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# Batt-Dannenberg DEBATE

**RESOLVED:** That by Political Action alone, without the assistance of the Socialist Industrial Union, the Workers can emancipate themselves.



**Price Fifteen Cents**

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**LITERATURE BUREAU OF THE  
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# PREAMBLE

OF THE W. I. I. U.

**T**HE working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few who make up the employing class have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the toilers come together on the political field under the banner of a distinct revolutionary political party governed by the workers' class interests, and on the industrial field under the banner of One Great Industrial Union to take and hold all means of production and distribution, and to run them for the benefit of all wealth producers.

The rapid gathering of wealth and the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands make the trades union unable to cope with the evergrowing power of the employing class, because the trades unions foster a state of things which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. The trades unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These sad conditions must be changed, the interests of the working class upheld and while the capitalist rule still prevails all possible relief for the workers must be secured. That can only be done by an organization aiming steadily at the complete overthrow of the capitalist wage system, and formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry or in all industries, if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

*The*  
**Batt - Dannenberg**  
**Debate**

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**Stenographically reported**  
**by**  
**Lee S. Kauser**

**W**ITHOUT indulging in the delusion that its progress will be a "dress parade;" and, knowing that its program carries in its folds that acute stage of all evolutionary process known as Revolution, the Industrial Union connects with the achievements of the Revolutionary Fathers of the country, the first to frame a Constitution that denies the perpetuity of their own social system, and that, by its amendment clause, legalizes Revolution. Connecting with that great achievement of the American Revolution; fully aware that the Revolution which it is big with being one that concerns the masses and that needs the masses for its execution, excludes the bare idea of conspiracy, and imperatively commands an open and above-board agitation, educational and organizing activity; finally its path lighted by the beacon tenet of Marx that none but the bona fide Union bends its efforts to unite the working class upon the political as well as the industrial field—on the industrial field because, without the integrally organized Union of the working class, the revolutionary act is impossible; on the political field, because on none other can be proclaimed the revolutionary purpose, without consciousness of which the Union is a rope of sand.

Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the Industrial Union is the Socialist Republic in operation.

Accordingly, the Industrial Union is, at once, the battering ram with which to pound down the fortress of capitalism, and the successor of the capitalist social structure itself.

—*Daniel De Leon.*

147.7551-190

*The*  
**Batt-Dannenberg Debate**

on

**RESOLVED, That by Political Action alone, without the assistance of the Socialist Industrial Union, the Workers can emancipate themselves.**

*Held under the Auspices of the Proletarian University of America at the Moose Temple, Detroit, Mich., on April 20, 1919.*

Between

**DENNIS E. BATT**

Representing the Socialist Party

and

**KARL DANNENBERG**

Representing The Workers' International Industrial Union.

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**THE LITERATURE BUREAU OF THE WORKERS'  
INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIAL UNION**

**DETROIT  
1919**

**T**HE fight of the bourgeoisie against the feudal nobility is the fight of the city against the country, of industry against landlordism, of economy based on money against economy based on natural products. The distinctive weapons of the bourgeois in this fight were those which came into existence through the development of increasing economic force by reason of the growth at first of hand manufacture and afterwards machine manufacture and through the extension of trade. During the whole of this conflict the political power was in the hands of the nobility, with the exception of a period when the king employed the bourgeoisie against the nobility in order to hold one in check by means of the other. From the very moment, however, in which the bourgeoisie still deprived of political power began to be dangerous because of the development of its economic power the monarchy again turned to the nobility and thereby brought about the revolution of the bourgeois first in England and then in France. The political conditions in France remained unaltered until the economic conditions outgrew them. In politics the noble was everything, the bourgeois nothing. As a social factor the bourgeoisie was of the highest importance while the nobility had abandoned all its social functions and yet pocketed revenues, social services which it did not any longer perform.

—*Frederick Engels.*

# **BATT-DANNENBERG DEBATE.**

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## **THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.**

**AL. RENNER,**

**Of the Proletarian University of America.**

I have several announcements to make before introducing the speaker. First of all, it is understood by the management of the house that the hall be vacated by 5 o'clock. The hall is rented for this evening, and we will have difficulties in getting the hall in the future if you do not leave at that time. You are also requested that you kindly refrain from smoking, as the inhaling of the smoke is not a benefit to the speakers, as well as to some of the audience. The subject of the debate is:

“Resolved, That by political action alone, without the assistance of the Socialist Industrial Union; the workers can emancipate themselves.”

The debate will be divided in two 45-minute presentations by the negative and the affirmative, followed by a 20-minute rebuttal of the affirmative and a 30-minute rebuttal from the negative, the affirmative closing the debate with a 10-minute final rebuttal. The speaker for the affirmative, who will now address you, is Comrade Dennis E. Batt.



**DIRECT PRESENTATION—  
DENNIS E. BATT.**

Comrade Chairman, Comrade Dannenberg, Comrades and Friends: The subject we are here to discuss this afternoon is the question: Resolved, That by political action alone, without the assistance of the Socialist Industrial Union, the workers can emancipate themselves. Comrade Dannenberg is here as the representative of the Workers' International Industrial Union; I represent the Socialist Party of Local Detroit; and the meeting is conducted under the auspices of the Proletarian University of America. The idea of the debate is not to see who can argue the most or talk the loudest. The spirit of a prize fight does not enter into it. Comrade Dannenberg has assured me that his only desire is to investigate the subject and arrive at a better understanding of the merits of the two forms of working-class action. Now, in order that we can arrive at some definite understanding this afternoon, as to whether the working-class can emancipate itself without the assistance of the Socialist Industrial Union, we must first define some certain terms that will be used considerably by myself this afternoon, and, I think, by Comrade Dannenberg as well. In the first place, I will contend this afternoon that society is dominated and ruled by the state. However, in order that you may follow me, I wish you to understand what I mean when I use the word "state." The state is defined as the public power of oppression, created and evolved in society through its division into classes. Another term that will be much in use this afternoon is the term "economic power." Economic power is nothing more nor less than man's power of production, or his power over nature. It is in this sense that I will discuss it this afternoon.

We will also have much to say this afternoon about "political action." And in order to give you a clear understanding of what I intend to convey by the term political force, reared by political action, I will herewith define political action: It is action taken by the working classes to gain control of the political state. I do not want anybody during the course of this debate to lock me and choke me up in the parliamentary pigeon hole, in which I do not believe. If my able opponent should contend that it is so, then he will have to explain to us how we had political action before we had parliamentarism. Now the Workers' International Industrial Union takes up the position, as I understand from their literature, that labor must use both arms to emancipate itself. It must use its political arm, as well as its industrial arm. They claim that we must have something with which to back up the ballot, must have the economic power of the worker, that is the worker's power of production, to back up the ballot; and also that we must build within the old the structure of the new order of society, in the shape of the Socialist Industrial Union. That, I think, is the position that my opponent will define this afternoon. On the other hand, as a member of the Socialist Party, I contend that the workers must emancipate themselves by political action; that is, they must organize and train themselves for a conquest of political power. After having gained political power, under the shield of the dictatorship of the proletariat, they will develop the economic state. That, I think, is a fair statement of my position.

In order that we may appreciate and understand the political state and the necessity of gaining control of it, also in order to appreciate the importance of the political state, and the fight such as the working class is carrying on

today, we must know something of the origin and development of the political state. The political state had its birth primarily due to the division of labor. The division of labor developed private property rights in society, and then, because of the conflict of interests arising within society, owing to the establishment of private property rights, the state came into existence. That is to say, since the primitive communal society known as the Gens, which existed prior to the state society, and since the disappearance of this Ancient Communism, private property rights developed. Certain individuals, or groups of individuals, claimed ownership over the different tools of production—you might say, herds of cattle, land and things of that nature—and they enslaved other people, made them cultivate the soil and made them herd the cattle as slaves. Conflict of interests arises here; and in order that society may go on, in order that it may live, in order that it will not destroy itself by this internal conflict, generated by these two classes in society, we find that the political state comes into existence. Conflict of interests between the two classes is reconciled by enforcing the will of one class, the master class—the one owning the slaves, etc., and which also developed the state to keep them in subjection—upon the other. Of course, that can be easily seen by anybody who cares to look back through the history. You can take a slave and have him till the soil, but he is not going to stay there unless you have some way to make him: some way of compelling him to slave for you. And that brings into existence the soldier who is typical of the state.

The state is the organized force of oppression in society. One of the first things that marks a political state is the creation of special armed bodies: the creation of a police force, an army

and navy apart from the people themselves. Prior to this time, the fighting was done by all who were armed. With the introduction of the state we find a great special armed body—the police force. The function of these bodies is to keep the slaves in subjection, if they should try to overthrow the master class in any way. It is the state that is directed to crush them. Around the Mediterranean Sea there grew up a lot of these states. We might lecture an hour and a half about the development of the different states that grew up around the Mediterranean; but for the purpose of the discussion this afternoon, the state which grew up and lasted the longest will serve best, and that is the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire came into existence and was one of the best organized states that existed at that time. It spread its domination over all the then known world. And this domination was spread by the power of the sword. This domination of the Roman Empire was forced upon the people of the surrounding country by the power of the sword. When they invaded England and gained control of the economic resources of that country, the things used upon the inhabitants there to coerce and subject them was the sword. When they went East it was the same thing. The army, in the last analysis, is the weapon of the political state. The Roman Empire, as you know, developed a very intricate economic system. We find, however, that with the development of that economic system and the centralization of wealth into the hands of fewer and fewer individuals, the military might of the Roman Empire began to crumble; and when it did crumble, the Huns came pouring over the Alps down upon the Gates of Rome and pounded on them until they were battered down and they looted the city. The Hun, everybody must acknowledge, had an inferior economic power and an inferior eco-

conomic system, and even though the Roman Empire was on the downward grade at that time, it must be admitted that their economic system was far superior to that of the wild communistic tribes that came pouring in over the Alps. After the decline and downfall of the Roman Empire, we find growing up in Europe a new state, developing out of the ruins of the Roman Empire and the elementary vitality inherent in the Gens of Germany. Slowly there grew up a new state of society, Feudalism, wherein the feudal lord imposes his will upon the people, owns the land and enslaves the people—by the sword. We find that the serfs were ruled by the feudal lords, not because of the fact that they liked him or that they did not realize that they were enslaved to him, but because of the fact that he had an armed body with which to enforce his will upon them, and at the same time keep other robbers from taking the spoils away from him. This feudal system finally began to concentrate. We find that kings began to impose their will upon other feudal lords, and a more centralized state grows up. Within this feudal system, however, there is developing another economic system, that is the permanent home of the system under which we slave today—Capitalism. We find that the embryonic capitalists settled around the walls of the castle, just as did the others, who were subjects of the feudal lords. They actually developed around the walls of the castle. Again, we find the middle class, the bourgeoisie, or their system developing. We find they also wished to expand. With the invention of the compass their market is widened out. We find that they have control over greater and greater economic power which is continually growing; but the political system of society under which they live does not suit the needs of the capitalist system. We find that the restrictions

placed upon them by the feudal barons do not meet the needs of the capitalists. For instance, we might illustrate: The feudal lords used to control the capitalists, by laying down rules to them regulating the manner in which things should be produced; the quality of the goods that should be sold and the price for which they should be sold. They tried to impose such restrictions upon them, and, of course, this did not aid the infant capitalists in any way in the development of their system. We find that they finally reached a point where their economic system is cramped like the limp little chicken within the shell of the egg; and what happens? They take political action and gain control of the political state. One of the most revolutionary inventions in Europe at this time was gunpowder. The army of the knights could not stand up before bullets, and was driven back and defeated by gunpowder; and, of course, also the stone walls of the castles had to ultimately crumble before cannon-shot. Again it is the question of available organized man-power for fighting; in this case a fight in which the capitalist class are trying to get control of the political state. How do they do it? By getting the workingmen to fight for them. In France, as you all know, it was an open bloody fight between the rising capitalists and the old feudal system. It was an out and out fight, and the streets were running with blood. They had to do one of two things, either gain control of the political state and establish themselves as the ruling class of society, or else concede to the strangling of the further development of their system. They were driven by this necessity to do the things which they did, and that was a fight for control of society—and fight they did. Within the feudal system, they were cramped and hampered, just as is social production today within the confines of the capitalist system. In a similar manner as social production today is hampered and cramped within the confines

of the capitalist system, so, too, was early production cramped within the confines of the feudal state; and just as the bourgeoisie, we workingmen and women, eventually, will be driven to organize ourselves to gain control of the political state, establishing ourselves as the ruling class in society. There isn't today that kind of action. Once the capitalists gain control of the political state, we find that they use it against the working class to further their own interests, and we find that the prime interest of the capitalist class, this time, is to get the state to spread itself out and take care of the trading interests of the capitalists, and develop the foreign markets and so on.

We also find that the state was very useful to the capitalists in forcing the workers into the factories, especially in the early days in England, before they had gained full economic power. Engels tells us further that the decree of freedom of land in France by the rising bourgeoisie meant nothing but freedom from the land by the peasants of that time. They proceeded to force them off the land, after they had gained control of the political state, forcing them into the workshops, to serve the machines—to slave producing commodities for the capitalists.

But the capitalist system goes on developing, just as did the previous economic systems before it, and, I think, that is why a great many of us fall down in not fully comprehending and understanding what Marx and Engels were pointing out, when they said that within the womb of the old society a new one must develop before the old gives way. We find in the early days of Capitalism that most of the exportation that went on, went on in the form of consumable commodities. Later on, we find that exportation takes another turn, culminating into the exportation of capital that is going on now. This presents a contradiction within the capitalist system. They produce wealth at home,

but the working class receives only a portion of it. A great part of it had to be exported to foreign countries, and as this exportation develops to foreign countries, thereby swamping and closing up the market, it, consequently, develops into a contradiction within the capitalist system. We find that the industries keep growing larger and larger. Today it is nothing to see ten thousand men employed in one plant, where in the early days of Capitalism there were only a handful. That is only one phase of the social production that is going on in society today. Today these factories are linked by telephones, telegraph, steamships, and wireless, and so on, until we have developed a huge social machine of production. The working class of the world is summoned each day to the factory, regardless of nationality or race. They are summoned to the factory to produce in a social way—co-operative production. They produce co-operatively. There is not much in this room, perhaps, that we can say has been produced wholly in any one section of the world; the products of the four corners of the earth are all necessary to produce everything. On the other hand, we have been in conflict with this private appropriation. We find the capitalist class as a whole appropriate the products of social production, and that is the great contradiction that exists within the capitalist system. The structure of the new order of society has already grown up within Capitalism—as much as it will grow within Capitalism.

If society is to go on, if it is to pass forward into another high stage of development, then this contradiction between social production and private appropriation must be broken. The shell of Capitalism, capitalist society, cramps the further growth of this social production. Just as the capitalists themselves were cramped within the super-structure of feudal society, so, too, today we find that social production, the production of the future, is



cramped within the political confines of present day society, and we cannot go forward, we cannot better our conditions until we have broken that shell; we cannot emerge out of the dilemma in which we find ourselves until we have seized control of the political state and changed the basis of our economic system from private appropriation to collective appropriation. We can go no further until we have performed this act.

The development of the capitalist class has a corresponding reflex development within the working class. Capitalism has performed a great mission. It found the world very, very large; it took weeks to get from one country to another; but with the development of Capitalism, we find that the world has grown smaller and smaller. We find that it is much easier to travel about. We have all been linked up in one co-ordinating whole; and that working class, which was voiceless and unorganized, has become a well oiled producing machine, and a well organized army of producers, operating the most intricate machinery, running the vast industries from top to bottom. Just as they have been organized economically by the capitalist class, so, too, in the very near future, they are going to organize themselves politically. There is just one thing that stands between the working class and its further development. There is just one very hard clamp upon the working class to hold it where it is, and that clamp is nothing more nor less than the political state. You can look around yourself today and find out what is being used most against the working class. What are they using against the workers most? You do not have to take my word for it. In one of the last issues, I believe the last issue of the Industrial Union News, there was published an unsigned article, I presume the editor is responsible for it, which tells that the state has absolute control over labor. I believe the editor will recall that, and I will not bother looking for it

now. In an article discussing the Seattle strike, the editor points out to the working class that the state has control over labor. That is one thing they found out there, and how did it evidence itself? We find that the Seattle strike paralyzed the town. They did it for one and only one thing, as any economic organization or industrial organization of any description would do. They withheld their labor power from the factories. What was the result? The state came marching out in the shape of soldiers. The one other thing that the strikers could not do was to take hold of the machinery of the government, of society. The economic power of the workers in Seattle, when it was withdrawn from production, did not amount to a "tinker's damn." And it furnishes concrete evidence that the proletariat can get nowhere with the mere economic power.

Let us go back a little further than the Seattle general strike. If you go back to the outbreak of the war with Germany, and the entrance of the United States Government into the war, you will find that there was a very well organized section of the working class which wished to use their economic power to defend themselves in distress. What happened? What happened when they started to use this economic power, this wonderful power of the working class to produce? They started to use that thing to better their conditions, but we find that the political state was brought into action against them, with the result that their organization was knocked into a cocked hat. We find that their organization was perfectly helpless against the forces of the state, against the courts, and against the soldiers who backed up the courts and today protect the courts. We find that the working class that time was absolutely helpless before this machinery of the state. We find that in all grievances coming up between the workers and the capitalists during the course of the prosecution of this war, that the

capitalists always brought the political state in to see that the workers behaved themselves. They used that as a weapon. What for? To control the economic power of the worker! They did that in order to maintain control of the political state, because, in the last analysis, the armed force of the state dominates the individuals of society, and this power must be used in the interest of the bourgeoisie.

There are instances in society where the working class organized themselves very finely for the purpose of withholding their economic power from the machinery of production and thus bring the boss to his knees, and what has been the result? What has been the result of this effort? How far has the working class ever gotten with these efforts to bring the boss to his knees, by withholding the economic power from the tools of production? Not very far. They have not succeeded in changing their status in society one iota. They are just as much enslaved now as at any other time. The W. I. I. U. tells us that their status is going to remain the same, until we have organized a union of Socialists operating the plants—the Socialist Industrial Union on the one hand, and the huge political party, on the other, casting the ballots. When we have that kind of organization, it will be possible to change our status in society; it will be possible to emancipate ourselves, when we have that kind of society. And they tell you, further, that a revolution of the working class is impossible without that kind of organization. They tell you that without the Socialist Industrial Union there can be no proletarian revolution. A few months ago, when the proletariat raised itself to the position of the ruling class in Russia, Arnold Petersen, National Secretary of the S. L. P., which endorsed the W. I. I. U., rushed into print with the statement that there could not be any revolution in Russia, as they had no Socialist Industrial Union. The principal argument in

favor of the resolution this afternoon, that the working class can emancipate themselves without the Socialist Industrial Union, is the living fact of the proletariat ruling in Russia. That is the principal argument this afternoon.

Now, as against this idea that it is necessary to organize the future form of society, the political Socialist presents another argument. My contention is that the course of the two conflicts which the workers wage, the immediate economic takes to guerilla warfare with the boss, and the political conflict is fought for the control of society. Because of these two struggles that the worker enters into, the Socialist Industrial Union cannot and does not develop. Further, we find that society has a funny way of not going the way just as the people are planning. Daniel De Leon, who organized and laid out this kind of program, has been given credit by Nikolai Lenin of Russia. Those of you who will take the pleasure of looking up the history of Trades Unionism will find that the organizations in Russia were there before the days of the November revolution; we find that some of them fought the dictatorship of the proletariat; we find that some of the organizations there, which had been organized for the working class and by the working class, were in opposition to the Soviet form of government. Things do not always work out that way. You can plan things that way, but things do not always come out as men plan them. We cannot take such a mechanical concept of things. We cannot blindly tell ourselves that Industrial Unionism is the natural reflex of industrial production that, therefore, we must have the industrial Union. We cannot take that mechanistic concept of things. They can so organize in churches, if you will, but if they have the Socialist knowledge in their head, then they can generate power which will bring the capitalist power to their knees. It will be

the organized fighting man-power of the working class. (Applause.)

I contend that the working class organized industrially into a Socialist Industrial Union is no more fit to overthrow the capitalist class than as if they were organized on the geographical basis. Knowledge will find the ways and means. Knowledge will generate the power, because knowledge in itself is power. That is my position, and because of that position, I insist that the Socialist organization as such should be organized primarily into a Socialist study class, conscious to make men understand their position in society, to make them understand the manner in which they are robbed, to make them understand the manner in which the capitalist class controls labor, as my Comrade Dannenberg tells us in the Workers' International Union organ. Let the workers understand how the capitalist class, through the political state, controls labor. Once they understand that thoroughly, then, in conformity with the conditions of the times, they will organize and train themselves to seize control of the political state, and, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, work the economic system out of it—the economic system of the future order.

Therefore, I urge you, as workingmen and workingwomen, to organize, to train yourselves for a conquest of political power. (Applause.)

### **THE CHAIRMAN.**

Comrade Dannenberg will now address you for a period of forty-five minutes.

### **FIRST PRESENTATION—**

### **KARL DANNENBERG.**

Fellow Worker Chairman, Fellow Worker Batt, Workingmen and Workingwomen: It is first of all essential for me, as the representative of an organization, to do something that my opponent has not done. I will present to you the position of the Workers' International Industrial Union. Com-

rade Batt has not presented to you the position of the Socialist Party. The position of the Workers' International Industrial Union, in essence, affirms that "the working class and employing class have nothing in common." That "there can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people, and the few who make up the employing class have all the good things of life." Furthermore, that "between these two classes a struggle must go on until the toilers come together on the political field under the banner of a distinct revolutionary political party governed by the workers' class interests, and on the industrial field under the banner of One Great Industrial Union to take and hold all means of production and distribution, and to run them for the benefit of all producers." This is my position and the position of the Workers' International Industrial Union which I have the honor to represent this afternoon.

Now, it is up to me this afternoon to prove scientifically and historically the accuracy of this position, nothing else. It is immaterial to me and the W. I. I. U. what the working class can do—if certain things come into being. It is also immaterial to me and the W. I. I. U. what the working class will do—if certain things happen. What I am particularly interested in, and what Comrade Batt must show me this afternoon, is whether the working class of today, without a Socialist Industrial Union, can emancipate itself. In other words, what he must do is to show me that the working class, without the assistance of a Socialist Industrial Union, or without economic power backing up the political power, *does emancipate itself*. The question is not what the workers can and would do, if they did not have the industrial union or the economic power, but what the workers are doing today—that is the question.

Comrades: We are living in a state of social turmoil and revolution; we are living in the last phase of capitalist production; yes, we are living in the culminating phases of the capitalist system. Therefore, to reiterate with emphasis, what we are interested in in these times of unrest is not what the workers *ought* to do, but what the workers *are* doing *today*; how they are emancipating themselves *today*; i. e., what indications, tendencies, and economic and political reflexes are visible on the field of the class struggle and in the camp of the working class. Again, that is the question.

I maintain that the history of the class struggle is a good criterion to go by. I further maintain that the history of the class struggle, or, to be more exact, of the proletarian class struggle in particular and the class struggle of society in general, is a good compass to go by in steering through the intricacies of this debate.

Having only forty-five minutes, I will take the history of the proletarian class struggle as a basis. Now, when we examine the class struggle of the proletariat, what do we perceive? Do we perceive that the proletariat organizes itself first politically? Do we further see that the proletariat organizes itself for immediate demands and ultimate demands? Furthermore, does history show and prove to us that the first organic expression of the working class, the first conscious expression, is a political expression? Now, mind you, Fellow Workers, in formulating these questions, I am not arguing against political action. What I want to show you thereby is that political action is only a reflex of economic action.

What I want to show you historically is that before we ever thought of political action in the working class, we conceived of economic action; and to illustrate this I will go into the modern history of the class struggle.

For instance, how did the working class of

Belgium actually get what it now exercises, namely political suffrage? Why was the universal suffrage system decreed, or how was it actually acquired by the workers in Belgium? Take, for instance, the momentous strike of 1893 in Belgium. What was that inaugurated for? For political demands? What results, if any, did this strike net? History shows that it obtained for the working class the right to vote. Now, how was that right obtained? Was it not achieved through the economic force and power of the working class? Did not the Belgian workers have to cow the capitalist class; and by what? By strangling, yes, crippling production. I would like to back up my claims, the claims I make here, with documentary evidence. If you will read Kautsky's opinion on this particular strike of the Belgian workers, you will find that economic action for the realization of political principles is a great force. Again, how did the working class of England actually obtain the suffrage? How did the English workers remove the obstacles in the way of the franchise in England? Think of the great historic days of 1839, when the working class of England united *economically* launched that momentous strike which afterwards culminated into the historic Chartists' movement! Furthermore, the question is undoubtedly opportune: How was the Russian revolution actually inaugurated? When did the Russian revolution start, my friends? I maintain that it did not start a few months or a few years ago. The Russian revolution started in 1905; and a Rosa Luxemburg states in her articles on the Political Mass Strike, its inception was nothing else but a series of mass strikes projecting a political goal. What was the political goal of these economic organizations? The political suffrage, of course. Here you have the working class actually employing its economic power, before it was even in a position to practice political action. Here you also have the working



class employing its economic power, in order to obtain what? Nothing more nor less than political rights: the privilege, the historic privilege, to vote.

On the hand of these illustrations, you will see that this afternoon it is not the question whether the working class can emancipate itself without a Socialist Industrial Union; that is not the question. The question is, does the working class in its struggle for emancipation take the course of a pure and simple political organization; or do we find that the class struggle is carried on industrially and politically? We find that the workers in their struggle against exploitation, or against the manifestations of exploitation, utilize both arms. Therefore, what Comrade Batt must prove this afternoon is that my assertion and illustrations are unsound, and that the working class does *not* utilize both arms. What he must prove is that the working class only fights with one arm, namely, the political one. He must prove and illustrate to me that the Russian revolution in 1905 was fought along pure and simple political lines. He must prove to me that the strikes for political enfranchisement of the workers in Holland, in Belgium, in Sweden, and in England, that these strikes, which were conducted with the aid of the economic organizations of the working class, were not so conducted. He must prove that these historic facts are not facts, if he desires to place his position upon what I would call a scientific basis.

Now, we are going to take up another phase of the discussion or, rather, we will stick to the class struggle for a little while longer. Why has Comrade Batt spoken to you about the Seattle strike—that was lost? Our Socialist theoreticians have always emphasized that a strike is never lost. Why has he not told you about Australia, where the working class is organizing into One Big Union, to oust the pure and simple labor politicians controlling Australia? Why did he not tell you that this

One Big Union practically adopted the preamble of the Workers' International Union? Why did he forget to tell you about the One Big Union which is being organized in Canada? Why did he forget to tell you about the revolutionary shop steward movement in England? Why did he forget to tell you about the Welsh coal miners' strike that brought Lloyd George down to his knees? (Applause.) Why did he forget to tell you about the movement aiming and striving for the dictatorship of the proletariat that is being developed in England at the point of production—a dictatorship that is absolutely feared by every politician in Great Britain. (Applause.) Yes, the dictatorship of the proletariat! Why did he not tell you about that dictatorship that is being developed through the class conscious economic organizations in Germany, a movement that is fighting hammer and tongs in the various industrial centers against the pure and simple politicians who are now betraying the revolution in Germany? Why talk about Seattle where the strike was lost? Why not talk about England, why not talk about Russia; why not talk about Germany; about strikes that were won? The Seattle strike lost! Comrades, did any strike ever conducted in the United States sound more emphatically like a clarion note of the revolution through the land than the Seattle strike? Why, the capitalist class in the United States were shivering in their stolen boots when it started! Every capitalist paper, every capitalist editor, every pure and simple politician was frantically shouting Bolshevism—and shaking with fear (laughter and applause). That strike, Fellow Workers, was not lost, it was won! (Applause.)

All revolutions have their origin in the economic conditions of society. Economic conditions of society produce all social conditions. Economic conditions of society are the driving forces in society. Now, if the economic conditions of society

are the driving forces in society, if the process of obtaining food, clothing and shelter, is the dynamic process, then we know, or ought to know, that whenever changes take place in the process of production that these changes are bound to reflex themselves where? In the political, in the ethical, and in the whole social life of society. In consequence, the economic conditions, or in other words, the process of producing food, clothing and shelter, are, as stated before, the dynamic forces behind life. Therefore, all revolutions, to emphasize again, have their origin in the economy of society, and if a revolution takes place in the economic conditions of society, that revolution is bound to be felt in all the other conditions of society.

Now, what is the political state? We have had society, and social life, without having a political state. We have had the period of Savagery, the period of Barbarism, where we had no political state, and we had revolutions in those periods. I ask Comrade Batt where did they come from—(applause) these revolutions? Were they the result of economic conditions; were they actually produced by the dynamic forces of economic conditions; or were they fought and produced by the dynamic forces of the armed forces of the political state—that did not exist? And I wish to tell you, Comrades, the arguments I am presenting this afternoon are not original, they are as old as the hills, and they have been presented before by Frederick Engels “some years” ago to fight Eugene Duehring, a man who also had that so-called “force kink.” Engels calls it “force nonsense.” We have here Comrade Batt, whom I present to you as the modern Herr Duehring of America. (Laughter.)

Comrade Batt cited to you how Capitalism emancipated itself from Feudalism. He told you about the military force that was necessary. Of

course, he did not tell you how the capitalists, all of a sudden, got that military force. He told you they got it. It was necessary, and when they had it they conquered the feudal barons; but why did not the feudal barons hold on? Place yourselves into the position of these feudal lords, Fellow Workers. If you had the military power behind you for centuries, why on earth didn't you hold on to it, when the capitalists wanted it—when the capitalists needed it to lick you? How was it possible for our good friends, the capitalists, to get the military power which they needed to get the political power? How was it possible for our bourgeoisie to get that military power, which in my estimation you can only get when you have the economic and the political power. How did this military power develop in the camp of the bourgeoisie? Again that persistent question arises: How did they get it? The most important point I want to emphasize is: that I want Comrade Batt to answer this question. I want him to answer how the working class is going to get that military power which, according to him, is so essential. (Applause.) Eugene Duehring answers the question for him; the same question that was also raised by Frederick Engels. Now this is Mr. Duehring's argument: "The most primitive or basic power must be sought in the direct political force, and not first in an indirect economic power." This was quoted by Engels in "Eugene Duehring's Umwälzung der Wissenschaft," on page 163. Here we perceive the Duehring of 50 years ago reappearing in the modern Mr. Duehring in the person of our good friend Batt. (Laughter). Now, what does Engels state against the argument of Duehring? If I read Engels to you, I am practically also answering the modern Duehring here this afternoon. (Reading): \* "When Herr Duehr-

\* Landmarks of Scientific Socialism, by Frederick Engels, page 187.

ing therefore calls the property of the present day, property resting on force, and designates it as 'that form of domination which does not merely signify the exclusion of one's fellow beings from the use of the natural means of sustenance, but implies in addition that the subjection of man has lain at the foundation of human slavery,' he puts the matter upside-down." (Laughter.) You heard Comrade Batt tell us, that one bunch of men subjected another bunch, and by this subjection they were able to do what? Rule. (Laughter.) I again maintain with Frederick Engels that (reading): \* "The subjection of humanity to slavery in all its forms means the control by the master of the means of labor by virtue of which alone he can employ his slaves upon them and the disposal of the means of livelihood by which he can keep his slaves alive." That is economic power. Let me continue: "In all cases therefore it implies a certain power of possession which transcends the ordinary? How did this arise? Occasionally it is clear that it was seized and can therefore be said to rest upon force but this is by no means essential. It can be got by labor, be robbed, be obtained by trade, or taken by fraud. It must be worked for generally before it can be stolen." Now, we come to the second reply on page 189. This will amplify what I first read (reading): \*\* "But Marx has proved in his 'Capital'—and Herr Duehring does not venture to intrude upon the matter—that at a certain stage in economic development the production of commodities is transformed into capitalistic production and that at this point 'the law of appropriation resting upon the production and circulation of commodities, the law of private property, by its own inevitable dialectic becomes changed into its opposite, the exchange of equivalents, which appeared as its original mode of operation, but

\* Landmarks, etc, page 187.

\*\* Landmarks, etc., page 189.

has now become so twisted that there is only an appearance of exchange since. In the first place, the portion of capital exchanged for labor force is itself only a portion of the product of another's labor taken without an equivalent, and in the second place, it is not only supplied by its producers, the workers, but it must be supplied also with a new surplus." This, Fellow Workers, is capitalistic production. (Reading): "Originally property seemed to us to be established on labor only—property now appears (as a conclusion of the Marxian argument), on the side of the capitalist, as the right to unpaid labor, and, on the side of the workingman, as an impossibility, the ownership of his own product. The difference between property and labor is the result of a law which apparently proceeded from their identity.' In other words if we exclude the possibility of force, robbery, and cheating absolutely, if we take the position that all private property originally depended upon the personal labor of its possessor and that equivalents are always exchanged we nevertheless come, in the course of the development of production and exchange, of necessity, to the modern capitalistic methods of production, to the monopolization of the means of production and livelihood in the hands of a single class few in numbers, to the degradation of the other, consisting of the immense majority of producers to the position of propertyless proletarians, to the periodical alternations of swindling operations and trade crises and to the whole of the present anarchy in production. The entire result rests on purely economic grounds without robbery, force, or any intervention of politics or the government being necessary." And now Engels sums up with the fitting conclusion:

"Property resting on force becomes a mere phrase which merely serves to obscure the understanding of the real development of things."

Now, here again you have the deductions and the scientific basis of Engels' reply to Duehring. My task this afternoon is very simple. You see, I do not have to talk at all. I will only let Engels talk. (Laughter and continuing to read.)

\* "If 'political conditions are the decisive causes of economic conditions' the modern bourgeoisie would necessarily not have progressed as the result of a fight with feudalism, but would be the darling child of its womb. Everybody knows that the opposite is the case. The bourgeoisie, originally bound to pay feudal dues to the dominant feudal nobility, recruited from bond-slaves and thralls, in a subject state, has, in the course of its conflict with the nobility captured position after position, and finally has come into possession of the power in civilized countries. In France it directly attacked the nobility, in England it made the aristocracy more and more bourgeois and finally incorporated it with itself as a sort of ornament. And how did this come about?" Here is, Fellow Workers, where Duehring and Engels clash. Here is the answer (reading): "Entirely through the transformation of economic conditions which was sooner or later followed either by the voluntary or compulsory transformation of political conditions." In other words, according to Engels, first the bourgeoisie transformed itself from a subject class into the economic bourgeoisie, and then afterwards accomplished its political transformation, something that is, as you will readily observe, absolutely different from what our Friend Batt concluded or told you about in his presentation.

Now let us continue our study of Engel's "Anti-Duehring" (continuing to read): \*\* "The fight of the bourgeoisie against the feudal nobility is the

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\* Landmarks of Scientific Socialism, by Frederick Engels, page 190.

\*\* Landmarks of Scientific Socialism, by Frederick Engels, page 191.

fight of the city against the country, of industry against landlordism, of economy based on money against economy based on natural products." You see, Fellow Workers, it is not a body or gang of soldiers against another. It was a fight of landlordism, against what? Against growing Capitalism. Now, what were the weapons of the bourgeoisie? Did they try to get the soldiers, or did the feudal barons try to keep them? What were they before they became capitalists? History shows they were serfs. They were a sorrowful lot of penniless human propositions. Do you think a serf could get a mercenary soldier to fight for him? Then how was he able to become a capitalist, if, according to our Friend Batt, you have got to have the soldier first before you can become a bourgeois. In other words, the capitalists control the army not because they are capitalists, but they are capitalists because they control the army! (Laughter and applause.)

Now, let us hear Engels (reading): "The distinctive weapons of the bourgeois in this fight were those which came into existence through the development of increasing economic force by reason of the growth at first of hand manufacture and afterwards machine-manufacture and through the extension of trade." From this you see, Fellow Workers, that the weapons of the bourgeoisie were the weapons of a superior economic force. Mind you, I am not telling you this. I am reading it from Engels. Of course, I agree. (Laughter and applause, continuing to read):

"During the whole of this conflict the political power was in the hands of the nobility, with the exception of a period when the king employed the bourgeoisie against the nobility in order to hold one in check by means of the other." According to that the bourgeoisie should have been licked all the time, because the political power was in the hands of the nobility. (Reading): "From the



very moment, however, in which the bourgeoisie still deprived of political power began to be dangerous because of the development of its economic power the monarchy again turned to the nobility and thereby brought about the revolution of the bourgeois first in England and then in France."

How can the bourgeoisie be dangerous, according to our Friend Batt, if it is deprived of political power? Also how can a class develop economic power, if it has not got political power, again according to our Friend Batt? (Laughter.) Let me repeat a few salient questions (reading): "—the monarchy again turned to the nobility and thereby brought about the revolution of the bourgeois first in England and then in France. The political conditions in France remained unaltered until the economic conditions outgrew them." To emphasize, the political conditions in France remained unaltered until the economic conditions outgrew them. This is substantiating Historical Materialism with vim and vigor. (Reading): "In politics the noble was everything, the bourgeois nothing. As a social factor the bourgeoisie was of the highest importance while the nobility had abandoned all its social functions and yet pocketed revenues, social services which it did not any longer perform."

In other words, here again you have the bourgeoisie the whole cheese in the country, and the nobility still having all the political power. How is it possible, Comrade Batt? (Reading): "Even this is not sufficient. Bourgeois society was, as far as the whole matter of production is concerned, tied and bound in the political feudal forms of the Middle Ages, which this production, not only as regards manufacture but as regards handwork also had long transcended amid all the thousand-fold gild-privileges and local and provincial tax impositions which had become mere obstacles and fetters to production." Can you beat it?

Bourgeois society was bound up in the political form of the Middle Ages; how could it be according to the concept of my worthy opponent? Impossible, but here you have it from a recognized Marxian scholar. (Laughter.)

I will repeat: "Bourgeois society was, as far as the whole matter of production is concerned, tied and bound in the political feudal forms of the Middle Ages, which this production, not only as regards manufacture but as regards handwork also had long transcended amid all the thousand-fold guild-privileges and local and provincial tax impositions which had become mere obstacles and fetters to production." In other words, despite the obstacles, despite the political fetters, the bourgeoisie manifested itself within and under the rulership of feudal political power. (Reading):

"The bourgeois revolution put an end to them. But the economic condition did not, as Herr Duehring would imply, forthwith adapt itself to the political circumstances,—that the king and the nobility spent a long time in trying to effect—but it threw all the mouldy old political rubbish aside and shaped new political conditions in which the new economic conditions might come into existence and develop." In other words, as soon as the bourgeoisie was powerful enough economically to throw aside and actually did depose the political state, it adapted the political state to the requirements of the economic conditions of the bourgeoisie.

But first you had to have the bourgeoisie before you could depose the feudal political state, and you also had to have what? The economic system necessitating the deposition of the feudal state. (Reading): \* "And it has developed splendidly in this suitable political and legal atmosphere, so splendidly that the bourgeoisie is now not very far from the position which the nobility occupied in

\* Landmarks of Scientific Socialism, by Fred Engels, page 192.

1789. It is becoming more and more not alone a social superfluity but a social impediment." Fellow Workers, I want you to remember that-- (Reading): "It takes an ever diminishing part in the work of production and becomes more and more, as the noble did, a mere revenue consuming class. And this revolution in its position and the creation of a new class, that of the proletariat, came about without any force-nonsense but by purely economic means." (Laughter.)

We will now stop quoting Engels. At least we will quote him once more, when we come to the proposition of Comrade Batt stating that the military or the superior military force always wins. You know he told you that the invention of gunpowder was a terrific factor in ousting feudalism; but he did not tell you how the invention of gunpowder came about, and who utilized this invention. Inventions are only products of economic conditions, and the very class that gives birth to certain inventions is going to utilize them in order to actually foster and advance its economic power. Therefore, the most progressive economic class in society is bound to give birth to the most effective weapons. And if you have the most effective weapons, you have got the most efficient army, too. To illustrate: Why were the Germans so forceful, with their Krupps or 42 centimeters? They had the most efficient army, because they had the best organized industries—the most perfect industries. In this connection I will just quote Engels in reply to Duehring once more. As stated before, Duehring advanced the same argument as Comrade Batt, with reference to military power, and Engels sums up as follows: \* "The revolver then triumphs over the sword and it should be apparent even to the maker of childish axioms that superior force is no mere act of the

\* Landmarks of Scientific Socialism, by Frederick  
els, page 193.

will but requires very real preliminary conditions for the carrying out of its purposes, especially mechanical instruments, the more highly developed of which have the superiority over the less highly developed. Furthermore these tools must be produced, whence it appears that the producer of the more highly developed tool of force, commonly called weapon, triumphs over the producer of the less highly developed tool. In a word, the triumph of force depends upon the production of weapons, therefore upon economic power, on economic conditions, on the ability to organize actual material instruments."

I thank you. (Applause.)

### THE CHAIRMAN.

Comrade Batt will now reply in a period of twenty minutes.

### DENNIS E. BATT IN REBUTTAL.

Comrade Chairman, Comrade Dannenberg, Comrades and Friends: I am really glad that Comrade Dannenberg has decided to start a study class this afternoon instead of debating on principles. It happens that I have read the Engels-Duehring debate on force. I must dissolve any characterization of me as the modern Duehring. I have read the articles on force and the "force nonsense." I really wish that Comrade Dannenberg would try to follow my argument a little more closely this time than he did the last time and he will undoubtedly know what I mean when I get through. If you will recall, I did not pick out any points in my debate that force developed an economic system. Those of you who take the pleasure, after going home, of getting themselves "Landmarks of Scientific Socialism," will see that Duehring-Engels argument of force is an entirely different proposition than that of this afternoon. It is an entirely different proposition.

If you have followed Comrade Dannenberg closely you will find that he read certain things. If you will recall them as he read them, you will also recall that I stated them before he read them. The only thing is that he proposes to put a different interpretation on them, and I assure you that the proposition I have laid down this afternoon agrees entirely with what Engels said here. He says on page 191 (reading):

“Entirely through the transformation of economic conditions which was sooner or later followed either by the voluntary or compulsory transformation of political conditions.” If you will recall I pointed out to you in the first period of my discussion how Capitalism develops economic conditions. Engels agrees with me on the interpretation of Capitalism and I am glad to say that Comrade Dannenberg agrees with me. We will go on (reading):

“The fight of the bourgeoisie against the feudal nobility is the fight of the city against the country, of industry against landlordism, of economy based on money against economy based on natural products. The distinctive weapons of the bourgeois in this fight were those which came into existence through the development of increasing economic force by reason of the growth at first of hand manufacture and afterwards machine-manufacture and through the extension of trade. During the whole of this conflict the political power was in the hands of the nobility, with the exception of a period when the king employed the bourgeoisie against the nobility in order to hold one in check by means of the other.

“From the very moment, however, in which the bourgeoisie still deprived of political power began to be dangerous because of the development of its economic power the monarchy again turned to the nobility and thereby brought about the revolution of the bourgeois first in

England and then in France. The political conditions in France remained unaltered until the economic conditions outgrew them." That is all I said during the first 45 minutes, that the political conditions became unalterable until the economic conditions outgrew them. Marx said that force is the midwife of history. What does he mean by that? When any economic system develops within another political system to a certain stage, then we find that transformation from the one system to the other. Force has to come in. That is what I have been pointing out to you all afternoon. You will find that what has happened in the feudal and capitalist struggle, you will find that Engels' remarks are correct. (Reading): "The political conditions in France remained unaltered until the economic conditions outgrew them." Then what happened? The aristocrats had started going off under the guillotines. The all important class today is the working-class and they have no political power to exercise, not even a negligible quantity of political power that they hold. The economic system is here, it is divided, and it is ripe, but we cannot develop it any further until we have removed these shackles of Capitalism—capitalist society. To get back to the end of the argument. The capitalist system, the political structure of the capitalist system cramps and hampers the further development of the economic system. The social production is cramped from further development, because of the political superstructure of society. The shell must be broken before the chick can develop any further.

Now, what does Comrade Dannenberg propose to do with the W. I. U., and so on? He proposes to develop within the capitalist system not only the social production, but he proposes to build up within the capitalist system the working-class structure. He proposes to do that thing. He proposes to build up the economic structure

underneath the structure of Capitalism, and as soon as it is built up underneath, you can make damn sure that the political system will dominate it. (Applause.)

You will find the conditions in England where the boss collectively bargains with his slaves as to how much they shall get for the labor which they render. You will find that thing has a tendency to help the capitalist system live just a little while longer. If you attempt to use those things for political purposes, you run afoul of the armed forces of the state; you run afoul of the armed guards of the state, so you must make up your mind that when the economic structure, even if you build it up as you want to build it up, you have to gain control of that political state before you can use it to your own advantage.

I don't think Comrade Dannenberg will deny that.

MR. DANNENBERG: I do.

MR. BATT (reading): \* "Bourgeois society was, as far as the whole matter of production is concerned, tied and bound in the political feudal forms of the Middle Ages, which this production, not only as regards manufacture but as regards handwork also had long transcended amid all the thousand-fold gild-privileges and local and provincial tax impositions which had become mere obstacles and fetters to production."

The system developed and was hampered just as I pointed out to you a few minutes ago. The capitalist political structure cramps the further development of the economic structure of the times: social production, in which the working-class is the only important class, and in which the capitalist class has become a parasite upon the economic system of society. The economic revolution has

\* Landmarks of Scientific Socialism, by Frederick Engels, page 192.

already taken place. The economic revolution that is going on in society has gained in society.

If you will turn to page 195 of "Landmarks of Scientific Socialism," you will find out that Engels said distinctly that (reading): "Fire-arms from the first were bourgeois instruments of warfare employed on behalf of the rising monarchy against the feudal nobility. The hitherto unassailable stone castles of the nobles submitted to the cannon of the burghers, the fire of their guns pierced the mail-armor of the knights. The supremacy of the nobility fell with the heavily armed cavalry of the nobility." Private property was brought into existence by the development of the division of labor in society. I contend that the hour has struck in the capitalist class, that the economic system has developed to a point where the fetters of Capitalism must be struck off before we can go any further. Now, there is the other discussion that has been brought up and which I would like to go into.

It is the question of backing up the ballot. Comrade Dannenberg has referred to that. How can you as working men organize into a Socialist Industrial Union? How are you going to back up the mandate of the working-classes at the polls? That is the question. The tendency of the system of Capitalism is such that you have less and less control over your labor power; the tendency of the capitalist system is such that your control over your labor-power grows weaker and weaker as an individual and as a class. You are less able to control your labor now in this country than you were 50 years ago. The development of the system has a tendency towards that way. I can assure you that as far as the country has slavery—the slave must have a head as thick as a four-inch plank if he does not understand that he is indispensable to production. Every workman in the shops knows that he is an indispensable thing in produc-



tion; the thing that he does not understand and does not know is that he is a slave. That is a thing he does not know. (Applause.) The thing that he is not conscious of is the fact that he and the fellow members of his class produce the wealth of the world and let somebody else get away with it. Now, what can we do towards backing up the ballot? Suppose we were organized 100 per cent, what could we do? We could do just one of two things. We could either withhold it from the tools, or we could apply it. Let us see how effective they are. Let us see how effective this strike proposition is in backing up the ballot. Briand, the father of the general strike, defended it at the Parisian Congress in 1899. He defended it very ably to the people there who "pooh-poohed" this idea of a general strike. He said that in case of a strike the government would mobilize their men into the army, put guns into their hands and put them operating industries. He stated that that was possible, but he said the government would think twice before it would do that. However, as Prime Minister of the French government in 1910, this same father of the general strike, this same Briand, dealt with a railroad strike which was called out on October 10th. What did he do? What did this man do who argued in 1899 that the government would think twice before it armed the workers on strike? What did he do? He thought twice and then armed them. (Laughter and applause.) He armed them and put them to operating railroads. The result was that the strike was broken on October 18th, in four days. That is one case. Now, that is one case where the government came in to break the strike. We have heard a lot about successful strikes this afternoon. But I am talking about losing strikes. We do that because argument is divided that way. It would not be natural for Comrade Dannenberg to talk that way. The strikes are only won in the sense that

they are an education to the working class. But experience runs an expensive school, a very expensive school, and it is a crime that fellows will learn in no other way. It seems a great majority cannot profit by the experience of a fellow who tried it. We all have got to have the club of the policeman fall on our head to realize that it is concrete. We cannot take the evidence of sound that echoes off the head of another. We have to learn by ourselves, but I have been content to learn by other people's experience.

Let us take another general strike. I heard my opponent say something about the Swedish strike which was called on August 4, 1909. It was one of the finest organized strikes that ever came down the pike. It was a fight between the boss and the slave. Everybody walked out, 100 per cent perfect. The policemen paraded the beat with a number of workers on strike, who helped them to keep order. They contended it was a fight between the boss and employe. Strikers helped the police to keep order, but very unfortunately on August 16th, twelve days later, the strike was lost. Why? Because it was predicated upon an error, just as my friend's whole argument on Duehring was predicated on an error. It was predicated upon this error that the class that does no useful work in society, the capitalistic class, will submit when the worker puts his ability to starve against the bosses' ability to eat; of course, the outcome is plain. (Applause.) Here is the other position, that you must "seize and hold." In other words, sneak around the door some early morning and turn the key and lock the boss out on the outside. About the time you get around the door to turn the key on the boss there are the boys with the machine guns—the state is on the job. This position leads to a fundamental error. It is not so much in itself bad, but it leads to another position which is worse. This position

is the father of Syndicalism. In fact, the I. W. W. is the bastard offspring of the S. L. P. and the W. I. I. U.. It is only a step from this position to total Anarchism. If you watch these organizations you will see that the political arm gets shorter and shorter until it is finally a little stump. I am of the opinion that it is not merely a question of fighting with the two arms of the working-class, but of the whole body in the fight; and this fight is a class fight, and as a class fight it expresses itself on the political field—as a fight for the domination of society.

I present this view, of course, always with the firm expectation that the midwife will bring forth this new social order out of the womb of Capitalism. I think my able opponent knows as well as I do the history and origin of the idea of the ballot. People started counting heads instead of cracking them. In the last analysis, I want something more to back up the ballot than just the ability to risk all, or apply my power to the tools of production. I feel that we have got to have that, we have got to have the working class organized, not only in the industries, but upon a full class basis. We must not only organize to get the workers in the industries, but we must organize to get the workers, who are today acting as the servants of the capitalists, the men in uniform. (Applause.) We must organize to get that fighting ability. Once we organize upon that basis, we will indeed get somewhere. That very same thing has been done in Russia. There was no Socialist Industrial Union in Russia. You can take Arnold Petersen's, 'National Secretary of the S. L. P.,' word for it. This is what he said (reading): "So long as the Bolsheviki were in opposition they were doing excellent work. Now, that they are in power they face failure." That was November 24th, 1917. Now, that they are in power they face failure. In another part of this

article he says (reading): "Socialism is not possible even in a highly developed capitalist country until the working class organizes as a class into industrial unions in contra-distinction to the existing craft unions—"

I know what my friend is going to fire back at me. He is going to bring the argument back at me that the revolution in Russia is going to fail unless the whole world will go into a revolution. It would not fail if the ballots of the world go over the top behind it. (Applause.) Now, I have been accused of being in opposition to the position of the Spartacan group, as the Scheidemann and Ebert government in Germany today. I have been put in the position of an opponent of the Spartacan group. I wish to point out to you that it is not so. I laid out to you the proposition that the workers must seize control of the government. Comrade De Leon in "*The Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World*" in 1905, pages 36 and 37, wrote me up and sticks me in the parliamentary pigeon hole. You will recall that I defined political action in a certain way. My position is illustrated by what the Spartacan group is doing in Germany in its political action against the Ebert-Scheidemann group. They propose to take just the plan that I was trying to lay out to you this afternoon, that is, seize control of the political state under the protection of the shield of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They will organize the economic structure of society. That is what they did in Russia, and are doing in Germany, and you will not get anywhere until you do that here. (Applause.)

### THE CHAIRMAN.

Comrade Dannenberg will reply in a period of thirty minutes, to be followed by the closing remarks of ten minutes by Comrade Batt.

**KARL DANNENBERG IN REBUTTAL.**

I would like to emphasize that my opponent has absolutely failed to answer the questions which I placed before him in my introduction. I represent the principles of a certain organization, and they maintain that the working class fights the class struggle politically and economically. I do believe in political action, and I am for the conquest of the political state. I am for the dismantling of the political state; but I do believe it imperative that the working-class shall fight with both arms, and I maintain that the working-class is fighting with both arms; but my opponent heretofore stated or insinuated that the working-class is not fighting with both arms. The point I want to make is that my opponent is absolutely a metaphysician. He supposes something which does not exist. I maintain that he has failed in proving the possibility of the impossible. My opponent must show where at least the political action he preaches has been practiced. He tells us Russia, he refers, quite laconically, to Germany; but I maintain that he is standing on his head if he tells us that. I want him to show me how it came that the Russians had a revolution and obtained the political franchise through purely economic action—in 1905. The point you must not forget is that a Socialist organization, or the form of political action as mapped out and preached by Comrade Batt, exists nowhere, not even in the Socialist Party which he represents. I want you to recollect, and I want to again emphasize that the form of political action as formulated by Comrade Batt does not function anywhere today. It is purely Utopian.

My opponent has cited the negative phases of economic action. He has shown you where certain strikes were lost. He has also shown you where certain strikes were actual failures; but did our friend ever cite to you the absolute collapse of pure and simple political action as it is so

graphically symbolized in the collapse of the Second International? We had political action of a certain kind in Germany. We had four million so-called Socialist votes there; and, as we all know, that political action certainly collapsed. It was pure and simple parliamentarism. I want Comrade Batt to show me what kind of Socialist political action he really can point to that has been successfully practiced and that he agrees with. He will cite Russia; he said the Spartacan group. But I want to tell you something; something you must know. The Russian revolution has been typically an economic revolution, and the conquest of the political power by the Bolshevist movement has been based upon the industrial power inherent in that movement—a power located in the Soviets.

Now what are Soviets? Are they political organizations? What is a council of peasants and workmen? Again, is it a political organization? Why does Comrade Lenin continually state that if the Russian Bolshevists want to maintain their political supremacy, they must maintain not only political power, but cement it by expropriating the expropriator as speedily as possible which, however, he considers improbable at this particular time.

Comrade Lenin in "*Soviets at Work*," says (reading): \* "The victory of the Socialist revolution will not be assured, unless the proletariat and the poorest peasantry manifest sufficient consciousness, idealism, self-sacrifice and persistence." I believe in class-consciousness, and I am absolutely a friend of Comrade Batt on the basis of class-consciousness. This is, however, not what we must ascertain; what we must find out is how this class-consciousness must manifest itself in order to be productive in a social revolutionary manner. Lenin answers that (reading): "With the creation of a new—the Soviet—type of state, offering

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\* The Soviets at Work, by Nikolai Lenin, page 5.

to the oppressed toiling masses the opportunity to participate actively in the free construction of a new society, we have solved only a small part of the difficult task. The main difficulty is in the economic domain; to raise the productivity of labor, to establish strict and universal accounting and control of production and distribution, and actually to socialize production." There is where the difficulty rests. You may have political control of the state, but that does not say that you can actually expropriate the expropriator—unless you have the instruments with which to do it. Now, what does accounting and control mean? It presupposes the existence of economic instruments. For instance, when the capitalists of America wanted to centralize or take over certain industries, they applied to their Washington politicians to create corresponding commissions of an industrial character, like the food commission, the railroad commission, and others. To be sure, they were all created by that political state of oppression. Speaking of Russia, Rosa Luxemburg said, "Victory had been dropped into their laps." The Russian victory is a big and to a degree abnormal victory, especially when compared to the struggle of the proletariat, as manifesting itself throughout the world. What did Lenin and what did Trotzky want these systems of accounting and control for? For the purpose of organizing the instruments with which to take, hold and run the means of production. And how are they organizing them? By organizing political committees in every city, or by creating what we call the industrial state through the various committees functioning industrially all over Russia? Why did Comrade Lenin endorse the theory of De Leonism? Why does De Leonism come back to America via Russia to show the Socialist Party that it is not dead, but that it is very much alive in reorganizing, reconstructing society in Europe in general, and Russia, in particular. Why? (Applause.) What

is the movement of the Spartacides? Why did it collapse? Because it was not big enough? No, because the German movement of the Eberts, the Scheidemanns, and the pure and simple politicians was based upon what? Was based upon the pure and simple economic movement of the German trade unions. These unions have been the backbone of pure and simple politics in Germany, and, therefore, the pure and simple trades union movement of Germany has manifested itself in the German Social Democracy. You have the same kind of trades unions here in America, a movement that has been disgraced by a Gompers, a Mitchell, and a Fitzgerald. They are the so-called labor-fakirs on the economic field and, therefore, I tell you I agree with our good Friend Eugene V. Debs when he said (reading): "If there has been any lingering doubt in the minds of those who organized the Industrial Workers as to the wisdom of the course, subsequent development would certainly have removed it, as each passing day has served to vindicate the timeliness and emphasize the demand for the revolutionary economic organization of the working class.

"That there are those, especially among Socialists, who are opposed to the Industrial Workers, either because of their fealty to the American Federation of Labor, or to their fear that economic unionism may absorb some of the means and energy which should be devoted to political propaganda, seems strange enough, and in either case we shall have something to ascribe their hostile attitude to superficial reasoning, or improper conceptions of economic unionism in its relation to the labor movement, and the historic mission of the working class.

"It is difficult to understand why so many Socialists treat contemptuously or with indifference, the whole question of labor unions, in view of the fact that the Socialist Party movement sprang from the trades union movement and the further obvious



fact that if the political organization of the working class is to develop its full power and fulfill its mission it will be only as the necessary outgrowth and result of the revolutionary economic solidarity of their class.

"In their every day lives, the workers have to fight for their economic existence and their fundamental need in this economic warfare is an economic weapon, and this weapon is the labor union, and without this the workers would be left naked and defenseless at the mercy of the enemy, and all attempts to interest them in the political aspect of the labor question, and to build up a political movement would end in dismal failure."—*Eugene V. Debs, in the Industrial Worker, September, 1906.*

Now, here I cite another classic of the Socialist movement in support of my position:

"The economic organizations (for Wage Workers) have become, without being conscious of it, the focus of organization for the working class; performing the same function as the mediaeval municipalities and communities for the bourgeoisie. If the economic organizations are indispensable to the daily guerrilla war between capital and labor, they are far more important as an organized means to advance the abolition of the system of wage slavery itself."—(*Resolution by Karl Marx, Geneva Congress of the International Workingmen's Association, 1866.*)

I would also be pleased to have my worthy opponent cite to you, in support of the position of political action which he takes, a position that is absolutely repudiated by the party to which he belongs and a position that has never been practiced, documentary evidence from recognized scientific sources. The Socialist Party in its national platform is absolutely opposed to the position which he advocates.

I maintain that if you want the working class to cast a class-conscious ballot on election day, *i. e.*, one day in the year, that it cannot do that unless these workers are class-conscious during the other 364 days of the year at the point of production! (Applause.) Because, if workers are class-conscious enough to cast a Socialist ballot, they ought to be and undoubtedly are class-conscious enough to organize Socialistically and industrially 364 days during the year. If they cannot do that during 364 days, they certainly cannot practice class-conscious political action on one day in the year. You are standing on your head, if you expect workers to be revolutionary on the political field and support an American Federation of Labor on the industrial field. (Applause.) You say, why has the Socialist Party collapsed politically wherever the American Federation of Labor comes in with its Labor Party? I maintain that you certainly can control a worker who is working at the point of production, you can actually ascertain his degree of intellectual development and his quality of class-consciousness. But to control a worker at the polls! Another thing, before I close, and before I forget.

It has been stated and emphatically reiterated here that the economic organization, at least its manifestation in a strike, can be crushed by political domination, the domination of the capitalist class. I want to tell you that if the capitalist class, through its political arm, can actually eradicate the productive forces or powers of a strike, *i. e.*, can actually bring a strike to collapse, then I also want to ask my worthy opponent what guarantee he has that if the political thermometer of the working class should rise to a danger point for the capitalist class; I want to ask him what guarantee he has that this "omnipotent" capitalist class will not actually revoke or mutilate the suffrage, *i. e.*, what guarantee he has that the

capitalist class will not really amend the suffrage in such a way that only such workingmen can vote who have lived five years in one place? Now, if the capitalist class can actually fight and beat us economically, then they can certainly defeat us politically, and in such a way that we absolutely remain politically enfranchised *according to the law*, but are actually disfranchised according to certain amendments; and, therefore, I again propound this question for Comrade Batt: What are you going to do under such conditions? What are you going to do with your political arm, if the capitalist class should disfranchise you in the same manner, as it has disfranchised thousands and thousands of migratory workers in America today; yes, I am insistent, what are you going to do with your political might, your political power—how are you going to express your revolutionary demand if the ballot is withdrawn? Furthermore, how are you going to carry on, propagate and realize the social revolution? How are you going to take and hold the industry, yes, capture the state, if you cannot manifest your revolutionary intentions and vitality through the ballot? If the impossible should be possible, namely, that you have a revolutionary political party, without a revolutionary economic organization; if then the revolutionary thermometer rises to a dangerous degree, and if the capitalist class in a delirium of fear should either repeal or amend the election laws in such a manner as to actually disfranchise large numbers of the American working class; then what are you going to do, Comrade Batt—yes, what are you going to do? Are you then going to take your organization, the International Association of Machinists on a general strike, to actually back up the fiat of that ballot; are you going to take out the “radical baker’s dozen” in the American Federation of Labor, or are you going to attempt to get Gompers, who repeatedly betrayed Socialism,

to help you fight his master—the capitalist class? If you have millions of men organized by the Gomperses, in the shop, how can you attempt to successfully organize an organization subscribing to the principles as you set forth here this afternoon? Before you can expect a revolutionary political party of labor to actually develop, you must have the revolutionary Socialist Industrial Union. If you have not got the revolutionary industrial foundation, you certainly cannot anticipate a revolutionary political structure. When a mass strike broke out recently in Bremen, Munich and Hanover, what was it inaugurated for? Yes, for the capture of the political state. But, why did the proletariat desire to capture that state? Only in order to abolish it. How did they go about this task? By actually taking hold of the industries which they thought essential to the economic welfare and the basic interests of the Industrial Republic. That is what the W. I. I. U. stands for.

To sum up: The W. I. I. U. advocates and endorses class-conscious political and economic action. However, it maintains that a party that decrees the abolition of the capitalist class and cannot enforce this historic demand with the requisite might absolutely stands upon the dubious and unsound precept upon which Comrade Batt has been resting all afternoon and from which all his deductions have flown, namely—that right without might is a possibility and can be maintained. The W. I. I. U. firmly stands upon the scientific precept amply and convincingly illustrated by historic events that right without might is moonshine. (Tremendous applause.)

#### THE CHAIRMAN.

This speech of ten minutes will conclude the debate.

#### DENNIS E. BATT IN FINAL REBUTTAL.

I want to say before closing that I have enjoyed

Comrade Dannenberg's denunciation of the American Federation of Labor as much as anybody else. I again find that Comrade Dannenberg has performed that wonderful feat of rolling fat men up like me and sticking them in the parliamentary pigeon hole. I realize, as my friend will, that food is only another matter of counting heads instead of cracking them, as I said before. Jenks tells us that it started in England. He tells us that they used to get big election crowds and fight it out as to who should be the successful candidate, and after a while they discovered that the largest crowd generally won and they quit breaking heads and started to count them. I want to talk a little about the Soviet government and then I think we will discontinue this debate. Comrade Dannenberg quotes to you from page 5. He says:

\* "The successful realization of such a revolution depends on the original historical creative work of the majority of the population, and first of all of the majority of the toilers. The victory of the Socialist revolution will not be assured, unless the proletariat and the poorest peasantry manifest sufficient consciousness, idealism, self-sacrifice and persistence. With the creation of a new—the Soviet—type of state, offering to the oppressed, toiling masses the opportunity to participate actively in the free construction of a new society, we have solved only a small part of the difficult task. The main difficulty is in the economic domain; to raise the productivity of labor, to establish strict and universal accounting and control of production and distribution, and actually to socialize production."

What does he mean by that? Is he lamenting here the lack of a W. I. I. U. or an Industrial Socialist Union in Russia? Not at all. He is lamenting the fact that the workers are not successfully class-conscious, and that they are not trained

\* The Soviets at Work, by Nikolai Lenin, page 5.

and have not been trained enough industrially as the capitalist system has trained you and me. All through his book, which I have read carefully four or five times, the burden of his lamentation is that they did not keep track of their production. (Reading): \* "On the other hand, it is not hard to see that during any transition from capitalism to Socialism a dictatorship is necessary for two main reasons or in two main directions. In the first place, it is impossible to conquer and destroy capitalism without the merciless suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, who cannot be at once deprived of their wealth, of their advantages in organization and knowledge, and who will, therefore, during quite a long period inevitably attempt to overthrow the hateful (to them) authority of the poor. Secondly, every great revolution, and especially a Socialist revolution, even if there were no external wars, is inconceivable without an internal war, with thousands and millions of cases of wavering and of desertion from one side to the other, and with a state of the greatest uncertainty, instability and chaos. And, of course, all elements of decay of the old order, inevitably very numerous and connected largely with the petty bourgeoisie (for the petty bourgeoisie is the first victim of every war and every crisis) cannot fail to "show up" during such a profound transformation. And, these elements of decay cannot "show up" otherwise than through the increase of crimes, ruffianism, bribery, speculation and other indecencies. It takes time and an iron hand to get rid of this."

The thing about which he is lamenting there is the lack of industrial training which they do not get from the W. I. I. U. You do not train technical experts. You do not train them, the capitalist system trains these experts, and will continue to train them. The capitalist system is organizing the worker in the more advanced case for the pro-

\* The Soviets at Work, by Nikolai Lenin, page 30.

duction of wealth. The only thing is—we have produced the wealth for the benefit of the capitalist class. What we must do is to give them, the working class, the knowledge that will teach them to produce that for themselves. Lenin said that the industrial government follows the revolution, follows the political revolution and does not come before. The Soviet form of government is a recent development. It has only come into prominence since the outbreak of the revolution in Russia. The workers were not organized there. Now, we come to this other point, the mass strike. You will note that I have consistently and insistently figured political action as a thing with which to gain control of the political state. His expression of political action allows a construction, which presupposes the fact that there are two kinds of construction. It presupposes that there is the political and the non-political structure. I contend that my opponent has not brought one iota of evidence here this afternoon to show that a conquest of political power is not the first thing necessary for the working class, and I will repeat in closing the historic words of Marx, namely—that the working class is to raise itself to the position of the ruling class. (Applause.)



# One Great Union

## STRUCTURE OF THE W. I. I. U.

### LOCAL INDUSTRIAL UNION

Unites all the actual wage-workers in a certain industry of a given locality; subdivided into branches as the particular requirements of said industry may call for.

Branch 1

Branch 2

Branch 3

### NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL UNION

Unites all Local Industrial Unions of the same industry in a country or on a continent.

### DISTRICT INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL

For the purpose of establishing solidarity of action in a given district, a council is organized, composed of delegates from Local Unions of at least five or more, located in that district. Councils are chartered by the General Administration of the W. I. I. U.

### DEPARTMENTS OF INDUSTRIES

Are organized of National Industrial Unions of kindred industries, in accordance with the provisions governing such body.

### GENERAL ORGANIZATION

#### American Administration.

The General Executive Board is elected by Departments, and Referendum of Membership. The Gen. Sec. Treas., the Gen. Organizer, Editor of Official Paper and Literature Committee are elected by the Regular Convention of the Workers' International Industrial Union, composed of delegates from all subdivisions of the organization.

International Bureau of W.I.I.U.:  
 American Adm.  
 Australian " "  
 British " "

### MEMBERSHIP AT LARGE

Are wage-workers in a locality where no local is organized.

### LOCAL RECRUITING UNIONS

Are organized by wage-workers employed in different industries wherein no Industrial Local Union has yet been organized.



## HOW DOES INDUSTRIALISM ORGANIZE?

---

**F**ROM the sketch on the opposite page the answer is, in the ascending line:

1st. By gathering into and keeping in "Recruiting Locals" the individual workers of whose specific occupation there may not as yet be enough to organize a "Shop Branch;"

2nd. By gathering into "Shop Branches" all the workers who are employed in a given shop or Departments thereof.

3rd. By gathering into "Local Industrial Unions" all the several "Shop Branches" whose combined work furnishes a given output.

These are the first three stages. The further stages in the ascending line,—Industrial Councils, National Industrial Unions, and Industrial Departments—are obvious. Their structure, hence the method of their organization, flows from the structure and reason for the structure of the "Local Industrial Union."

\* \* \*

**T**HE Industrial Union hearkens to the command of social evolution to cast the nation, and, with the nation, its government, in a mold different from the mold in which Class Rule casts nations and existing governments. While Class Rule casts the nation, and, with the nation, its government in the mold of territory, Industrial Unionism casts the nation in the mold of useful occupations, and transforms the nation's government into the representations from these. Accordingly, Industrial Unionism organizes the useful occupations of the land into the constituencies of Future Society.

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