he will nevertheless confess with gratitude in the editorial sanctum.

—NEW YORK *Sun*, JUNE 8, 1913; REPRINTED IN NEW YORK *Call*, JUNE 11, 1913



## A New Light Is Coming

*Address at the Sociological Conference, Sagamore Beach,  
Massachusetts*

Dear Friends: I came here to listen, not to talk. I have not prepared a speech. But I suppose a woman can always think of something to say. If other subjects fail, one can talk about oneself.

Ever since I came here, people have been asking my friends how I can have a first-hand knowledge of the subjects you are discussing. They seem to think that one deaf and blind cannot know about the world of people, of ideas, of facts. Well, I plead guilty to the charge that I am deaf and blind, though I forget the fact most of the time. It is true, I cannot hear my neighbors discussing the questions of the day. But, judging from what is repeated to me of their discussions, I feel that I do not miss much. I can read. I can read the views of well-informed thinkers like Alfred Russell Wallace, Sir Oliver Lodge, Ruskin, H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, Karl Kautsky, Darwin and Karl Marx. Besides books, I have magazines in raised print published in America, England, France, Germany and Austria.

Of course, I am not always on the spot when things happen, nor are you. I did not witness the dreadful accident at Stamford the other day, nor did you, nor did most people in the United States. But that did not prevent me, any more it prevented you, from knowing about it.

To be sure, I have never been a captain of industry, or a soldier, or a strikebreaker. But I have studied these professions, and I think I understand their relation to society. At all events, I claim my right to discuss them. I have the advantage of a mind trained to think, and that is the difference between myself and most people, not my blindness and their sight. It seems to me that they are blind indeed who do not see that there must be something very wrong when

the workers—the men and women who produce the wealth of the nation—are ill paid, ill fed, ill clothed, ill housed. Deaf indeed are they who do not hear the desperation in the voice of the people crying out against cruel poverty and social injustice. Dull indeed are their hearts who turn their backs upon misery and support a system that grinds the life and soul out of men and women.

I have been much interested in what I have heard here. I am glad so many of you have your eyes open to the questions of the day, and to the great change that is taking place in the structure of society. There is always hope of improvement when people are willing to try to understand. The change will take place whether we understand or not. Comrade Giovannitti<sup>18</sup> has explained to you how he believes that great change is coming. If you understood him, you will see that it is the workers themselves who will work out their own salvation. All we can do is to get into the procession.

We are marching toward a new freedom. We are learning that freedom is the only safe condition for all human beings, men and women and children. Only through freedom, freedom for all, can we hope for a true democracy. Some of us have imagined that we live in a democracy. We do not. A democracy would mean equal opportunity for all. It would mean that every child had a chance to be well born, well fed, well taught and properly started in life. It would mean that every woman had a voice in the making of the laws under which she lives. It would mean that all men enjoyed the fruits of their labor. Such a democracy has never existed.

But some of us are waking up. We are finding out what is wrong with the world. We are going to make it right. We are learning that we live by each other, and that the life for each other is the only life worth living. A new light is coming to millions who looked for light and found darkness, a life to them who looked for the grave, and were bitter in spirit. We are part of this light. Let us go forth from here shafts of the sun unto shadows. With our hearts let us see, with your hands let us break every chain. Then, indeed, shall we know a better and nobler humanity. For there will be no more

slaves. Men will not go on strike for 50 cents more a week. Little children will not have to starve or work in mill and factory. Motherhood will no longer be a sorrow. We shall be "just one great family of friends and brothers."

—NEW YORK *Call*, JULY 8, 1913

## New Vision for the Blind

I have visited sweatshops, factories, crowded slums of New York and Washington. Of course I could not see the squalor; but if I could not see it, I could smell it.

With my own hands I could feel pinched, dwarfed children tending their younger brothers and sisters, while their mothers tended machines in nearby factories.

Besides the advantages of books and of personal experience, I have the advantage of a mind trained to think. In most people I talked with thought is infantile. In the well educated it is rare. In time their minds become automatic machines.

People do not like to think. If one thinks, one must reach conclusions; and conclusions are not always pleasant. They are a thorn in the spirit. But I consider it a priceless gift and a deep responsibility to think.

When we inquire why things are as they are, the answer is, the foundation of society is laid upon a basis of individualism, conquest and exploitation, with a total disregard of the good of the whole.

The structure of a society built upon such wrong basic principles is bound to retard the development of all men, even the most successful ones because it tends to divert man's energies into useless channels and to degrade his character. The result is a false standard of values. Trade and material prosperity are held to be the main objects of pursuit and conquest, the lowest instincts in human nature—love of gain, cunning and selfishness—are fostered.

The output of a cotton mill or a coal mine is considered of greater importance than the production of healthy, happy-hearted, free human beings.

Crushed, stupefied by terrible poverty, the workers yet demand that they shall have some of the beauty, some of the comforts, some of the luxuries which they have produced.

The time of blind struggle is drawing to a close. The forces

governing the law of the survival of the fittest will continue to operate, but they will be under the conscious, intelligent control of man.

In all my reading I am conscious of a multitudinous discontent. Slowly man is waking up. The people—the great “common herd”—are finding out what is wrong with the social, political and economical structure of the system of which they are a part.

This is not a time of gentleness, of timid beginnings that steal into life with soft apologies and dainty grace. It is a time for loud voiced, open speech and fearless thinking; a time of striving and conscious manhood, a time of all that is robust and vehement and bold; a time radiant with new ideals, new hopes of true democracy.

I love it, for it thrills me and gives me a feeling that I shall face great and terrible things. I am a child of my generation, and I rejoice that I live in such a splendidly disturbing time.

—*Justice* (PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA), OCTOBER 25, 1913



## Brutal Treatment of the Unemployed in Sacramento

I think their treatment was outrageous.<sup>19</sup> It is not a crime to protest for your fellows. It is not a crime to be without bread.

They say that these men are IWW's and that means, 'I Won't Work.' I honor these men for their protest.

I am a socialist because I believe that socialism will solve the misery of the world—give work to the man who is hungry and idle and at least give to little children the right to be born free.

I believe socialism is practical.

You tell me these men out of work are unfit. Under socialism they will not be unfit because they will not be overtaxed. With the idle rich and the idle poor working and the work day four hours long their bodies will grow strong again and their minds sane.

There are so many in prison who should be out—with their minds and bodies given a chance to grow straight. There are so many out of prison who more deserve to be inside. There are those who enslave men and women and little children, paying wages that will not let them live.

It is them and the system under which they live that are responsible for the men who have been treated like inhuman things at Sacramento.

—SACRAMENTO (CALIFORNIA) *Star*, MARCH 16, 1914

## Introduction to *Arrows in the Gale:* *Poems by Arturo Giovannitti*

I am glad of this opportunity to commend to the public the poems of my dear friend and comrade, Arturo Giovannitti.

No one who loves poetry can fail to recognize the greatness of Giovannitti's expression or to be glad of any force that has produced such noble verse. He has tried to render his ideas of the world he lives in. As a poet he is to be judged by his success in rendering these ideas in verse, and not by his relations to syndicalism<sup>20</sup> or socialism or any other movement in which he happens to be active. The laws of poetic beauty and power, not one's beliefs about the economic world, determine the excellence of his work.

Giovannitti's poetry has been called "rashly materialistic." So is Homer. So is Virgil. So is Dante. So is Shakespeare. So is Shelley. So are allegories and parables. So are the prophecies of Isaiah. So is the description of the New Jerusalem descending out of Heaven, at once most spirit-illuminated and most closely linked with the natural needs, the sensuous pleasures and desires of man! When a poet speaks he covers the bare facts of life with a shimmering cloth of gold. He spiritualizes all that men see, feel, think, suffer, learn of life's heights and depths. Giovannitti's poetry is the spiritualization of a lofty dream that he seeks to realize—the establishment of love and brotherhood and social justice for every man and woman upon earth. If you insist on finding in his glorious imaginings something definite, something translatable into prose, it is there; it is the struggle of a new world against the old world, of ideas against customs blindly obeyed, of young truth against the antiquity of outworn creeds and musty traditions. Giovannitti is, like Shelley, a poet of revolt against the cruelty, the poverty, the ignorance which too many of us accept in blind content. His is the poetry of humane humanity, of exultation in everything new, vigorous, wholesome, manly, and of uncompromising hatred of what is bestial, mean, sordid and degrading. It is an outgrowth of

noble ideals, aspirations and hopes for a true democracy that are being proclaimed from one end of the world to the other. Rashly materialistic, indeed!

Behind Arturo Giovannitti stand the poets, prophets, wise men and patriots of Italy. Into him have been poured the fire and courage of a proud, energetic people.

He was born January 7, 1884, at Ripabottoni in southern Italy. He was educated at the *lycee* in Campobasso. At the age of 17 he came to America, which he had been taught to regard as a better, freer country than his own. As he said in his address before the jury in Salem,<sup>21</sup> he had "learned upon the knees of his mother and his father to revere with tears in his eyes the name of 'The Republic.'" His first years in America were years of disillusion and failure. He worked in the coal mines of Pennsylvania, where he saw the misery and degradation of many of the foreigners who come here, animated by the same love for democracy and hope for opportunity that had filled his heart. He studied for a while in several theological schools. Then he took up journalistic work in New York. About nine years ago he joined the socialist movement and later became the editor of the Italian revolutionary journal, *Il Proletario*. Pent in by cold and poverty and still colder tradition, he caught the glow of the radiance of a redeemed humanity; he bulwarked himself in his enthusiasm and in the determination that all men shall have their share in the bounty of the earth, shall know the splendors and ecstasies of life.

His poetry is inspired by this consecration to a glorious cause. It is "only living aloud his work, a singing with his hand." Many readers of it will find themselves face to face with a baffling personality, with a poet quite unlike any other. His subjects will puzzle them, and they cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of the forces which have given rise to it. Giovannitti's main theme is the class war, the immediate battleground of which is what we call labor troubles, the strike, the lock-out, the visible clash between employer and employed. That battlefield has recently produced a new type of militant workman, the revolutionary

unionist, the syndicalist as he is called in most countries, the member of the Industrial Workers of the World as we have come to know him in America. Their business today is to help the workers to win strikes, that is, to force one and another concession from the masters. Their aim tomorrow is that of the socialists, to overthrow the master class completely and win for all men the heritage of the earth. They are crusaders, preachers of a new morality whose cardinal virtue is solidarity, a word scarcely comprehended by those who have no intimate knowledge of the militant proletariat. Among the heralds who bear the banner with this strange new device, solidarity, is Arturo Giovannitti.

He is a poet, a better poet than has come out of the privileged classes of America in our day. He is also a practical strike leader and organizer. For his activities during the Lawrence Strike he spent several months in jail. The crime with which he was charged was, of course, a legal fiction devised by the mill owners and their agents. Giovannitti's real crime was helping the strikers in their assault on the pocket-books of the owners. Of that crime, Giovannitti and all syndicalists are proudly guilty. For it they will be punished, and they expect to be punished, until the day when they are stronger than the powers that administer the punishment. They ask no quarter and they give none. They respect the law only as a soldier respects an enemy. In the presence of any law they ask only whether it is expedient—good tactics—to obey it or break it. They know that the laws are for the most part made by and for the possessing classes, and that in a contest with the workers the bosses do not respect the laws, but quite shamelessly break them. When workers go on strike for better conditions, the police disperse their meetings, club and imprison them and even drive the leaders out of town. It is natural that they should do this, for a strike is not a legal game; it is a war, and both sides use any weapon that they can lay their hands on. The difference is that the employers keep up the hypocritical fiction of law and order, while the revolutionary unionists, who are either more honest or more clear-sighted, point out that law and order do not

exist in a world which is at war. From every platform and in every pamphlet they boldly declare that capitalist morality is hostile to the interests of the workers and is therefore, from the worker's point of view, immoral. They preach a new morality according to which the basest crime is "scabbing," and that, as we know, is regarded as a virtue by the upper classes. They make their own laws in accordance with the needs of their class, just as throughout history other classes have done; and they treat statutes, ordinances and injunctions as so many orders from the enemy.

No one has ever given me a good reason why we should obey unjust laws. But the reason why we should resist them is obvious. Our resistance proves our manhood and our womanhood. The dignity of human nature compels us to resist what we believe to be wrong and a stumbling block to our fellow men. When a government puts forth its strength on the side of injustice it is foredoomed to fail. When it depends for "law and order" upon the militia and the police, its mission in the world is nearly finished. We believe, at least we hope, that our capitalist government is near its end; we wish to hasten its end; the only question is how. The various answers to that question constitute the differences between the several types or groups of socialists. The capitalist press is anxious to prove how insignificant is this group of agitators—a handful of discontents, mostly ignorant foreigners.

A handful of discontents? When in the history of the world has the vanguard been in the majority? Never. People who are ready to devote their lives to the oppressed, hoping for no return but a good conscience, are never found in large numbers at a given time and place. Most men have other affairs to attend to than their fellowmen's prosperity and happiness. It is not a question of numbers at first, but the spirit which animates the "handful." But why so persistently dodge the truth? Why not at least face the fact that a million of the people of the United States would like to see the present government changed? Why not admit frankly that the creed of socialism is held by thirty million people in the civilized world, and is preached and written in sixty languages? The



foe—if so you regard the emancipation of man from cruel conditions—is in your midst. Scarcely a hamlet, nay, even a house, will be found where he does not lurk. Socialism is here to stay. That is, the idea is here; socialist society has not yet arrived. Let anyone who will, take the trouble to investigate; and he will find that this idea is a very vigorous plant, rooted securely in the hearts of men where it does not depend upon the press for watering and cultivating. Ideas so planted will bear fruit inevitably. At this very hour the seeds are being scattered far and wide, and the power does not exist in the world which can prevent their germination. It is a plant which it has taken ages to bring to flower. To its nourishment have gone the best, the finest, the noblest aspirations of humanity.

Such is the wonderful world movement out of which Arturo Giovannitti is flashing his message of hope to the human race. It is a movement great in its material and spiritual possibilities. It is great, very great in the diversity and sweep of its issues. It is supremely great in the sympathy, mutual helpfulness and limitless energy of those who are pushing it forward. It is appealing, it is beautiful in the whole-hearted efforts to redeem to light, hope, strength and joy the millions upon whom all the world's burden of anguish and toil has fallen so pitilessly through the centuries.

Giovannitti's poetry is an effort to express the hopes of a multitude of men who are lost in an immensity of silence, swallowed up in meaningless darkness. With burning words he makes us feel the presence of the toilers hidden behind tenement walls, behind the machinery they guide. He turns the full light of his intense, vivid intelligence upon the worn face of the workers who put every breath and nerve into the struggle for existence, who give every hour and exhaust every faculty that others may live. He finds voice for his message in the sighs, the dumb loves and hopes, the agonies and thwartings of men who are bowed beneath burdens and broken by the monster hands of machines, men who spin and weave and cause the earth to yield its glad increase, men from whose unheeded stroke uproll domes and spires, till the eyes

of men and angels behold among the clouds the work of their patient hands! But the sense of divine things to be goes thrilling through all his verses. It is as unmistakable as the smell of spring in April air, and just as pervasive, just as elemental. He welcomes the combat—not a combat that shall rend the world apart, but one which shall bring it together in a universal sunshine of peace. “The battle has gone up onto higher ground and into higher light; the battle is above the clouds.” In the irregular lines of such poems as “The Cage” there is the tramp of a vast, onrushing host. It is the high tide of the revolution. Onward it sweeps through the rent temples of the past, flooding the courts of dethroned state, thundering through the market-place where men buy and sell the lives and souls of their fellow men. Face the wreckage, you who can, and behold upon the tumultuous waves a new ship of state. Fast through the night of our ignorance and our fear it speeds on to the calm, sunlit shores of the desired land.

I am sure this book will go on its way thrilling to new courage those who fight for freedom. It will set human hearts beating for something better. It will move some to think and keep them glad that they thought. Its echoes caught from a noble life, a noble fight will “roll from soul to soul/And grow forever and forever.”

—1914

## Why Men Need Woman Suffrage

Many declare that the woman peril is at our door. I have no doubt that it is. Indeed, I suspect that it has already entered most households. Certainly a great number of men are facing it across the breakfast table. And no matter how deaf they pretend to be, they cannot help hearing it talk.

Women insist on their "divine rights," "immutable rights," "inalienable rights." These phrases are not so sensible as one might wish. When one comes to think of it, there are no such things as divine, immutable or inalienable rights. Rights are things we get when we are strong enough to make good our claim to them. Men spent hundreds of years and did much hard fighting to get the rights they now call divine, immutable and inalienable. Today women are demanding rights that tomorrow nobody will be foolhardy enough to question.

Anyone that reads intelligently knows that some of our old ideas are up a tree, and that traditions are scurrying away before the advance of their everlasting enemy, the questioning mind of a new age. It is time to take a good look at human affairs in the light of new conditions and new ideas, and the tradition that man is the natural master of the destiny of the race is one of the first to suffer investigation.

The dullest can see that a good many things are wrong with the world. It is old-fashioned, running into ruts. We lack intelligent direction and control. We are not getting the most out of our opportunities and advantages. We must make over the scheme of life, and new tools are needed for the work. Perhaps one of the chief reasons for the present chaotic condition of things is that the world has been trying to get along with only half of itself. Everywhere we see running to waste woman-force that should be utilized in making the world a more decent home for humanity. Let us see how the votes of women will help solve the problem of living wisely and well.

When women vote men will no longer be compelled to

guess at their desires—and guess wrong. Women will be able to protect themselves from man-made laws that are antagonistic to their interests. Some persons like to imagine that man's chivalrous nature will constrain him to act humanely toward woman and protect her rights. Some men do protect some women. We demand that all women have the right to protect themselves and relieve man of this feudal responsibility.

Political power shapes the affairs of state and determines many of the every-day relations of human beings with one another. The citizen with a vote is master of his own destiny. Women without this power, and who do not happen to have "natural protectors," are at the mercy of man-made laws. And experience shows that these laws are often unjust to them. Legislation made to protect women who have fathers and husbands to care for them does not protect working women whose only defenders are the state's policemen.

The wages of women in some states belong to their fathers or their husbands. They cannot hold property. In parts of this enlightened democracy of men the father is the sole owner of the child. I believe he can even will away the unborn babies. Legislation concerning the age of consent is another proof that the voice of woman is mute in the halls of the lawmakers. The regulations affecting laboring women are a proof that men are too busy to protect their "natural wards."

Economic urgencies have driven women to demand the vote. To a large number of women is entrusted the vitally important public function of training all childhood. Yet it is frequently impossible for teachers to support themselves decently on their wages. What redress have these overworked, underpaid women without the vote? They count for nothing politically.

An organization of women recently wanted to obtain a welfare measure from a Legislature in New York. A petition signed by 5,000 women was placed before the chairman of a committee that was to report on the bill. He said it was a good bill and ought to pass. After the women had waited a reasonable time, they sent up a request to know what had

become of the bill. The chairman said he did not know anything about it. He was reminded of the petition that had been brought to him signed by 5,000 women. "Oh," replied the chairman, "a petition signed by 5,000 women is not worth the paper it is written on. Get five men to sign and we'll do something about it." That is one reason we demand the vote—we want 5,000 women to count for more than five men.

A majority of women that need the vote are wage-earners. A tremendous change has taken place in the industrial world since power machines took the place of hand tools. Men and women have been compelled to adjust themselves to a new system of production and distribution. The machine has been used to exploit the labor of both men and women as it was never exploited before. In the terrific struggle for existence that has resulted from this change women and children suffer even more than men. Indeed, economic pressure drives many women to market their sex.

Yet women have nothing to say about conditions under which they live and toil. Helpless, unheeded, they must endure hardships that lead to misery and degradation. They may not lift a hand to defend themselves against cruel, crippling processes that stunt the body and brain and bring on early death or premature old age.

Working men suffer from the helplessness of working women. They must compete in the same offices and factories with women who are unable to protect themselves with proper laws. They must compete with women who work in unsanitary rooms called homes, work by dim lamps in the night, rocking a cradle with one foot. It is to the interest of all workers to end this stupid, one-sided, one-power arrangement and have suffrage for all.

The laws made by men rule the minds as well as the bodies of women. The man-managed state so conducts its schools that the ideals of women are warped to hideous shapes. Governments and schools engender and nourish a militant public opinion that makes war always possible. Man-written history, fiction and poetry glorify war. Love of country is turned into patriotism which suggests drums, flags and young men eager



to give their lives to the rulers of the nation. There will continue to be wars so long as our schools make such ideas prevail.

Women know the cost of human life in terms of suffering and sacrifice as men can never know it. I believe women would use the ballot to prevent war and to destroy the ideas that make war possible. In spite of an education that has taught them to glorify the military element in their ideals of manhood, they will wake to the realization that he loves his country best who lives for it and serves it faithfully. They will teach children to honor the heroes of peace above the heroes of war.

Women are even now more active in working for social legislation and laws affecting the schools, the milk supply and the quality of food than are the men who have the votes. Fundamentally, woman is a more social being than man. She is concerned with the whole family, while man is more individualistic. Social consciousness is not so strong in him. Many questions can be solved only with the help of woman's social experience—questions of the safety of women in their work, the rights of little children.

Yet her peculiar knowledge and abilities are made the basis of arguments against giving women the vote. It is indisputably true that woman is constituted for the purposes of maternity. So is man constituted for the purposes of paternity. But no one seems to think that incapacitates him for citizenship. If there is a fundamental difference between man and woman, far be it from me to deny that it exists. It is all the more reason why her side should be heard.

For my part, I should think that man's chivalrous nature would cause him to emancipate the weaker half of the race. Indeed, it seems strange that when he was getting the suffrage for himself it did not occur to him to divide up with his beloved partner. Looking closer, I almost detect a suspicion of tyranny in his attitude toward her on the suffrage question. And can it be that this tyranny wears the mask of chivalry? Please do not misunderstand me. I am not disparaging chivalry. It is a very fine thing—what there is of it. The trouble

is, there is not enough to go around. Nearly all the opportunities, educational and political, that woman has acquired have been gained by a march of conquest with a skirmish at every post.

So since masculine chivalry has failed us we must hustle a bit and see what we can do for ourselves—and the men who need our suffrage. First of all, we must organize. We must make ourselves so aggressive a political factor that our natural protectors can no longer deny us a voice in directing and shaping the laws under which we must live.

We shall not see the end of capitalism and the triumph of democracy until men and women work together in the solving of their political, social and economic problems. I realize that the vote is only one of many weapons in our fight for the freedom of all. But every means is precious and, equipped with the vote, men and women together will hasten the day when the age-long dream of liberty, equality and brotherhood shall be realized upon earth.

—NEW YORK *Call*, OCTOBER 17, 1915

## To President Woodrow Wilson: Joe Hill

I believe that Joseph Hillstrom has not had a fair trial and that the sentence passed upon him is unjust.<sup>22</sup> I appeal to you as official father of all the people to use your great power and influence to save one of the nation's helpless sons. The stay of execution will give time to investigate. A new trial will give the man justice to which the laws of the land entitle him.

—NOVEMBER 16, 1915, WOODROW WILSON PAPERS, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## Birth Control

The case of William Sanger, whose wife formed the Birth Control League, should open the eyes of all intelligent persons to the forces at work against the spread of this new idea. A short time ago Sanger was giving away a pamphlet, *Family Limitation*, that his wife had written.<sup>23</sup> It was her answer to many appeals for information from men and women who could not support their families and who could not pay a competent physician for the information they wanted. Its purpose was to help distressed parents to limit the number of their offspring and give a better chance of health and happiness to the children they did have.

Now, most of those who have large families are working people. Why should not the idea of having fewer children be fostered among them?

The imprisonment of Sanger reveals the fact that there are persons who do not want this idea to be disseminated among the workers. These persons, for the sake of profits alone, deliberately encourage the workers to have large families, that their little ones may be driven to labor—that the factories shall have them—to the end that there shall be no dearth of hands and, therefore, plenty of people to take such wages as are offered to them.

Incredible as it seems, employers of others' brains and bodies may, and do, claim a right over their lives, the frail limbs and tender souls of others' progeny—for profit. To such persons the knowledge about birth control is odious.

The limiting of families is a matter of the gravest necessity to the workers. In spite of our boasts of national prosperity, poverty is steadily increasing. The cost of living mounts higher and higher, and wages do not advance in proportion.

If the families of the workers are left to the uncontrolled caprice of nature, we shall have a larger percentage of children that are forced to toil in mills and factories—who are denied their birthright of education and play.

Already countless mothers are obliged to work outside their homes and leave their little ones without the proper care. Unwatched, exposed to all the influences of evil, these children of the poor grow or waste away, as they may, like plants in sandy soil, among rocks, weeds and rubbish, bereft of light and sunshine. Those that survive bring into the world, in spite of themselves, an even larger number of deformed, sickly, feebleminded children. And the incalculable mischief of an uncontrolled birth rate sucks up the vitality of the human race. This is the real suicide that we must combat.

The destruction of the poor is their poverty. Only by taking the responsibility of birth control into their own hands can they roll back the awful tide of misery that is sweeping over them and their children.

Anyone who will take a peep into life's backyard will see a huge junk heap that will set him thinking.

Once it was necessary that the people should multiply and be fruitful, if the race was to survive. But now, to preserve the race, it is necessary that people hold back the power of propagation.

—NEW YORK *Call*, NOVEMBER 26, 1915



## The Ford Peace Plan is Doomed to Failure

Henry Ford belongs to the same class as the diplomats and politicians that made the war. Nothing will come of his plan,<sup>24</sup> because he won't use the only means to make it a success—get the soldiers themselves to quit fighting.

The Roman peace was a failure, the truce of God was only a truce, and the treaties of governments end in new wars. It is time to sweep aside these artificial peacemakers and declare the peace of man. If the soldiers in the trenches once understood that their victories belong to their governments, but their miseries are their own, they will cease to fight at the bidding of an officer backed by an official.

They will put their hands in their pockets and go home. If the Kaiser and the Czar and a group of Presidents and Kings are interested in a quarrel about a line fence, the workers they have turned into soldiers will let them have their fight out among themselves.

—NEW YORK *Call*, DECEMBER 16, 1915

## Menace of the Militarist Program

*Speech at the Labor Forum, Washington Irving High School, New York City, December 19, 1915<sup>25</sup>*

The burden of war always falls heaviest on the toilers. They are taught that their masters can do no wrong, and go out in vast numbers to be killed on the battlefield. And what is their reward? If they escape death they come back to face heavy taxation and have their burden of poverty doubled. Through all the ages they have been robbed of the just rewards of their patriotism as they have been of the just reward of their labor.

The only moral virtue of war is that it compels the capitalist system to look itself in the face and admit it is a fraud. It compels the present society to admit that it has no morals it will not sacrifice for gain. During a war, the sanctity of a home, and even of private property is destroyed. Governments do what it is said the "crazy Socialists" would do if in power.

In spite of the historical proof of the futility of war, the United States is preparing to raise a billion dollars and a million soldiers in preparation for war. Behind the active agitators for defense you will find J. P. Morgan & Co., and the capitalists who have invested their money in shrapnel plants, and others that turn out implements of murder. They want armaments because they beget war, for these capitalists want to develop new markets for their hideous traffic.

I look upon the whole world as my fatherland, and every war has to me a horror of a family feud. I look upon true patriotism as the brotherhood of man and the service of all to all. The only fighting that saves is the one that helps the world toward liberty, justice and an abundant life for all.

To prepare this nation in the true sense of the word, not for war, but for peace and happiness, the State should govern every department of industry, health and education in such a way as to maintain the bodies and minds of the people in

soundness and efficiency. Then, the nation will be prepared to withstand the demand to fight for a perpetuation of its own slavery at the bidding of a tyrant.

After all, the best preparedness is one that disarms the hostility of other nations and makes friends of them. Nothing is to be gained by the workers from war. They suffer all the miseries, while the rulers reap the rewards. Their wages are not increased, nor their toil made lighter, nor their homes made more comfortable. The army they are supposed to raise can be used to break strikes as well as defend the people.

If the democratic measures of preparedness fall before the advance of a world empire, the worker has nothing to fear. No conqueror can beat down his wages more ruthlessly or oppress him more than his own fellow citizens of the capitalist world are doing. The worker has nothing to lose but his chains, and he has a world to win. He can win it at one stroke from a world empire. We must form a fully equipped, militant international union so that we can take possession of such a world empire.

This great republic is a mockery of freedom as long as you are doomed to dig and sweat to earn a miserable living while the masters enjoy the fruit of your toil. What have you to fight for? National independence? That means the masters' independence. The laws that send you to jail when you demand better living conditions? The flag? Does it wave over a country where you are free and have a home, or does it rather symbolize a country that meets you with clenched fists when you strike for better wages and shorter hours? Will you fight for your masters' religion which teaches you to obey them even when they tell you to kill one another?

Why don't you make a junk heap of your masters' religion, his civilization, his kings and his customs that tend to reduce a man to a brute and God to a monster? Let there go forth a clarion call for liberty. Let the workers form one great world-wide union, and let there be a globe-encircling revolt to gain for the workers true liberty and happiness.

## Strike Against War

*Speech at Carnegie Hall, New York City, January 5, 1916, under the auspices of the Women's Peace Party and the Labor Forum*<sup>26</sup>

To begin with, I have a word to say to my good friends, the editors, and others who are moved to pity me. Some people are grieved because they imagine I am in the hands of unscrupulous persons who lead me astray and persuade me to espouse unpopular causes and make me the mouthpiece of their propaganda. Now, let it be understood once and for all that I do not want their pity; I would not change places with one of them. I know what I am talking about. My sources of information are as good and reliable as anybody else's. I have papers and magazines from England, France, Germany and Austria that I can read myself. Not all the editors I have met can do that. Quite a number of them have to take their French and German second hand. No, I will not disparage the editors. They are an overworked, misunderstood class. Let them remember, though, that if I cannot see the fire at the end of their cigarettes, neither can they thread a needle in the dark. All I ask, gentlemen, is a fair field and no favor. I have entered the fight against preparedness and against the economic system under which we live. It is to be a fight to the finish, and I ask no quarter.

The future of the world rests in the hands of America. The future of America rests on the backs of 80,000,000 working men and women and their children. We are facing a grave crisis in our national life. The few who profit from the labor of the masses want to organize the workers into an army which will protect the interests of the capitalists. You are urged to add to the heavy burdens you already bear the burden of a larger army and many additional warships. It is in your power to refuse to carry the artillery and the dreadnoughts and to shake off some of the burdens, too, such as limousines, steam yachts and country estates. You do not

need to make a great noise about it. With the silence and dignity of creators you can end wars and the system of selfishness and exploitation that causes wars. All you need to do to bring about this stupendous revolution is to straighten up and fold your arms.

We are not preparing to defend our country. Even if we were as helpless as Congressman Gardner says we are, we have no enemies foolhardy enough to attempt to invade the United States. The talk about attack from Germany and Japan is absurd. Germany has its hands full and will be busy with its own affairs for some generations after the European war is over.

With full control of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, the allies failed to land enough men to defeat the Turks at Gallipoli; and then they failed again to land an army at Salonica in time to check the Bulgarian invasion of Serbia. The conquest of America by water is a nightmare confined exclusively to ignorant persons and members of the Navy League.

Yet, everywhere, we hear fear advanced as argument for armament. It reminds me of a fable I read. A certain man found a horseshoe. His neighbor began to weep and wail because, as he justly pointed out, the man who found the horseshoe might someday find a horse. Having found the shoe, he might shoe him. The neighbor's child might some day go so near the horse's heels as to be kicked, and die. Undoubtedly the two families would quarrel and fight, and several valuable lives would be lost through the finding of the horseshoe. You know the last war we had we quite accidentally picked up some islands in the Pacific Ocean which may some day be the cause of a quarrel between ourselves and Japan.<sup>27</sup> I'd rather drop those islands right now and forget about them than go to war to keep them. Wouldn't you?

Congress is not preparing to defend the people of the United States. It is planning to protect the capital of American speculators and investors in Mexico, South America, China and the Philippine Islands. Incidentally this prepara-



tion will benefit the manufacturers of munitions and war machines.

Until recently there were uses in the United States for the money taken from the workers. But American labor is exploited almost to the limit now, and our national resources have all been appropriated. Still the profits keep piling up new capital. Our flourishing industry in implements of murder is filling the vaults of New York's banks with gold. And a dollar that is not being used to make a slave of some human being is not fulfilling its purpose in the capitalistic scheme. That dollar must be invested in South America, Mexico, China, or the Philippines.

It was no accident that the Navy League came into prominence at the same time that the National City Bank of New York established a branch in Buenos Aires. It is not a mere coincidence that six business associates of J. P. Morgan are officials of defense leagues. And chance did not dictate that Mayor Mitchel should appoint to his Committee of Safety a thousand men that represent a fifth of the wealth of the United States.<sup>28</sup> These men want their foreign investments protected.

Every modern war has had its root in exploitation. The Civil War was fought to decide whether the slaveholders of the South or the capitalists of the North should exploit the West. The Spanish-American War decided that the United States should exploit Cuba and the Philippines. The South African War decided that the British should exploit the diamond mines. The Russo-Japanese War decided that Japan should exploit Korea. The present war is to decide who shall exploit the Balkans, Turkey, Persia, Egypt, India, China, Africa. And we are whetting our sword to scare the victors into sharing the spoils with us. Now, the workers are not interested in the spoils; they will not get any of them anyway.

The preparedness propagandists have still another object, and a very important one. They want to give the people something to think about besides their own unhappy condition. They know the cost of living is high, wages are low, employment is uncertain and will be much more so when

the European call for munitions stops. No matter how hard and incessantly the people work, they often cannot afford the comforts of life; many cannot obtain the necessities.

Every few days we are given a new war scare to lend realism to their propaganda. They have had us on the verge of war over the *Lusitania*, the *Gulflight*, the *Ancona*, and now they want the workingmen to become excited over the sinking of the *Persia*.<sup>29</sup> The workingman has no interest in any of these ships. The Germans might sink every vessel on the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, and kill Americans with every one—the American workingman would still have no reason to go to war.

All the machinery of the system has been set in motion. Above the complaint and din of the protest from the workers is heard the voice of authority.

“Friends,” it says, “fellow workmen, patriots; your country is in danger! There are foes on all sides of us. There is nothing between us and our enemies except the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. Look at what has happened to Belgium. Consider the fate of Serbia. Will you murmur about low wages when your country, your very liberties, are in jeopardy? What are the miseries you endure compared to the humiliation of having a victorious German army sail up the East River? Quit your whining, get busy and prepare to defend your firesides and your flag. Get an army, get a navy; be ready to meet the invaders like the loyal-hearted freemen you are.”

Will the workers walk into this trap? Will they be fooled again? I am afraid so. The people have always been amenable to oratory of this sort. The workers know they have no enemies except their masters. They know that their citizenship papers are no warrant for the safety of themselves or their wives and children. They know that honest sweat, persistent toil and years of struggle bring them nothing worth holding on to, worth fighting for. Yet, deep down in their foolish hearts they believe they have a country. Oh blind vanity of slaves!

The clever ones, up in the high places know how childish

and silly the workers are. They know that if the government dresses them up in khaki and gives them a rifle and starts them off with a brass band and waving banners, they will go forth to fight valiantly for their own enemies. They are taught that brave men die for their country's honor. What a price to pay for an abstraction—the lives of millions of young men; other millions crippled and blinded for life; existence made hideous for still more millions of human beings; the achievement and inheritance of generations swept away in a moment—and nobody better off for all the misery! This terrible sacrifice would be comprehensible if the thing you die for and call country fed, clothed, housed and warmed you, educated and cherished your children. I think the workers are the most unselfish of the children of men; they toil and live and die for other people's country, other people's sentiments, other people's liberties and other people's happiness! The workers have no liberties of their own; they are not free when they are compelled to work twelve or ten or eight hours a day. They are not free when they are ill paid for their exhausting toil. They are not free when their children must labor in mines, mills and factories or starve, and when their women may be driven by poverty to lives of shame. They are not free when they are clubbed and imprisoned because they go on strike for a raise of wages and for the elemental justice that is their right as human beings.

We are not free unless the men who frame and execute the laws represent the interests of the lives of the people and no other interest. The ballot does not make a free man out of a wage slave. There has never existed a truly free and democratic nation in the world. From time immemorial men have followed with blind loyalty the strong men who had the power of money and of armies. Even while battlefields were piled high with their own dead they have tilled the lands of the rulers and have been robbed of the fruits of their labor. They have built palaces and pyramids, temples and cathedrals that held no real shrine of liberty.

As civilization has grown more complex the workers have become more and more enslaved, until today they are little

more than parts of the machines they operate. Daily they face the dangers of railroad, bridge, skyscraper, freight train, stokehold, stockyard, lumber raft and mine. Panting and straining at the docks, on the railroads and underground and on the seas, they move the traffic and pass from land to land the precious commodities that make it possible for us to live. And what is their reward? A scanty wage, often poverty, rents, taxes, tributes and war indemnities.

The kind of preparedness the workers want is reorganization and reconstruction of their whole life, such as has never been attempted by statesmen or governments. The Germans found out years ago that they could not raise good soldiers in the slums so they abolished the slums. They saw to it that all the people had at least a few of the essentials of civilization—decent lodging, clean streets, wholesome if scanty food, proper medical care and proper safeguards for the workers in their occupations. That is only a small part of what should be done, but what wonders that one step toward the right sort of preparedness has wrought for Germany! For eighteen months it has kept itself free from invasion while carrying on an extended war of conquest, and its armies are still pressing on with unabated vigor. It is your business to force these reforms on the Administration. Let there be no more talk about what a government can or cannot do. All these things have been done by all the belligerent nations in the hurly-burly of war. Every fundamental industry has been managed better by the governments than by private corporations.

It is your duty to insist upon still more radical measures. It is your business to see that no child is employed in an industrial establishment or mine or store, and that no worker is needlessly exposed to accident or disease. It is your business to make them give you clean cities, free from smoke, dirt and congestion. It is your business to make them pay you a living wage. It is your business to see that this kind of preparedness is carried into every department of the nation, until every one has a chance to be well born, well nourished, rightly educated, intelligent and serviceable to the country at all times.

Strike against all ordinances and laws and institutions that

continue the slaughter of peace and the butcheries of war. Strike against war, for without you no battles can be fought. Strike against manufacturing shrapnel and gas bombs and all other tools of murder. Strike against preparedness that means death and misery to millions of human beings. Be not dumb, obedient slaves in an army of destruction. Be heroes in an army of construction.

—NEW YORK *Call*, JANUARY 6, 1916



## Why I Became an IWW

*An Interview, written by Barbara Bindley*

I asked that Miss Keller relate the steps by which she turned into the uncompromising radical who now faces the world as Helen Keller, not the sweet sentimentalist of woman's magazine days.

"I was religious to start with," she began in enthusiastic acquiescence to my request. "I had thought blindness a misfortune."

"Then I was appointed on a commission to investigate the conditions among the blind. For the first time I, who had thought blindness a misfortune beyond human control, found that too much of it was traceable to wrong industrial conditions, often caused by the selfishness and greed of employers. And the social evil contributed its share. I found that poverty drove women to the life of shame that ended in blindness.

"Then I read H. G. Wells' *Old Worlds for New*, summaries of Karl Marx's philosophy and his manifestoes. It seemed as if I had been asleep and waked to a new world—a world so different from the beautiful world I had lived in.

"For a time I was depressed"—her voice saddened in reminiscence—"but little by little my confidence came back and I realized that the wonder is not that conditions are so bad, but that humanity has advanced so far in spite of them. And now I am in the fight to change things. I may be a dreamer, but dreamers are necessary to make facts!" Her voice almost shrilled in its triumph, and her hand found and clutched my knee in vibrant emphasis.

"And you feel happier than in the beautiful make-believe world you had dreamed?" I questioned.

"Yes," she answered with firm finality in the voice which stumbles a little. "Reality even when it is sad is better than illusions." (This from a woman [for] whom it would seem all earthly things are but that.) "Illusions are at the mercy of

any winds that blow. Real happiness must come from within, from a fixed purpose and faith in one's fellow men—and of that I have more than I ever had.”

“And all this had to come after you left college? Did you get none of this knowledge of life at college?”

“No!”—an emphatic, triumphant, almost terrifying denial—“college isn't the place to go for any ideas.

“I thought I was going to college to be educated,” she resumed as she composed herself, and laughing more lightly, “I am an example of the education dealt out to present generations. It's a deadlock. Schools seem to love the dead past and live in it.”

“But you know, don't you,” I pleaded through Mrs. Macy and for her, “that the intentions of your teachers were of the best.”

“But they amounted to nothing,” she countered. “They did not teach me about things as they are today, or about the vital problems of the people. They taught me Greek drama and Roman history, the celebrated achievements of war rather than those of the heroes of peace. For instance, there were a dozen chapters on war where there were a few paragraphs about the inventors, and it is this overemphasis of the cruelties of life that breeds the wrong ideal. Education taught me that it was a finer thing to be a Napoleon than to create a new potato.

“It is my nature to fight as soon as I see wrongs to be made right. So after I read Wells and Marx and learned what I did, I joined a Socialist branch. I made up my mind to do something. And the best thing seemed to join a fighting party and help their propaganda. That was four years ago. I have been an industrialist since.”

“An industrialist?” I asked, surprised out of composure. “You don't mean an IWW—a syndicalist?”

“I became an IWW because I found out that the Socialist party was too slow. It is sinking in the political bog. It is almost, if not quite, impossible for the party to keep its revolutionary character so long as it occupies a place under the government and seeks office under it. The government

does not stand for interests the Socialist party is supposed to represent."

Socialism, however, is a step in the right direction, she conceded to her dissenting hearers.

"The true task is to unite and organize all workers on an economic basis, and it is the workers themselves who must secure freedom for themselves, who must grow strong." Miss Keller continued. "Nothing can be gained by political action. That is why I became an IWW."

"What particular incident led you to become an IWW" I interrupted.

"The Lawrence strike.<sup>30</sup> Why? Because I discovered that the true idea of the IWW is not only to better conditions, to get them for all people, but to get them at once."

"What are you committed to—education or revolution?"

"Revolution." She answered decisively. "We can't have education without revolution. We have tried peace education for 1,900 years and it has failed. Let us try revolution and see what it will do now."

"I am not for peace at all hazards. I regret this war, but I have never regretted the blood of the thousands spilled during the French Revolution. And the workers are learning how to stand alone. They are learning a lesson they will apply to their own good out in the trenches. Generals testify to the splendid initiative the workers in the trenches take. If they can do that for their masters you can be sure they will do that for themselves when they have taken matters into their own hands."

"And don't forget workers are getting their discipline in the trenches," Miss Keller continued. "They are acquiring the will to combat."

"My cause will emerge from the trenches stronger than it ever was. Under the obvious battle waging there, there is an invisible battle for the freedom of man."

Again the advisability of printing all this here set forth. And this finally from the patience-exhausted, gentle little woman:

"I don't give a damn about semi-radicals!"

Gradually, through the talk, Helen Keller's whole being had taken on a glow, and it was in keeping with the exalted look on her face and the glory in her sightless blue eyes that she told me:

"I feel like Joan of Arc at times. My whole becomes uplifted. I, too, hear the voices that say 'Come,' and I will follow, no matter what the cost, no matter what the trials I am placed under. Jail, poverty, calumny—they matter not. Truly He has said, 'Woe unto you that permits the least of mine to suffer.'"

—NEW YORK *Tribune*, JANUARY 16, 1916<sup>31</sup>

## To the New York Call

No matter how much it costs us to do it, we must keep the *Call* kicking. The only way we can smash the system is by telling the truth about it, telling the truth in print. We need a Socialist daily newspaper in every city in the country, and a Socialist press association with live reports on the spot to give us the facts about every battle of the class struggle. The *Call* is an advance herald of the army of truth—and we cannot afford to have it worrying about bread and butter.

I am sending a check for \$50 worth of bonds<sup>32</sup>—just now it is all I can spare—and I hope the whole stock-bond, rent-interest-and-profit system is out of business before they fall due. Yours for a bigger *Call*,

—NEW YORK *Call*, SEPTEMBER 7, 1916



## The New Woman's Party

For the first time in the history of America women have become a great factor in the selection of a Presidential candidate and the creation of a party's platform. They are seen everywhere in Chicago in these convention discussions, where a very few years ago their appearance would have caused untold comment. And their influence is affecting every "deal" that the politicians are making. Greatest of all they have just formed a "woman's party,"<sup>33</sup> the birth of which I saw as it started winging its way down the ages.

*What does all this mean?*

*What message does this hold for the women of America—of the world?* The Woman's Party means more than votes for women. It is the symbol of our solidarity. It stands for the best national efforts of American women. It embodies the aspirations of millions of intelligent women—women who think and have enlightened opinions. It focuses our struggle for independence.

The Woman's Party stands for Woman First. It means an individual allegiance to our ideal—the ideal of sex equality and responsibility.

It means more and more united, effective co-operation.

Women have discovered that they cannot rely on man's chivalry to give them justice—just as men before them found out that we cannot be saved by other people—we must save ourselves.

Man has fought hard for the extension of his franchise; it has sometimes caused bloodshed. Today women are met with the same arguments that were used against the political emancipation of men. It was argued by the masters that the propertyless mob was not competent to vote; that they did not want the vote; that only a few noisy demagogues were stirring the people and filling their heads with foolishness. The idea that they were capable of taking intelligent interest in political questions was ridiculed.

But no ridicule, no argument, no force could daunt those who fought for manhood suffrage.

*The justice of our cause is as obvious, as compelling, as theirs. Our need to take part in controlling the affairs of the world is imperative. The love of power is strong in the human breast, and men, having once secured their suffrage, will keep it for themselves until we force them to extend it to women.*

*The time is ripe for us; there are now four million women voters in the United States. The party that turns them down is dead politically. Of course, our victory is not won; we shall have to work long and endure much before our dreams are realized. But the new Woman's party will give the two old parties a jolt at the Presidential election that will set them thinking and acting.*

*At every stage of history there comes a moment when decisive action brings all the struggles of the past into realization. This is one of those moments in the nation's life and in the life of women.*

—NEW YORK *Call*, JUNE 9, 1916

## To Morris Hillquit<sup>34</sup>

I have refrained from writing, or giving utterance to the fierce protest in my heart against the war madness that is sweeping away the reason and common sense of our people, because I believed that President Wilson would defend our liberties and stay with his strong hand the forces that are invading them. I have waited and waited for some word from the White House. I have prayed and hoped against hope that today, tomorrow or next day the newspapers would contain a rebuke that would bring the nation back to sanity and tolerance. I have read and read President Wilson's own lofty utterance about freedom, justice and the rights of the people against the rights of governments. I thought he must realize that the Trading With the Enemy Act<sup>35</sup> does not differ essentially from the drastic measure which the Federalists of 1798 rushed through Congress.<sup>36</sup> In the quiet of his study he wrote that the Sedition Act cut perilously near the root of freedom of speech and of the press. He saw clearly that there was no telling where such power would stop. Who can tell where the power given by the Trading With the Enemy Act will stop—an act that makes the Postmaster General absolute dictator over the press, an act that renders it impossible for any publication criticizing any measure of the government to circulate through the mails, be sent by express or freight, or sold . . .

Now you know, and the voters of New York know, when they are in their right minds, that it is neither treasonable nor seditious to criticize any statute or law. Nor is it treasonable to agitate for the repeal of any act. We are within our constitutional rights as citizens to agitate for the abolition of conscription. Why should we give up the best things we have, freedom of speech, of the press and of assemblage and establish Kaiserism in this country while we send our armies to destroy it in Europe? I am not discussing the war, its causes, its origin, its righteousness or unrighteousness, or whether the Christian spirit is eternally opposed to it or not.

I am not opposed to war for sentimental reasons. The

blood of fighting ancestors flows in my veins. I would gladly see our young men go forth to battle if I thought it was a battle for true freedom. I would gladly participate in a war that would really make the world safe for democracy. By making the world safe for democracy I do not mean simply to put down autocracy in Germany. . . .

I do not know if your election would bring about a speedy peace. But I do know that it would encourage us to look forward to a people's peace—a peace without victory, a peace without conquests or indemnities. I would that a large vote cast for you would be a strong protest against the Prussian militarism that is taking possession of our government. It would be an unequivocal denial that New York City stands for the kind of democracy that prevails here just now, a democracy where freedom of assemblage is denied the people, a democracy where armed officials behave like thugs, forcibly dispersing meetings, burning literature and clubbing the people; a democracy where workingmen are arrested and imprisoned for exercising their right to strike, a democracy where the miners of Bisbee were torn from their homes, huddled in freight cars like cattle, flung upon a desert without food or water and left to die;<sup>37</sup> a democracy where Negroes may be massacred and their property burned, as was done in East St. Louis;<sup>38</sup> a democracy where lynching and child labor are tolerated, a democracy where a minister who follows the feet of the Messenger of Peace beautiful upon the earth was flogged almost to death, and the only comment of the press upon this outrage was a series of facetious remarks, and a half-concealed approval of the "hot-headed Kentuckians whose earnestness and patriotism carried them a little too far."

If I had the right to vote, I would vote for you, Mr. Hillquit, because a vote for you would be a blow at the militarism that is one of the chief bulwarks of capitalism, and the day that militarism is undermined, capitalism will fall.

—NEW YORK *Call*, NOVEMBER 5, 1917

## What is the IWW?

*Speech at the New York City Civic Club, January 1918*

I am going to talk about the Industrial Workers of the World because they are so much in the public eye just now. They are probably the most hated and most loved organization in existence. Certainly they are the least understood and the most persistently misrepresented.

The Industrial Workers of the World is a labor union based on the class struggle. It admits only wage-earners, and acts on the principle of industrial unionism. Its battleground is the field of industry. The visible expression of the battle is the strike, the lock-out, the clash between employer and employed. It is a movement of revolt against the ignorance, the poverty, the cruelty that too many of us accept in blind content.

It was founded in 1905 by men of bitter experience in the labor struggle,<sup>39</sup> and in 1909 it began to attract nation-wide attention. The McKees Rocks strike first brought it to notice. The textile strike of Lawrence, Massachusetts, the silk workers' strike of Paterson, New Jersey, and the miners' strike of Calumet, Michigan, made it notorious.<sup>40</sup> Since 1909 it has been a militant force in America that employers have had to reckon with.

It differs from the trade unions in that it emphasizes the idea of one big union of all industries in the economic field. It points out that the trade unions as presently organized are an obstacle to unity among the masses, and that this lack of solidarity plays into the hands of their economic masters.

The IWW's affirm as a fundamental principle that the creators of wealth are entitled to all they create. Thus they find themselves pitted against the whole profit-making system. They declare that there can be no compromise so long as the majority of the working class lives in want while the master class lives in luxury. They insist that there can be no peace until the workers organize as a class, take possession of the



resources of the earth and the machinery of production and distribution and abolish the wage system. In other words, the workers in their collectivity must own and operate all the essential industrial institutions and secure to each laborer the full value of his product.

It is for these principles, this declaration of class solidarity, that the IWWs are being persecuted, beaten, imprisoned, murdered.<sup>41</sup> If the capitalist class had the sense it is reputed to have, it would know that violence is the worst weapon that can be used against men who have nothing to lose and the world to gain.

Let me tell you something about the IWWs as I see them. They are the unskilled, the ill-paid, the unnaturalized, the submerged part of the working class. They are mostly composed of textile mill workers, lumber men, harvesters, miners, transport workers. We are told that they are "foreigners," "the scum of the earth," "dangerous."

Many of them are foreigners simply because the greater part of the unskilled labor in this country is foreign. "Scum of the earth?" Perhaps. I know they have never had a fair chance. They have been starved in body and mind, denied, exploited, driven like slaves from job to job. "Dangerous?" Maybe. They have endured countless wrongs and injuries until they are driven to rebellion. They know that the laws are for the strong, that they protect the class that owns everything. They know that in a contest with the workers, employers do not respect the laws, but quite shamelessly break them.

Witness the lynching of Frank Little in Butte;<sup>42</sup> the flogging of 17 men in Tulsa;<sup>43</sup> the forcible deportation of 1200 miners from Bisbee; the burning to death of women and little children in the tents of Ludlow, Colorado, and the massacre of workers in Trinidad.<sup>44</sup> So the IWWs respect the law only as a soldier respects an enemy! Can you find it in your hearts to blame them? I love them for their needs, their miseries, their endurance and their daring spirit. It is because of this spirit that the master class fears and hates them. It is because

of this spirit that the poor and oppressed love them with a great love.

The oft-repeated charge that the Industrial Workers of the World is organized to hinder industry is false.<sup>45</sup> It is organized in order to keep industries going. By organizing industrially they are forming the structure of the new society in the shell of the old.

Industry rests on the iron law of economic determination. All history reveals that economic interests are the strongest ties that bind men together. That is not because men's hearts are evil and selfish. It is only a result of the inexorable law of life. The desire to live is the basic principle that compels men and women to seek a more suitable environment, so that they may live better and more happily.

Now, don't you see, it is impossible to maintain an economic order that keeps wages practically at a standstill, while the cost of living mounts higher and even higher? Remember, the day will come when the tremendous activities of the war will subside. Capitalism will inevitably find itself face to face with a starving multitude of unemployed workers demanding food or destruction of the social order that has starved them and robbed them of their jobs.

In such a crisis the capitalist class cannot save itself or its institutions. Its police and armies will be powerless to put down the last revolt. For man at last will take his own, not considering the cost. When that day dawns, if the workers are not thoroughly organized, they may easily become a blind force of destruction, unable to check their own momentum, their cry for justice drowned in a howl of rage. Whatever is good and beneficent in our civilization can be saved only by the workers. And the Industrial Workers of the World is formed with the object of carrying on the business of the world when capitalism is overthrown. Whether the IWW increases in power or is crushed out of existence, the spirit that animates it is the spirit that must animate the labor movement if it is to have a revolutionary function.

## In Behalf of the IWW

Down through the long weary years the will of the ruling class has been to suppress either the man or his message when they antagonized its interests. From the execution of the propagandist and the burning of books, down through the various degrees of censorship and expurgation to the highly civilized legal indictment and winking at mob crime by constituted authorities, the cry has ever been "crucify him!" The ideas and activities of minorities are misunderstood and misrepresented. It is easier to condemn than to investigate. It takes courage to steer one's course through a storm of abuse and ignominy. But I believe that discussion of even the most bitterly controverted matters is demanded by our love of justice, by our sense of fairness and an honest desire to understand the problems that are rending society. Let us review the facts relating to the situation of the IWWs since the United States entered the war with the declared purpose to conserve the liberties of the free peoples of the world.

During the last few months, in Washington State, at Pasco and throughout the Yakima Valley, many IWW members have been arrested without warrants, thrown into "bullpens" without access to attorney, denied bail and trial by jury, and some of them shot. Did any of the leading newspapers denounce these acts as unlawful, cruel, undemocratic? No. On the contrary, most of them indirectly praised the perpetrators of these crimes for their patriotic service!

On August 1, 1917, in Butte, Montana, a cripple, Frank Little, a member of the executive board of the IWW was forced out of bed at three o'clock in the morning by masked citizens, dragged behind an automobile and hanged on a railroad trestle. Were the offenders punished? No. A high government official has publicly condoned this murder, thereby upholding lynch law and mob rule.

On the 12th of last July twelve hundred miners were deported from Bisbee, Arizona, without legal process. Among

them were many who were not IWWs or even in sympathy with them. They were all packed into freight cars like cattle and flung upon the desert of New Mexico, where they would have died of thirst and hunger if an outraged society had not protested. President Wilson telegraphed the Governor of Arizona that it was a bad thing to do, and a commission was sent to investigate. But nothing has been done. No measures have been taken to return the miners to their homes and families.

Last September 5, an army of officials raided every hall and office of the IWW from Maine to California. They rounded up 166 IWW officers, members and sympathizers, and now they are in jail in Chicago, awaiting trial on the general charge of conspiracy.<sup>46</sup>

In a short time these men will be tried in a Chicago court. The newspapers will be full of stupid, if not malicious comments on their trial. Let us keep an open mind. Let us try to preserve the integrity of our judgment against the misrepresentation, ignorance and cowardice of the day. Let us refuse to yield to conventional lies and censure. Let us keep our hearts tender towards those who are struggling mightily against the greatest evils of the age. Who is truly indicted, they or the social system that has produced them? A society that permits the conditions out of which the IWWs have sprung, stands self-condemned.

The IWW is pitted against the whole profit-making system. It insists that there can be no compromise so long as the majority of the working class lives in want, while the master class lives in luxury. According to its statement, "there can be no peace until the workers organize as a class, take possession of the resources of the earth and the machinery of production and distribution, and abolish the wage-system." In other words, the workers in their collectivity must own and operate all the essential industrial institutions and secure to each laborer the full value of his produce. I think it is for this declaration of democratic purpose, and not for any wish to betray their country, that the IWW members are being persecuted, beaten, imprisoned and murdered.

Surely the demands of the IWW are just. It is right that the creators of wealth should own what they create. When shall we learn that we are related one to the other, that we are members of one body, that injury to one is injury to all? Until the spirit of love for our fellow-workers, regardless of race, color, creed or sex, shall fill the the world, until the great mass of the people shall be filled with a sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice cannot be attained, and there can never be lasting peace upon earth.

I know those men are hungry for more life, more opportunity. They are tired of the hollow mockery of mere existence in a world of plenty. I am glad of every effort that the workingmen make to organize. I realize that all things will never be better until they are organized, until they stand all together like one man. That is my hope of world democracy. Despite their errors, their blunders and the ignominy heaped upon them, I sympathize with the IWWs. Their cause is my cause. While they are threatened and imprisoned, I am manacled. If they are denied a living wage, I too am defrauded. While they are industrial slaves, I cannot be free. My hunger is not satisfied while they are unfed. I cannot enjoy the good things of life that come to me while they are hindered and neglected.

The mighty mass movement of which they are a part is discernible all over the world. Under the fire of the great guns, the workers of all lands, becoming conscious of their class, are preparing to take possession of their own.

That long struggle in which they have successively won freedom of body from slavery and serfdom, freedom of mind from ecclesiastical despotism, and more recently a voice in government, has arrived at a new stage. The workers are still far from being in possession of themselves or their labor. They do not own and control the tools and materials which they must use in order to live, nor do they receive anything like the full value of what they produce. Workingmen everywhere are becoming aware that they are being exploited for the benefit of others, and that they cannot be truly free unless they own themselves and their labor. The achievement of



such economic freedom stands in prospect—and at no distant date—as the revolutionary climax of the age.

—*The Liberator*, MARCH 1918; REPRINTED IN *Labor Scrap Book: Out of the Shell Hole of War*, PP. 38-42, CHARLES H. KERR AND CO. CHICAGO, N.D.

## To Eugene V. Debs

Of course, the Supreme Court has sustained the decision of the lower court in your case.<sup>47</sup> To my mind, the decision has added another laurel to your wreath of victories. Once more you are going to prison for upholding the liberties of the people.

I write because my heart cries out, and will not be still. I write because I want you to know that I should be proud if the Supreme Court convicted me of abhorring war, and doing all in my power to oppose it. When I think of the millions who have suffered in all the wicked wars of the past, I am shaken with the anguish of a great impatience. I want to fling myself against all brute powers that destroy life and break the spirit of man.

In the persecution of our comrades there is one satisfaction. Every trial of men like you, every sentence against them, tears away the veil that hides the face of the enemy. The discussion and agitation that follows the trials define more sharply the positions that must be taken before all men can live together in peace, happiness and security.

We were driven into the war for liberty, democracy and humanity. Behold what is happening all over the world today! Oh, where is the swift vengeance of Jehovah, that it does not fall upon the hosts of those who are marshalling machine guns against hunger-stricken people? It is the complacency of madness to call such acts "preserving law and order." Law and order! What oceans of blood and tears are shed in their name! I have come to loathe traditions and institutions that take away the rights of the poor and protect the wicked against judgment.

The wise fools who sit in the high places of justice fail to see that, in revolutionary times like the present, vital issues are settled, not by statutes, decrees and authorities, but in spite of them. Like the Girondins in France, they imagine that force can check the onrush of revolution. Thus they

sow the wind, and unto them shall be the harvest of the whirlwind.

You dear comrade! I have long loved you because you are an apostle of brotherhood and freedom. For years I have thought of you as a dauntless explorer going towards the dawn and, like a humble adventurer, I have followed in the trail of your footsteps. From time to time the greetings that have come back to me from you have made me very happy, and now I reach out my hand and clasp yours through prison bars.

With heartfelt greetings, and with a firm faith that the cause for which you are now martyred shall be all the stronger because of your sacrifice and devotion, I am,

Yours for the revolution—may it come swiftly, like a shaft sundering the dark!

—NEW YORK *Call*, APRIL 24, 1919; *Appeal to Reason*, MAY 17, 1919

## End the Blockade of Soviet Russia!

I am glad to join the People's Freedom Union and other friends of liberty in condemnation of the blockade of Russia by Japan, Great Britain, France and the United States of America.<sup>48</sup> This outrage upon a people who are trying to work out their form of government, their ideas of life, upon their own territory, is one of the blackest crimes in history. The allied and associated governments which are guilty of this infamy violate every principle of civilization, every rule of common honesty.

For our governments are not honest. They do not openly declare war against Russia and proclaim the reasons. They are fighting the Russian people half-secretly and in the dark with the lie of democracy on their lips and the indirect weapon of the blockade in their hands.

We cannot remain silent while the government for which we are partly responsible assists in starving women, children and old people because, forsooth, our political rulers and perhaps a majority of the American public do not approve the ideas which underlie Russia's experiment in a new type of society. No thinking American can be silent, can fail to be on one side or the other. There can be no middle ground. Those who are not for fair play to Russia, for the removal of all alien soldiers from Russian soil,<sup>49</sup> for the lifting of the blockade, are Russia's enemies. And Russia's enemies are the friends and upholders of Czarism, of oppression, of exploitation, of the plunder of one people by another. Silence in this case is not neutrality in a mere problem of politics and trade. Every word of sympathy for the men, women and children of Russia, whom the allied governments are trying to starve into submission to the interests behind those governments, is a word on the side of humanity and progress.

What quarrel have our people with the Russian people? We may disagree with their ideals and we have a right to disagree. If their ideals are not ours, we need have no fear

of them, for they cannot supplant our own ideals, whatever our own may be.

Has the truth been told about Russia? The whole truth cannot be known because it is too vast and complicated and involves rapidly developing events. But have not our people been deliberately supplied with falsifications appealing to their fears and their prejudices to make them hostile to Russia and its present government?

Hold any opinion you may happen to hold about Russia and its government. It is wrong to attack Russia without an open declaration of war and an avowal of the true causes. That is simply honest politics in accordance with the Constitution of the United States.

Above the Constitution and the laws of politicians are the laws of humanity, justice and right, embodied in the Declaration of Independence and so often eloquently invoked by President Wilson when he was urging us into a war against Germany with Russia as one of our Allies. And now Germany is being urged to join our Allies and associates in a war against Russia. Can all this shifting of alliances, this change of partners in a few months any longer deceive us? We fought and helped win a war to make the world safe for democracy, for ideals. That war is finished and our ideals are, of course, established. What ideal is served by this war, this actual war against Russia, denied by the State Department and carried on by the War Department? And of the generous vocabulary of liberty and justice and humanity which has been strained and worn during the past few years, what is left to apply to this war to make it seem right to the heart and conscience of Americans?

It is not enough to express our feelings about the treatment which our government is according Russia. It is not enough to defend one part of democracy. All democracy must stand together. All humanity must be humanitarian or all will perish. We cannot divorce an unrighteous intervention in Russia, nor the attack of France and Rumania on Hungary, from the theft of Shantung. For they are only specific evils in a world-wide evil, and we must cure them to maintain



ourselves and all mankind in health and happiness. We must oppose hypocrisy, greed, murder, wherever we find them in order to save ourselves and the rest of humanity. If the President and his administration will not apply to Russia and to every other country, including the United States of America, the principles which he has expressed over and over again, we must bring pressure to bear upon our government. We must appeal to the citizens of America to regard with suspicion the news from and about Russia which is printed for them every day, and to demand the enforcement of the President's own proposition that every nation has a right to govern itself, to self-determination.

—NEW YORK *Call*, NOVEMBER 10, 1919

## To President Woodrow Wilson: The Blockade of Russia

The American Women's Emergency Committee, organized more than a year ago to promote the lifting of the blockade on Russia so that the suffering and starvation of innocent men and children might be ended,<sup>50</sup> again sends to you its vigorous protest against the continuation of a policy that makes the return of Russia to normal conditions impossible. More especially we protest against the recent action of your administration in ordering the deportation of the only representative of the Russian Soviet government with whom the United States government can begin negotiations that will bring about peace for Russia and the rest of Europe.<sup>51</sup> As American women we feel that this arbitrary act is taken without consideration of the American spirit that still lives—the spirit that guaranteed the right of self-determination to all peoples and that has lent relief to the suffering of all countries in the past.

We would remind you that in 1781, when Francis Dana was sent to Russia as the representative of our own young republic, he was received by Czarist Russia.<sup>52</sup> Is this country to be less tolerant more than 200 years later?

We await some further consideration and action from your administration on this recent decision, which can only be resented by every American, and again beg to ask you what your administration will do to end this unjust war against a people with whom the United States government has never been at war.

(with HARRIET STANTON BLATCH)

—NEW YORK *Call*, DECEMBER 21, 1920

## A Plea for Recognition of Soviet Russia

*Statement at a Hearing on Russian Free Trade before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee*<sup>53</sup>

I am amazed that any thinking, liberty-loving man or woman should remain silent in the face of such an inhuman policy toward a starving and bleeding people. I hope, I trust, I pray that my country will not remain silent.

America was the friend of Russia during the long years in which the Russian people were denied opportunity for political expression. I do not believe that impulse of sympathy has died in American hearts. We still wish to be friends and brethren to the people of Russia. If we had a more enlightened press in this country—a press breathing the spirit of the founders of this nation, the spirit of 1776, there would be no blockade of Russia. There would be no doubt of America's purpose to help the forces of progress to prevail there. Our attitude would be one of encouragement and not of hostility to the daring experiment which is being tried out in Russia. American history and traditions would tend to deepen our interest in an experiment to abolish autocrats and privilege, to prove whether the workers can rule themselves, and maintain their position against internal dissensions and external aggressions.

The principle of the right of every nation to choose its own form of government is the very breath of democracy. In obedience to this principle America severed its relations with England and declared its political independence. Every American should feel a partnership in the struggle for human freedom that Russia is going through with such fortitude and sacrifice. If we could see the facts without the misrepresentation with which the newspapers obstruct them, we should be the champions of Russia, her steadfast friends in her hour of need.

But championship and cooperation have been checked and made difficult by sinister and corrupt intrigue and falsehood. These are the true facts:

Russia had no quarrel with anyone outside her own borders. She sought no nation's territory. She coveted no neighbor's goods. And yet all the strong nations have struck out at her with hatred in their hearts. Her stern, noble resolve to build a real democracy upon the ruins of the old autocracy of Russia was her only crime, and for that she has been maligned as if her people were the vilest on earth. Her territory has been invaded by marauders. Her women and children have been starved and murdered. She has been harassed and persecuted. She has been denied medicine and industrial machinery. And America has stood by silently while these atrocities were being perpetrated. But the most insidious propaganda cannot blind the conscience of humanity forever. I have a confident hope that our policy of hostile obstruction will not long continue. Surely this country will not much longer stand silent and see crimes committed in its name that should never have been tolerated by any nation which claimed to be civilized.

Let us individually and collectively express our condemnation of the cumulative wrongs done to the Russian people. What we have to do is not merely to protest against the starvation blockade but also to assert a right—the right which is ours by the sacrifices this nation made upon the battlefields of Europe—the right of peoples to peace and security. We gave our treasures and the lives of our young men in vain if we fail now in this supreme moment, if we tolerate the further hindrance and betrayal of Russia. We unseated the Kaiser, but the imperialistic spirit of conquest and greed is still in the saddle everywhere in Europe. We have a right to demand the Entente guarantee Russia's freedom to develop and govern itself in the manner that shall seem good to the Russian people, without interference from any foreign power. We owe it to our children, to our country, to the generations which will come after us, that we shall not silently countenance open, flagrant, contemptuous violation of the rights for which we entered the world war. The Russian question is the acid test of our national integrity. It is also an opportunity for us to promote world peace and unity. Here is a fair

cause, a just cause, a cause of reconstruction. Statesmen and premiers never labored for higher ends.

It should be remembered also that the recognition of Russia is perhaps of greater importance to America than to Russia itself. To be on the side of friendly relations with Russia is to march with the events and laws of world development. Cooperation with Russia will be the triumph of brains and spirit over stupidity and passion, and in this triumph all reasonable beings have a vital interest.

The thought that we, the members of the American Women's Emergency Committee, who will appear before the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate, are a part of the great, justice-loving American people, should give us courage and steadfastness. When we protest with the power of a hundred million Americans, who shall resist the push and sweep and might of that flood of public opinion? Together, we can speak so clear and so high and so insistent that the world must hear us. And hearing us, all right-minded, compassionate men and women will join us, and once more, with God's help, America will take up the championship of the disinherited and oppressed. We have had dreams of a world better, freer, happier, nobler because America was a democracy. Let us go to work in earnest with our hands, our voices, our lives to make that better world a reality.

—NEW YORK *Call*, FEBRUARY 27, 1921



## Onward, Comrades!

*An Address at the Rand School New Year's Eve Ball,<sup>54</sup>  
December 31, 1920*

The hour has struck for the Grand March! Onward, comrades, all together! Fall in line! Start the New Year with a cheer! Let us join the world's procession marching toward a glad tomorrow. Strong of hope and brave in heart the West shall meet the East! March with us, brothers every one! March with us to all things new! Climb with us the hills of God to a wider, holier life. Onward, comrades, all together, onward to meet the dawn!

Leave behind you doubts and fears! What need have we for "ifs" and "buts?" Away with parties, schools and leagues! Get together, keep in step, shoulder to shoulder, hearts throbbing as one! Face the future, outdaring all you have dared! March on, O comrades, strong and free, out of darkness, out of silence, out of hate and custom's deadening sway! Onward, comrades, all together, onward to the wind-blown dawn!

With us shall go the new day, shining behind the dark. With us shall go power, knowledge, justice, truth. The time is full! A new world awaits us. Its fruits, its joys, its opportunities are ours for the taking! Fear not the hardships of the road—the storm, the parching heat or winter's cold, hunger or thirst or ambushed foe! There are bright lights ahead of us, leave the shadows behind! In the East a new star is risen! With pain and anguish the old order has given birth to the new, and behold in the East a man-child is born! Onward, comrades, all together! Onward to the campfires of Russia! Onward to the coming dawn!

Through the night of our despair rings the keen call of the new day. All the powers of darkness could not still the shout of joy in faraway Moscow! Meteor-like through the heavens flashed the golden words of light, "Soviet Republic of Russia." Words sun-like piercing the dark, joyous radiant love-words banishing hate, bidding the teeming world of

men to wake and live! Onward, comrades, all together, onward to the bright, redeeming dawn!

With peace and brotherhood make sweet the bitter way of men! Today and all the days to come, repeat the words of Him who said, "Thou shalt not kill." Send on psalming winds the angel chorus, "Peace on earth, good-will to men." Onward march, and keep on marching until His will on earth is done! Onward, comrades, all together, onward to the life-giving fountain of dawn!

All along the road beside us throng the peoples sad and broken, weeping women, children hungry, homeless like little birds cast out of their nest. Onward march, comrades, strong to lift and save! Our brothers watch us from barred windows! With their hearts aflame, untamed, glorying in martyrdom they hail us passing quickly, "Halt not, O comrades, yonder glimmers the star of our hope, the red-centered dawn in the East! Halt not, lest you perish ere you reach the land of promise." Onward, comrades, all together, onward to the sun-red dawn!

We march through trackless wilds of hate and death, across earth's battlefields. O comrades, pause one panting moment and shed a tear for the youth of the world, killed in its strength and beauty—our brothers, our comrades tenderly loved, the valiant young men of all lands eagerly seeking life's great enterprises, love, adventure and the fair country of bright dreams. Under our feet they lie, mingling their clean young flesh with the soil, the rain and the heat! Over our murdered dead we march to the new day. Onward, comrades, all together, onward to the spirit's unquenchable dawn!

—NEW YORK *Call*, JANUARY 30, 1921

## Help Soviet Russia

I love Russia and all who stand loyally by her in her mighty wrestlings with the giant powers of ignorance and imperialist greed. When I first heard of the glorious words, "Soviet Republic of Russia," it was as if a new light shone through my darkness. I felt that the sun of a better day had risen upon the world. Those glowing, hope-inspiring words, "Soviet Republic of Russia," meant that at last the principles of truth, justice and brotherhood had gained a foothold upon earth, and this thought has run like a shining furrow through the dark years that have intervened. We have witnessed Russia's superhuman struggle in a world blinded by avarice and calumny. But despite intrigues and blockades and the wicked misinterpretations of a stupid, dishonest press, she stands today firmly entrenched in her just cause, while the old social order is collapsing at her feet.

Oh, why cannot the workers see that the cause of Russia is their cause? Her struggle for economic freedom is their struggle, her perishing children are their children, and her dreams, her aspirations, her martyrdom and victories are an internal part of the workers' campaign for a better, saner world. Why can they not understand that their own best instincts are in revolt against a social order which enthralles masses of men and leads inevitably to poverty, suffering and war? How spiritually blind are men, that they fail to see that we are all bound together! We rise or fall together, we are dwarfed or godlike, free or chained together.

If the workers would only use their minds a little, instead of letting others do their thinking for them, they would see quickly through the flimsy arguments of the newspapers they read. They are told that the famine in Russia is caused by "Marxian socialism," and that four years of Bolshevism have brought Russia to the doors of the world begging for bread. If that is true, what has caused the famine in China? What is the cause of undernourishment in some of our southern

states? And what is the cause of unemployment throughout this great, rich land? Begging for bread is not uncommon within the capitalistic nations, and these days we hear a great deal of soup kitchens and the bread line.<sup>55</sup> These phenomena occur even in times which the newspapers are accustomed to speak of as "prosperous."

The famine in Russia is the result of a drought following years of war and a long imperialistic blockade of Russian ports, preventing entrance to them of all necessary supplies. This is the plain truth. Yet millions of sensible men and women have been deceived about conditions in Russia. But I trust that the good sense of the American people will soon surmount the wall of calumnies and prejudices which now prevents friendly relations between the two countries.

Through the mist of tears and sweat and blood of struggling men I salute her and wish for her the love of an awakened and grateful humanity.

Here is a thought that keeps singing in my mind but will not fold its wings in the formal limits of a letter:

Great, O Russia, is thy task! Thine is the race immortal whose beams shall spread across the earth, wide as the wings of heaven, bright as the morning light. Lift high thy flaming torch wherever men are slaves! Breathe upon them the life-quickenings of thy creative mind. Give them the potent red light of thy courage, that they may look upon the faces of comrades in every land, and be to all their kind dear friends and neighbors. Then shall all men discover thee, a paradise upon the verge of doom.

—*The Toiler*, NOVEMBER 19, 1921

## The Rand School

TO BERTHA H. MAILLY, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:<sup>56</sup>

On my return from Pittsburgh I found your telegram awaiting me. It will not be possible for me to be with you on the 30th. But I am proud to say my word for the Rand School, because I believe it is doing valuable and necessary work. I think of the Rand School as a center of light from which thought-sparks fly in every direction, penetrating here and there the darkness which covers this precious country of ours like a dense fog.

If the Rand School succeeds in making it clear even to a few individuals that the collapse of our present-day civilization is due to economic and social causes and not to any one nation or race, it will have accomplished something worthwhile. Further, if it teaches men that the world is an economic unit and that no part of the world can do business without reference to its relations with all the other parts, it will have taken a long step in the direction of finding a remedy for what is wrong with us. There is less need for resentment and denunciation of the evils we perceive in our social system than of patient study and determination to understand them. Education is the most potent and effective weapon that can be put into the hands of the proletariat. I sometimes think ignorance is the measure of a man's wrongdoing. Perhaps he needs only to see, to understand, in order that he may burgeon out of the darkness into light. Any activity that stimulates thought and discussion gives impetus to progress.

It must be obvious to anyone who thinks at all that the world is passing through a period of economic, social and political change. Circumstances are forcing men to alter their attitude toward time-honored institutions and traditions. The purpose of the Rand School is to give a right direction to men's thoughts and assist them through the chaos of transition. This is a noble purpose and cannot fail to accumulate strength as it goes along.



Therefore I say to every one who wishes to see a saner civilization rise out of the wreck of the old order, get behind the Rand School, for it is leading the way to the achievement of a splendid enterprise.

—NEW YORK *Call*, DECEMBER 30, 1922

## To Senator Robert M. La Follette

Unto you greetings and salutations and fealty! My congratulations are somewhat delayed; but if you know how my heart rejoiced when I heard of your nomination, my silence would not seem to you like indifference.<sup>57</sup>

I have hesitated to write to you because I know that the newspapers opposed to the Progressive movement will cry out at the "pathetic exploitation of deaf and blind Helen Keller by the 'motley elements' who support La Follette." It would be difficult to imagine anything more fatuous and stupid than the attitude of the press toward anything I say on public affairs. So long as I confine my activities to social service and the blind, they compliment me extravagantly, calling me archpriestess of the sightless," "wonder woman" and "a modern miracle." But when it comes to a discussion of poverty, and I maintain that it is the result of wrong economics—that the industrial system under which we live is at the root of much of the physical deafness and blindness in the world—that is a different matter! It is laudable to give aid to the handicapped. Superficial charities make smooth the way of the prosperous; but to advocate that all human beings should have leisure and comfort, the decencies and refinements of life, is an Utopian dream, and one who seriously contemplates its realization must indeed be deaf, dumb and blind. As political speeches and editorials of our "best" papers are transmitted to me, I am amazed at the power which stops the ears and clouds the vision of society.

Please pardon this long personal preamble. It is rather out of place in a congratulatory letter, but it explains my silence on subjects which are of vital interest to me. Opposition does not discomfort me when it is open and honest. I do not mind having my ideas attacked and my aims opposed and ridiculed, but it is not fair fighting or good argument to find that "Helen Keller's mistakes spring out of the limitations of her development."

For years I have followed your public efforts with approval and admiration. I have often wished to write and express my interest in what you were doing, but have refrained for the reasons given above. Recently Mr. Leffingwell, a son of Wisconsin and an enthusiastic friend of yours, happened to be calling here. When it was revealed that I was a La Follette woman, Mr. Leffingwell urged me to write you. I am emboldened to follow his suggestion because of God's commandment to "bring forth the blind people that have eyes and the deaf that have ears."

I rejoiced that a sufficient number of thinking Americans have come to the conclusion, after many trials and tribulations, that you are the man of the hour—the man most capable of breaking the power of private monopoly and leading the people to victory. Your nomination at Cleveland was in the nature of a gesture toward the re adoption of the Declaration of Independence. The revolt of thoughtful Democrats and Republicans against innumerable blunders and obvious incompetence of their own parties is the sure sign of a new spirit in the nation. I believe we have heard the swan song of the old parties. The muddling of their leaders has brought the world to the brink of chaos. The Progressives insist upon taking matters into their own hands. They see that the government must be revitalized.

I am for you because you have courage and vision and unyielding determination to find a sensible, just way out of the evils which threaten this country. I am for you because you have a forward-looking mind. You are alive, and have a grip on live issues. When I think of you, I do not need to go back to dead statesmen for inspiration, or dig out of books ideals for which I am willing to make sacrifices. You have principles you are ready to fight for, to risk your life for. Your golden age is not behind you, but just ahead of you, and to be reached in the future.

I am for you because you stand for liberty and progressive government. You know that a constitution, however admirable, cannot be final as an effectual guide to conduct in the

ever shifting circumstances of a rapidly developing nation which is ever touching elbows with the rest of the world.

I am for you because you believe that the people should rule, and that the voters should have assured and effective freedom of choice of those who make and execute the laws. I am for you because you believe that labor should participate in public affairs. The aim of all government should be to secure for the workers as large a share as possible of the fruits of their toil. For is it not labor that creates all things?

I am for you because you have held fast to the three elements of human liberty—free speech, a free press and freedom of assemblage. You understand that to sweep away the rights of the people by legislation and force is not progress, is not justice, but is decadence.

I am for you because you have discernment, and perceive that the ills from which America is now suffering are economic rather than political. You realize that the curtailment and limitation of wealth and special privilege are essential to the building up of honest government.

I am for you because you represent the spirit of kindly consideration by every American toward all his fellowmen. You believe in peaceable methods of settling differences—in open discussion and the method of friendship as opposed to intolerance, hatred and violence. You stand for an enlightened world policy, for international cooperation and amity.

—AUGUST 1924

## The Only Kind of War I Believe In

We are living in an age of constructive philanthropy. The old idea was to alleviate pain, and to help the victims of disaster to live as contentedly as might be. Misfortune was looked upon as God's yoke to be borne with fortitude. Very slowly this idea has been discarded as a superstition, as a hindrance to right thinking and better living.

The modern idea is to prevent, to root out the evils that destroy the eyes, the ears, the lives and the happiness of men. We are now entering upon a truceless war to exterminate the causes which lie at the root of disease. That is the only kind of war I believe in. It is the true battle of God against the infidel. We know that hospitals and institutions for defectives are not permanent temples of salvation. They are only temporary campsites along the way upon which the race is journeying towards a happier life—not in a dreamed-of paradise, but here on earth.

Already whole communities refuse to condemn thousands of children to labor which dwarfs their body and minds, and the thought is becoming intolerable that any human being should be wantonly plunged into the abyss of blindness. It is time for us all to wake from our lotus sleep, and accept the responsibilities of men and women out of which grow their achievements.

It is easy to follow the old roads, to keep alive the tradition that all is well with the world because God is in His heaven. It is hard to think, to investigate, to substitute action for pity and right conditions for charity, but that is the price we must pay, so that all may indeed be well with the world. That state cannot prosper whose citizens are kept in ignorance of the knowledge that saves, and in mental and spiritual poverty.

I read about a baby who is so nearly blind that he will have to be educated in a school for the sightless. This baby was born two and a half years ago at one of the hospitals in a large city of this state. It seems to me that this can mean just one



thing—gross carelessness on the part of somebody. We live in an age of publicity. Should not the public have been acquainted with the facts in this case and the responsibility placed where it belongs? I realize that it is a matter for thankfulness. Not so very long ago the blindness of that baby would have been regarded as an inevitable misfortune. The little victim would have been pitied, and in the course of time sent to an institution. But now we know that the cruel, fruitless beating of clipped wings against dark windows of that human spirit need never have been if prompt, effective treatment had been given the infant's eyes.

All our individual and collective responsibilities and duties to our fellow beings should be constantly impressed upon all minds. More and more we should come to understand that we are our brothers' keepers, and that a state is great in proportion to the opportunities which it affords its citizens to become healthy, useful, happy human beings.

A new will has come into the world, not a will to power, but a will to service. Everywhere I feel there is a growing desire to restore, to rehabilitate, to reclaim and promote better living for all men. It seems to me we Americans are foreordained to lead in humanitarian enterprises. We are prosperous, we are bubbling over with youthful energy and optimism. We can, if we are so minded, roll back the clouds of calamity which overshadow the world. We can keep the torch of service bright in every land.

What nobler tribute could be paid to the memory of the young men of America who died for world freedom? Friendship and cooperation between nations are the most effective barriers to war. Knowledge and sympathy travel like light and make all the common roads of the earth safe for everybody to walk in unafraid. An international association for the prevention of disease and the conservation of health would be a long step towards creating the thing we hope for out of the travesty we call civilization.

—*The New Leader*, JULY 25, 1925

## The Spirit of Lenin

I think that every honest belief should be treated with fairness, yet I cry out against people who uphold the empire of gold. I am aware of moods when the perfect state of peace, brotherhood and universal love seems so far off that I turn to division, pugnacity and the pageant of war. I am just like St. Paul when he says, "I delight in the Law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." I am perfectly sure that love will bring everything right in the end, but I cannot help sympathizing with the oppressed who feel driven to use force to gain the rights that belong to them.

That is one reason why I have turned with such interest toward the great experiment now being tried in Russia. No revolution was ever a sudden outbreak of lawlessness and wreckage incited by an unholy brood of cranks, anarchists and pedagogues. People turn to a revolution only when every other dream has faded into the dimness of sorrow. When we look upon these mighty disturbances which seem to leap so suddenly out of the troubled depths we find that they were fed by little streams of discontent and oppression. These little streams which have their source deep down in the miseries of the common people all flow together at last in a retributive flood.

The Russian Revolution did not originate with Lenin. It had hovered for centuries in the dreams of Russian mystics and patriots, but when the body of Lenin was laid in simple state in the Kremlin,<sup>58</sup> all Russia trembled and wept. The mouths of hungry enemies fed on new hopes, but the spirit of Lenin descended upon the weeping multitude as with cloven tongues of fire, and they spoke one to another and were not afraid. "Let us not follow him with cowering hearts," they said, "let us rather gird ourselves for the task he has left us. Where our dull eyes see only ruin, his clearer sight discovers the road by which we shall gain our liberty.

Revolution he sees, yea, and even disintegration which symbolizes disorder is in truth the working of God's undeviating order; and the manner of our government shall be no less wonderful than the manner of our deliverance. If we are steadfast, the world will be quickened to courage by our deeds."

Men vanish from earth leaving behind them the furrows they have ploughed. I see the furrow Lenin left sown with the unshatterable seed of a new life for mankind, and cast deep below the rolling tides of storm and lightning, mighty crops for the ages to reap.

—HELEN KELLER, *Midstream: My Later Life*, NEW YORK, DOUBLEDAY AND CO., 1929, PP. 334-35

## Notes

1. On November 7, 1911, the city of Schenectady in New York state elected a Socialist administration headed by Mayor George R. Lunn, Pastor of the First Reformed Church. Among Mayor Lunn's appointments was Walter Lippmann, then a young Socialist from New York City, who was named the Mayor's personal secretary.

2. The Erfurt Program was the German Workers' Party program adopted at the Erfurt Party Congress of 1891 and which served as a model for nearly all the programs of the parties in the Second International.

3. The *National Socialist* was published in Washington, D.C., by William J. Ghent. It was a right-wing Socialist journal, bitterly opposed to the advocates of "direct action" as espoused by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

4. The *International Socialist Review* was a militantly left-wing Socialist monthly published in Chicago by Charles H. Kerr. It endorsed many of the policies and practices of the IWW.

5. The *New York Call* was for many years the leading Socialist daily paper in the United States. It was published from 1908 to the end of 1923.

6. The *Appeal to Reason*, a weekly Socialist journal published by Julius A. Wayland and edited by Fred Warren, began publication in 1895 in Kansas City, and a few months later established its permanent home in Girard, Kansas. Within a decade its circulation grew to 260,000, and by 1910 it had 472,255 paid subscribers. It appealed especially to the farmers of the middle west.

7. In January 1907, the United States government charged Fred Warren with sending "scurrilous, defamatory and threatening" literature through the mails. The action was based on the publication of two articles in the *Appeal to Reason* of January 5, 1907. The first, written by Eugene V. Debs, criticized judicial procedure in the celebrated case of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, leaders of the Western Federation of Miners who were accused of the bomb killing of ex-Governor Frank Steunenberg of Idaho in December 1905. The second article, written by Warren, dealt with a former governor, Taylor, of Kentucky, who was wanted in his native state in connection with the murder of a political rival. When the governor of Kentucky refused to extradite Taylor from Indiana, Warren offered a reward of \$1,000 to anybody who seized Taylor and turned him over to the Kentucky authorities.

After much delay, Warren was convicted in 1909, sentenced to six months in prison, and fined \$5,000. On February 2, 1911, yielding to a mass defense campaign in Warren's behalf of which Helen Keller's letter was part, President William Howard Taft reduced the fine to \$100, and issued a pardon which kept Warren out of jail.

8. The reference is to the Moyer, Haywood, Pettibone case. For a discussion of the case which resulted in the acquittal of Haywood and the dismissal of the charges against the other two defendants, see Philip S. Foner, *The In-*

*dustrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917, History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, vol. IV, New York, 1965, pp. 40-59.

9. The Supreme Court ruled that the seizure of the three union officials had been illegal, but now that they were in Idaho's jurisdiction, there was no legal remedy. In a dissenting opinion, Justice Joseph McKenna said: "Kidnapping is a crime, pure and simple. All the officers of the law are supposed to be on guard against it. But how is it when the law becomes the kidnapper, when the officers of the law, using its forms and exerting its power, become abductors? The foundation of extradition between the states is that the accused should be a fugitive from justice from the demanding state, and he may challenge the fact by habeas corpus immediately upon his arrest." (*Ibid.*, p. 51.)

10. The headline in the New York *Call's* report of Miss Keller's speech read: "Helen Keller Points to Social Enemies. Cruelty of Commercialism Responsible for Much Blindness and Misery." The *Call* noted that while for several years specialists in the education of the blind "have attacked the problem of saving eyesight as an isolated problem," Miss Keller, in her address, "related the problem of blindness to the fundamental problems of social well being. She did not hesitate to declare her realization of the fact that much disease and suffering is directly due to the thirst of employers for profits." (New York *Call*, February 15, 1911.)

11. Israel Zangwill, the British novelist, was an active supporter of the woman suffrage movement in England, and fully endorsed its militant tactics. In his address, "Votes for Women," he used the phrase "not votes for Liberals, or votes for Labour, but votes for Women."

12. Christabel Pankhurst, daughter of Mrs. Emmaline Pankhurst, the militant leader of the British woman suffrage movement, addressed woman suffrage meetings in the United States early in 1911.

13. The full title of Edmond Kelly's book is *Twentieth Century Socialism; What it is not; What it is; How it may come*. It was published in New York in 1910.

14. The strike at Little Falls, New York, a major center for knit goods and underwear, was led by the IWW. It began on October 10, 1912, in protest against a reduction of wages of from 75 cents to \$2.00 per week, following the application of a state law reducing hours for women workers from 60 to 54 per week. Average weekly wages before the reduction were \$8.00 to \$9.00 for men, \$5.00 for women, and \$3.75 for children. On January 2, 1913, after a 12-week strike marked by police brutality and widespread arrests of strikers, 1,500 mill workers, native Americans, Italians and Hungarians—70 per cent of them women—ended their walkout with a wage increase.

15. In his paper, the *National Socialist*, W. J. Ghent wrote: "Either Haywood or the Socialist Party will have to go." Ghent called for the removal of W. D. ("Big Bill") Haywood from the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party. He charged that Haywood had violated Article II, Section 6, of the Party's constitution, adopted at the 1912 national convention, which called for the expulsion of any member "who opposes political action or advocates crime, sabotage, or other methods of violence as a weapon of the working class to aid in its emancipation. . . ." In a referendum, with about 25 per cent of the membership participating, Haywood was recalled from the National Executive Committee by a vote of 22,000 to 11,000.

The New York *Call* of February 22, 1913, carried "An Open Letter to



Helen Keller" by Carol D. Thompson, a member of the Socialist's Party's National Executive Committee, and an opponent of Haywood and his followers. Thompson assured Miss Keller that controversies in the Socialist Party were nothing new, and that while he regretted them, he rejoiced in the fact "that matters of importance are being settled, decisions are being reached, the future is being made more secure, and socialism is coming."

For a discussion of how the expulsion of Haywood and his followers weakened the Socialist Party, see Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917, op. cit.*, pp. 391-414.

16. Woodrow Wilson, elected President of the United States on November 5, 1912, entered the White House as the champion of what he called the "New Freedom." On April 8, 1913, he appeared before the two houses of Congress to deliver his first message, and outlined a program for fundamental reforms in tariffs and banking. In the fall of 1913, Congress enacted the Underwood Tariff and the Federal Reserve Act. While the tariff law lowered tariff schedules, it did not affect the trusts. The Clayton Anti-Trust Act, passed in the fall of 1914, also had little effect on the trusts.

17. Miss Keller's letter was in reply to an editorial which appeared in the *New York Sun* of June 4, 1913. The editorial entitled "Helen Keller and Her Pupil," was based on an alleged dispatch from Madrid reporting that King Alfonso had engaged Miss Keller "in the belief that she, as the most accomplished of deaf mutes, is best able to instruct others suffering from a similar affliction." Prince Jaime, the King's five-year-old son, was unable to hear. The editorial in the *Sun* went on to quote from the alleged dispatch that Miss Keller was to have Prince Jaime under her care "for the next few months" during which time she would teach him "in the way she taught herself years ago." It then commented:

"It can hardly be said, however, that Miss Keller 'taught herself,' altogether, nor is it conceivable that she could do much in the way of teaching in a few months. Perhaps it is feared at the court that she may carry her teaching a little too far and impart some of her latest discoveries to the young Prince. For since she ceased to be a violent preacher of the Baconian doctrine, Helen Keller has turned her attention to the terrible evils of the capitalistic system under which she was brought up, and has learned to reiterate all the socialistic jargon with that extraordinary quickness and fluency which she has shown in everything she has acquired.

"It might be inconvenient in these days to turn a Prince into a dispenser of socialistic commonplace."

18. Arturo Giovannitti, IWW leader, was one of the speakers at the Sociological Conference.

19. While in San Francisco during a cross-country lecture tour, Miss Keller learned that several hundred unemployed workers had been attacked and severely beaten in Sacramento by the police, members of the fire department, county sheriffs and deputies recruited from among Sacramento citizens. (The unemployed, among whom were members of the IWW, were en route from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., to demand relief from the government.) Since Miss Keller was scheduled to lecture in Sacramento that evening, a reporter for the *Sacramento Star* asked for her opinion of the treatment of the unemployed. Informed that if she dared to talk on the subject in Sacramento, she would be "hauled down and carried from the city in a cart," Miss Keller declared: "I hope I will be." (*Sacramento Star*, March 16, 1914.)

20. Briefly stated, syndicalism was the doctrine that the working class should confine its activities to the economic field, relying on the strike and other forms of direct action, rather than political action, to win immediate gains and, through the One Big Union and the General Strike, the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a new social system in which the trade unions would conduct industry and all other social activities. The IWW, of which Giovannitti was a leader, advocated many of the principles of syndicalism.

21. During the great textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, led by the IWW, which began on January 12, 1912, and ended on March 18, 1912, in a victory for the strikers, Giovannitti was arrested along with Joseph Ettor, IWW leader of the strike, on the charge of murder. The obvious frameup to deprive the strikers of their leaders, aroused one of the greatest defense movements in American labor history. The trial began on September 30, 1912, in the Superior Court of Essex County, sitting at Salem, and ended in the acquittal of Ettor and Giovannitti. (See Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, *op. cit.*, pp. 150, 335-37, 343-46, 348, 401, 408, 411. For Giovannitti's poem, "To Helen Keller," see *The Collected Poems of Arturo Giovannitti*, Chicago, 1962, p. 63.)

22. Joseph Hillstrom, better known as Joe Hill, was the famous IWW song writer and organizer. In January 1914, he was arrested in Salt Lake City, Utah, on the charge of holding up a grocery store and killing the owner. He was found guilty in a trial which many Americans, especially those in the labor movement, felt was a travesty of justice, and a mass movement arose demanding a new trial. Joe Hill was scheduled to be executed on September 30, 1915, but when President Wilson appealed to Governor Spry of Utah to postpone the execution, the state authorities rescheduled it for November 19. Miss Keller, along with many others, appealed to President Wilson to intervene again. Although Wilson replied to Miss Keller that he could do nothing even though he wished "most sincerely it was in my power to do something," he did urge upon Governor Spry "the justice and desirability of a thorough reconsideration of the case of Joseph Hillstrom." The second appeal was rejected, and Joe Hill was executed on November 19, 1915. (See Philip S. Foner, *The Case of Joe Hill*, New York, 1965).

23. William Sanger, husband of Margaret Sanger, was arrested in the summer of 1915 by agents of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice for giving out one copy of his wife's pamphlet, *Family Limitation*. He was sentenced to \$150 fine or 30 days in jail. The arrest and sentence aroused widespread protests. (See Margaret Sanger, *An Autobiography*, New York, 1938, pp. 176-78.)

24. In 1915 Henry Ford, the millionaire automobile manufacturer, sponsored a "peace ship," the *Oskar II*. It carried pacifists to Europe to attempt to initiate steps to end the European war. As Miss Keller predicted, the peace expedition ended in failure.

25. On December 16, 1915, the *New York Call* announced that Helen Keller would present "the Socialist interpretation of the causes of the European war and the dangers confronting the United States" when she spoke at the Labor Forum. It announced further that Miss Keller "will advocate the general strike as the speediest way to end the European conflict." "All the soldiers have to do now," it continued, "is to throw their rifles into the trenches, bid their officers and rulers a 'Merry Christmas' and 'Happy New

Year' and march to their families and jobs, according to Miss Keller. When the soldiers find they can stop war so easily, they never will go back to another, in her opinion."

Helen Keller was introduced by Mrs. Rose Pastor Stokes, a leader of the Socialist Party and wife of millionaire Socialist, J. G. Phelps Stokes.

Following Miss Keller's speech, pro-preparedness groups demanded that the New York City Board of Education revoke the Labor Forum's permit to use the Washington Irving High School building for public meetings. (New York *Herald*, December 22, 1915; New York *Evening Sun*, December 22, 1915.) The Board, however, refused to bow to this pressure, and on December 26, 1915, Andrew Furuseth, leader of the Seamen's Union of the Pacific, spoke in the high school under the auspices of the Labor Forum.

26. Following her speech at the Labor Forum, Miss Keller left New York City on a lecture trip through the West which was to last until June first. But when the Women's Peace Party and the Labor Forum asked her to speak again on the question of "preparedness" at Carnegie Hall to accommodate the thousands who had not heard her at Washington Irving High School, Miss Keller changed her lecturing schedule and returned to New York. She requested only that since she was anxious to appeal to workers, no admission be charged for the seats. This was agreed to, and the expenses of the meeting were borne by the receipts from the 64 boxes taken by a group of organizations. All of the trade unions in New York City and their members were invited to hear Miss Keller. "Union officials and representatives have been invited to occupy the stage in honor of the blind girl who is giving her life to the cause of the workers," the New York *Call* reported on January 2, 1916, in an article bearing the headline, "Helen Keller to Defy Jingoos."

27. In the Treaty of Paris following the Spanish-American War, the United States obtained the Philippine Islands and Guam from Spain. In addition to these islands in the Pacific, Spain also ceded Puerto Rico to the United States.

28. Mayor John Purroy Mitchel of New York City was a leader of the pro-war movement.

29. These were the names of American ships sunk after the German decree of February 4, 1915, declaring the waters around the British Isles a war zone, threatening to sink all belligerent merchant ships met within that zone, and giving warning that neutral ships might also be sunk. On May 7, 1915, the *Lusitania* was sunk by a German submarine and over a thousand persons drowned, among them 128 Americans. It was disclosed that four days before the *Lusitania* sailed, President Wilson was warned in person by Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan that the ship had 6,000,000 rounds of ammunition on board, besides explosives.

30. For a discussion of the Lawrence strike, see Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-50.

31. The New York *Call* reprinted the interview on January 17, 1916, under the heading: "Helen Keller, Industrialist. Famous Blind Girl Says She Finds Party Too Slow and is Now IWW Adherent." The Socialist paper notified its readers that it had not "verified" the interview in which "Miss Keller criticises the Socialist party, saying that 'it is too slow' and 'is sinking into the political bog.'"

32. When the New York *Call* announced a \$50,000 bond issue, the bonds

bearing four per cent per annum interest and redeemable ten years from the date of issue, Helen Keller immediately subscribed.

33. Organized by Alice Paul and originally known as the Congressional Union, the National Woman's Party devoted itself to the passage of an amendment to the Federal Constitution for woman suffrage. By 1913 women had secured the vote in nine states, and the National Woman's Party used their voting power to advance the cause of a Federal Amendment. National woman suffrage became an assured fact on August 18, 1920, when the Tennessee legislature adopted the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. It had passed Congress on May 21, 1919, and the National Woman's Party led the fight for ratification by the state legislatures.

34. In July, 1917, the New York Socialists nominated Morris Hillquit for Mayor on a platform opposing conscription. The United States entered the war on April 6, 1917, and conscription became law on May 18 as the draft bill passed both houses and was signed by President Wilson. The Socialist platform that nominated Hillquit protested against "compelling them [the people] to fight against their will." (*New York Times*, July 9, 1917.) In the election, Hillquit polled 142,178 votes, only 7,129 fewer than John Purroy Mitchel who ran second. John F. Hylan, the Tammany candidate, was elected Mayor.

The *New York Call* described Helen Keller's letter as "the great human document that this great municipal campaign has brought forth," and observed, "Though physically blind, she sees with her soul's vision the true issues of this campaign." (November 5, 1917.)

35. Title XII of the Espionage Act prohibited sending through the mails any materials "advocating or urging treason, insurrection, or forcible resistance to any law of the United States." In effect, this was to give the Postmaster General the right to determine what matter could be mailed, a right which Postmaster General Albert Sidney Burleson used indiscriminately to suppress newspapers and publications which opposed America's participation in the war.

36. The Sedition Act of 1798, enacted by a Federalist Congress and signed by President John Adams, provided for a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment and \$5,000 fine for publicizing false or malicious statements against the U.S. government, Congress, or the President. It was aimed at the followers of Thomas Jefferson, and was criticized by Woodrow Wilson in his *A History of the American People*.

37. On July 12, 1917, about 1,200 workmen in the Arizona copper mines, engaged in a strike led by the IWW, were rounded up by vigilantes belonging to the Citizens' Protective League and deported to New Mexico. They were unloaded at the little desert station of Hermanas, New Mexico, abandoned by their guards and left to shift for themselves.

38. On July 2, 1917, one of the worst race riots in American history occurred in East St. Louis, Illinois. Estimates of Negroes killed by white mobs, as the police and soldiers stood idly by, ranged from 38 to over 100. Hundreds were wounded and maimed, and over 300 Negro homes were burned.

39. The Industrial Workers of the World was founded at a convention in Chicago which opened on June 27, 1905. Delegates represented the Western Federation of Miners, the Socialist Party, the Socialist Labor Party, the American Labor Union, and a number of unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.



40. The strike against the Pressed Steel Car Co. in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, July 10 to September 8, 1909, resulted in a victory for the strikers and showed that the IWW which took a leading part in the strike knew how to organize and lead the unskilled, foreign-born workers. This was reenforced even more by the great victory at Lawrence in 1912. The Paterson silk strike in 1913, however, resulted in a defeat for the IWW which led the strike, and shattered its influence in Eastern industry.

The strike of the copper miners at Calumet, Michigan, in 1913 was led by the Western Federation of Miners and not by the IWW. The WFM had left the IWW as early as 1907.

41. In late 1917 and early 1918, IWW leaders and members were arrested throughout the country, ostensibly because of their opposition to the war but more frequently because employers, threatened by the IWW organizing their workers, saw an opportunity to use the war to destroy the militant labor body. The press regularly reported frequent beatings and jailings of IWW's in many parts of the country.

42. On the morning of August 1, 1917, Frank Little, a crippled IWW organizer, was seized by vigilantes in his room in Butte, Montana, tied behind an automobile, dragged through the streets, and hanged at the railroad trestle outside of town. A sign was left pinned to his clothes, reading: "Others take notice. First and last warning. 3-77-77."

43. On November 7, 1917, vigilantes in Tulsa, Oklahoma, entered the jail where 17 IWW's were being held, drove them to the outskirts of the city, tied each prisoner to a tree, and lashed each victim until his back ran with blood. Then a coat of hot tar, followed by feathers, was applied to the bleeding back of each victim.

44. The "Ludlow Massacre" occurred in 1914 during a strike of coal miners in Colorado against the Rockefeller-dominated Colorado Fuel and Iron Co. Evicted from the company houses, the miners, who were members of the United Mine Workers of America and not of the IWW, organized a tent colony which included women and children. On April 20, 1914, the state militia attacked the tent colony and burned the tents. Two women and eleven children were smothered in the flames. During the same strike, strikers were shot down and killed by Baldwin-Felts guards at Trinidad, Colorado, and many were arrested and deported.

45. The reference is to the IWW's belief in sabotage as a weapon in the class struggle, a tactic which was more often preached than practiced.

46. The number of IWWs on trial in Chicago was actually 113. Following the government raids on various IWW offices on September 5, 1917, 166 men were arrested. The names of all these persons had been included in the original indictment, but 53 of the defendants were finally dismissed on lack of evidence. This left 113 to stand trial on the general charge of conspiracy against the war program of the United States. There were originally five counts against the defendants, but one was thrown out before the case went to the jury. On August 30, 1918, the jury brought in a verdict of guilty on all counts for 97 men. Sentences ranged from 20 years in prison and \$30,000 fine for William D. Haywood and 14 other defendants to less severe sentences and fines.

Along with John Dewey, Thorstein Veblen, Carlton J. Hayes and others, Helen Keller's name appeared in an advertisement in the *New Republic* asking for a fair trial for the IWWs. The magazine was warned by an agent



of the Department of Justice not to reprint it, under threat of getting into trouble with the law. (H. C. Peters and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917-1918*, Madison, Wisconsin, 1957, p. 236.)

47. On June 29, 1918, Eugene V. Debs, leader of the Socialist Party, was indicted for violating the Espionage Act during an anti-war speech he had delivered in Canton, Ohio, on June 16. He was found guilty after a brief trial, and sentenced to ten years in prison. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court which handed down its decision on March 10, 1919, upholding the jury's verdict and the sentence. The opinion was written by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. Debs remained in prison from April, 1919, until December 25, 1921, when he was released by President Warren G. Harding. The *Appeal to Reason* called Helen Keller's letter "one of the most beautiful tributes that has been paid to Debs." (May 17, 1919.)

48. Miss Keller's letter, sent from Alabama, was read by Helen Todd to 15,000 men and women in New York's Madison Square Garden. The meeting was held to protest the blockade of Soviet Russia.

49. On July 2, 1918, the Allied Supreme War Council decided on intervention to aid Admiral Kolchak, who was in Siberia, overthrow the Soviet government. On July 17, the US government notified the Allies that it would land troops in Vladivostok. Kolchak's counterrevolutionary military campaign was aided by British, French, American and Japanese troops. The American troops remained in Siberia from mid-1918 to early 1920. British and French intervention in behalf of General Denikin, another counter-revolutionary leader, was especially pronounced in south Russia. Kolchak's and Denikin's forces were finally defeated by the Red Army, but the intervention against Soviet Russia resulted in the death of thousands of Russians, most of them civilians.

50. The American Women's Emergency Committee was organized in October 1919, for the purpose of sending a relief ship of milk, medicine, shoes and food to starving babies and women in Soviet Russia. When this was halted by the US government, the committee turned its attention to the campaign to lift the embargo against Russia. In addition to Helen Keller, the committee was led by Mrs. Helen Stanton Blatch, daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and a women's suffrage and Socialist leader, Mrs. J. A. H. Hopkins, Helen Todd, Lucy Branham and Mrs. Toscan Bennett.

51. Ludwig C. A. K. Martens was officially appointed on January 2, 1919, by the Soviet government as the first "Representative of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in the United States of America." He took up his duties on March 18, 1919, and sought to establish trade and diplomatic relations with the United States. Although a significant group of American firms wished to develop trade with Soviet Russia, the State Department rejected all plans to promote Soviet-American trade and establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. After frequent investigations of the charge that he was advocating the overthrow of the US government by force and violence, investigations conducted by the Lusk Committee in New York and the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Martens was ordered deported by Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson. Wilson admitted that there was no evidence that Martens had ever personally advocated the use of force or violence as a means of overthrowing the US government, or that he had ordered the dissemination of any literature containing such propaganda.

52. Francis Dana was sent by Congress as a regular accredited minister to Russia. He stayed in St. Petersburg from August 1781, to September 1783, but did not present his credentials to the Russian government until March 7, 1783. The Czarist government refused to recognize Dana or the United States.

53. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held hearings on a bill introduced by Senator Joseph I. France of Maryland which called for resumption of trade with Soviet Russia. Lucy Branham and Mrs. Harriet Stanton Blatch came to Washington to testify for the American Women's Emergency Committee. They brought with them Helen Keller's statement.

54. Helen Keller and Art Young, the great Socialist artist and cartoonist, led the grand march at midnight at the New Year's Eve Ball of the Rand School of Social Science at Madison Square Garden. At the conclusion of the march, Miss Keller delivered this address from a raised platform in the middle of the Garden. The Rand School of Social Science in New York City was the leading school founded by the Socialist Party. It conducted classes in the school and through correspondence courses on the principles and practices of socialism.

55. By the beginning of 1921 a general depression, accompanied by widespread unemployment, hit the entire United States.

56. Two years before in 1920, Miss Keller had led the grand march at the Rand School Ball at Madison Square Garden. On this occasion, New Year's Eve 1922, this letter was read to the audience at the close of the march, together with a letter of greetings from Dr. Charles P. Steinmetz. Steinmetz, the "wizard of electricity," had been the Socialist and Farmer-Labor Party candidate for State Engineer in the election of 1922.

57. A conference for Progressive political action, meeting at Cleveland in July 1924, and attended by trade unionists, Socialists and political reformers, invited Robert M. La Follette to run independently for President on a Farmer-Labor ticket. La Follette accepted, and received nearly 5,000,000 votes in November, or one-sixth of the votes cast. Calvin Coolidge, the Republican nominee, was the victorious candidate.

58. Lenin died on January 21, 1924.



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