CHAPTER III

The Socialist Labor Party

I.—THE PLACE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY IN THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

THE Socialist Labor Party was the dominant factor in the socialist movement of this country for more than twenty years, and its variegated career forms the most intricate and interesting part of the history of American socialism.

At the first glance it appears a series of incoherent events, ill-considered political experiments, sudden changes of policy, incongruous alliances, internal and external strife, and a succession of unaccountable ups and downs, with no perceptible progress or gain.

But the confusion is only apparent. On closer analysis we find a logical thread running all through the seemingly devious course of the party, and a good reason for every one of its seemingly planless moves.

The difficulties which beset the path of the Socialist Labor Party were extraordinary. As one of the first socialist parties organized in this country on national scale, it had to cope with the usual adversities which attend every radical reform movement at the outset of its career—weakness and diffidence in its own ranks, hostility and ridicule from the outside.

But apart from these natural obstacles, the Socialist Labor Party suffered from one grave disadvantage peculiarly its own. In the countries of Europe the socialist movement sprang up in the midst of the native population and adjusted itself to the economic and political conditions of each country quite mechanically and without effort. But in the United States the situation was altogether different. It is estimated that no more than ten per cent. of the members of the Socialist Labor Party, during the period described, were

native Americans. All the rest, including the most active and influential leaders of the party, were men of foreign birth, insufficiently acquainted with the institutions, customs, and habits of the country of their adoption, and frequently ignorant of its very language.

Under these circumstances the pioneers of the movement soon realized the hopelessness of their task to effect radical social and economic changes in this country by their own efforts, and henceforward they considered it their special mission to acclimatize the movement and to leave its further development to the American working men. The endeavor to "Americanize" the socialist movement is the keynote to the activity of the Socialist Labor Party throughout its entire career.

That the movement could not become "Americanized" before the great masses of the population, and especially the working men, were reached by the propaganda of socialism, was too obvious to admit of any dispute: the great question was, how to reach them most effectively.

This question was at all times the subject of the most animated discussions and heated controversies within the party, it shaped its policy, determined its actions, and was at the bottom of all its struggles.

Surveying the field of American institutions, the founders of the Socialist Labor Party discovered two principal avenues through which they could expect to approach the native working men with the greatest chances of success—the trade-unions and political activity.

On the continent of Europe, socialism had in some cases preceded and to a certain degree developed the trade-union movement, in other cases both movements had developed simultaneously and were regarded as a necessary complement to each other, and on the whole the trade-unions were in full accord with the socialist movement.

In the United States the trade-union movement sprang up before the socialist movement, and the Socialist Labor

Party found it just entering on the period of its bloom. In 1878 the first general assembly of the Knights of Labor was held, and the period of phenomenal growth of the order began. Three years later the Federation of Trade and Labor Unions, which subsequently developed into the American Federation of Labor, was organized.

In these two bodies, as well as in the numerous unaffiliated national and local trade-unions, hundreds of thousands of American working men were organized during the next few years. Their platforms were often radical, and in many points inclined decidedly toward socialism. In their meetings and conventions they discussed social problems, with particular reference to the relations of capital to labor, and in their oft-recurring strikes they were being trained in active battle against capital. No wonder then that the socialists saw in the trade-unions their natural allies, and that they strove to bring the two movements into close touch with each other.

At almost every one of its conventions the Socialist Labor Party proclaimed its sympathy with the objects and methods of the labor-unions, and called upon its members to join the organizations of their trade; in a number of instances the party sought direct representation in the central bodies of oragnized labor; its official organs supported the trade-unions, and in many important strikes the socialists were found on the side of the strikers, aiding, counseling, and at times directing them in their battle. But notwithstanding these efforts, the influence of the Socialist Labor Party on the trade-union movement was for a long time rather insignificant. The socialists were as yet numerically too weak to permeate the much-ramified labor movement and to shape its course as they had hoped to do, and voices were at times raised within the party protesting against its activity in the unions as a waste of time.

These protests grew especially loud during the periods of industrial depression, when the efficiency of the trade-unions

was greatly impaired. At such times the party would not infrequently assume an attitude of indifference, sometimes even hostility, to the trade-unions. Again, whenever the trade-unions came to the front owing to a wave of prosperity, the party would renew its activity among them.

Hardly less varying were the fortunes of the party in the field of politics.

Politics were at all times regarded by the socialists as an essential part of their movement. The issues of socialism are political in their nature; the conquest of the political machinery is regarded by the socialists as a necessary prerequisite to the realization of their social ideal; they believe in the efficiency of legislative measures to correct economic abuses, and finally they regard political campaigns as great educating factors, and excellent opportunities for the dissemination of new social theories among the populations at large.

At the time of the organization of the Socialist Labor Party the socialists in Germany had already been in the political arena for about ten years, and had succeeded in uniting almost half a million voters under their banner, and in the United States, with its more democratic form of government and greater importance and frequency of elections, the opportunities were still more tempting. But how to go about it? On this question the camp was divided for a number of years. One group, consisting principally of the native American element within the party and a number of former Lassalleans, advocated active and independent politics at all times, while others pointed at the weakness of the party and its poor chances of success as an independent political factor, and advised either to abstain from politics altogether until such time as the party would be strong enough to make a respectable showing at the polls, or to cooperate with other existing reform parties and endeavor to infuse into the latter as much of the doctrines of socialism as possible. And according to the political and economic

situation of the country at any given time, either the one view or the other gained the ascendency in the party.

A series of labor troubles prepared by a period of industrial depression would create a sentiment favorable to radical reform politics, and then the party would either nominate its own candidates, or, if a reform party had sprung up as a result of such sentiment, cooperate with it. In several places and at several times the Socialist Labor Party, alone or in conjunction with its political allies, succeeded in polling a comparatively large vote, but it had no means to follow up and retain its gains. A new wave of prosperity would strike the country, the spirit of discontent would subside, and the socialist votes would disappear.

Under these unpropitious circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that even the sturdiest and most optimistic among the socialists at times succumbed to the spirit of discouragement, while those of the weaker clay either withdrew from public life altogether, or sought a quieter haven in the ranks of the trade-union movement or the old political parties.

It was at the period of the greatest desolation in the socialist camp that the specter of Anarchism loomed up in the United States. Anarchism, with its negation of all laws of social progress, its ridicule of reform measures, and its gospel of violent destruction—anarchism, the general philosophy of despair—had a peculiar fascination for the discouraged and disgruntled socialists of that period. The new doctrine threatened to make deep inroads in the ranks of the Socialist Labor Party, and to wipe out whatever little progress the young organization had made, by discrediting it in the eyes of the American working men. The Socialist Labor Party now had the additional task of combating anarchism, and for several years its efforts were diverted from the work of furthering its own movement to the struggle with the new foe.

The struggle was carried on relentlessly by both sides,

and terminated only when anarchism had lost all influence on the labor movement in the United States.

The manifold experiments, disappointments and struggles of the Socialist Labor Party, and the frequent changes of policy and methods of propaganda involved in or consequent upon them, could naturally not pass without effect on the relation of the members between themselves. Every new experiment gave rise to a heated controversy as to its expediency, every new failure was a fruitful source of discussion as to its causes, and the discussions were carried on with the earnestness characteristic of all adherents of a new faith or doctrine. At times these internal disputes filled the columns of the party papers for months and all other party work was temporarily lost sight of; at times the controversies were conducted with unnecessary bitterness and assumed a personal character; and at times the differences transcended the bounds of mere controversies and developed into splits, on several occasions rending the party in twain.

The assertion has, therefore, repeatedly been made, that the men of the Socialist Labor Party were a set of querulous individuals who wasted their time in mutual recriminations and accomplished little for their cause.

Nothing can be more unjust than this opinion.

When the founders of the Socialist Labor Party assumed the task of acclimatizing the socialist movement in this country, they undertook an enterprise of extraordinary difficulty and tremendous proportions.

For almost a full generation they plodded away at their self-imposed task in the face of adversities which have no parallel in the history of the socialist movement in any other country. Their internal strifes were but the natural echo of their great struggles with the hostile surroundings, and may easily be pardoned; and their courage, perseverance, and devotion to the cause can not fail to arouse our admiration.

In the socialist movement they performed a great mission. Through their trials and failures they evolved working

methods of socialist activity, and through their ceaseless agitation they prepared the ground for a genuine American movement of socialism.

The party had the misfortune of surviving the period of its usefulness, and its remnants brought in a shrill note of dissonance in the movement, but that does not alter the fact that the men of the Socialist Labor Party did the pioneer work of modern socialism in this country, and that the present socialist movement owes its existence largely to their efforts.

II.—CAREER OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY

1. Early Triumphs and Reverses

The Socialist Labor Party commenced its career under rather favorable auspices. The extraordinary industrial activity which had developed after the close of the war was succeeded by the great financial panic of 1873. The acute stage of the panic subsided after a few months, but the financial depression continued for fully five years and caused an unprecedented degree of destitution among the population of the country. In the great industrial cities cases of death from starvation, not only of single individuals but of entire families, were reported by the police every week. During the winter of 1877, the police stations were filled every night with crowds of working men and their families seeking shelter from the cold of the streets, and the police courts were besieged by men, women, and children imploring to be committed to the workhouse. The number of the unemployed in the United States was estimated at no less than three millions. At the same time the wages of those who had employment were reduced from year to year, and in 1877 they were so low that the working men rebelled, and a series of strikes was inaugurated. The movement was quite spon-

taneous; it was an outbreak of despair rather than a planned and deliberate undertaking; the time was ill-chosen, the masses were unorganized and undisciplined, and the strikes were almost uniformly unsuccessful.

The most significant of the series of these strikes, in point of size and the bitterness with which it was fought, was that of the railway employees.

The construction of railroads had become a favorite form of investment and financial speculation immediately after the termination of the civil war. Between the years 1867 and 1877 about 25,000 miles of new railway tracks were laid, and in the latter year the railroads of the country were capitalized for about $500,000,000. The roads were frequently built on the mere expectation of the future development of the country, and without reference to the actual requirement of traffic. When the panic of 1873 set in, the railroads, therefore, were more affected by it than any other industry, and the men to suffer most were the employees. Between 1873 and 1877 the wages of railroad workers were reduced by an average of about twenty-five per cent., and in June, 1877, the principal lines announced another reduction of ten per cent.

It was to resist this last reduction that the strike was inaugurated. The first clash occurred at Martinsburg, W. Va., on the 16th day of July, but the movement soon became general, and in less than two weeks it had spread over seventeen States.

The first men to quit work were the machinists and switchmen of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and they were immediately joined by the locomotive engineers and other employees of the line. The management of the road soon succeeded in filling the places of the strikers, but when the new men attempted to move the cars, they were prevented by force. Two companies of the state militia sent by the Governor were powerless to cope with the situation, and the regular troops to the number of 250, sent by President Hayes to the seat of the battle, had no better results.

No serious disorders, however, occurred in West Virginia, but in Maryland, where the strike had broken out at the same time, a company of militia was greeted by the strikers and the crowds of their sympathizers with hooting and shouts of derision, which soon turned into active attack. Missiles were hurled at the militiamen, who retorted by opening a fusillade on the crowd, killing ten men and wounding many more. The shooting precipitated a riot; the militia was overpowered, rails were torn out, and cars burned.

On the same day, July 19th, a series of disorders developed all along the system of the Pennsylvania Railroad. There the movement was inaugurated by the switchmen, who struck against the introduction of the "double-heading" system. In the course of the day the switchmen were joined by the employees of the road in all other branches of the service, and the strikers now demanded not only the abolition of the "double-heading" system, but also the recall of the last ten per cent. reduction of wages.

Toward the evening all freight traffic in Pittsburg was blocked. Large crowds of strikers paraded the streets of the city and were rapidly reenforced by the multitudes of the unemployed and dissatisfied labor population. The demeanor of the masses grew more threatening from hour to hour, the local militia which was called into requisition by the sheriff refused to interfere, and 600 militiamen were sent from Philadelphia. But the arrival of the latter only served to increase the excitement of the crowd. A brief but fierce battle between the hostile camps ensued, and the defeated militiamen retired to the company's engine-room, where they barricaded themselves against the onslaughts of the strikers. There they passed a very uncomfortable night amidst the threatening shouts of the infuriated mob and the sound of the bullets whizzing past the windows. Early on the next morning they left Pittsburg and never halted on their retreat until they had reached Claremont, a point about twelve miles distant from the city.

The crowds were now the undisputed masters of the situation and their long-pent-up hatred against the railroad company, intensified and inflamed by the recent battle with the militia, vented itself in a wild crusade of destruction of the company's property. One thousand six hundred cars and one hundred and twenty locomotives are said to have been demolished by them in one day.

Disorders of a more or less serious nature also occurred in different points of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and other States.

In Reading, Pa., a large force of the militia was ordered out to combat the strikers, but here something quite unexpected occurred.

Most of the companies were composed of working men, who openly fraternized with the strikers, distributed their munitions among them, and threatened to turn their arms against all hostile militiamen. One company, however, recruited almost exclusively from the possessing classes, and led by a reckless officer, opened fire on the crowd, killing thirteen persons and wounding twenty-two. The effect of this unjustifiable act was to arouse the strikers and their sympathizers to fury; the noisy but peaceful crowd turned into a wild and dangerous mob, freight trains were derailed, cars demolished, and bridges burned. The hostile militiamen were maltreated, and the majority of them managed to make their escape from the city only by changing their military uniforms for civil attire.

Most singular of all, however, were the occurrences at St. Louis. There the excitement communicated itself to all classes of the labor population. The traffic on the bridge between East and West St. Louis was stopped, and all communication between the Eastern and Western States was thus interrupted; the slaughter-houses and factories were closed, and the strikers took full possession of the city. The socialists called a mass-meeting which was attended by thousands, and at which an executive committee was elected to

protect the interests of the working men. Nobody ever knew who that executive committee really was. It seems to have been a rather loose body composed of whosoever chanced to come in and to take part in its deliberations. It had no definite plan of action and limited its activity to tying up all the industries of the city.

But such was the general excitement that the mysterious committee maintained the undisputed sway of the city for an entire week. Only when the general fear and excitement had somewhat subsided, the city administration, aided by the "leading citizens" of St. Louis, roused itself to some activity. A vigilance committee was formed in opposition to the executive committee, and finally the former, aided by the entire police force of the city and several companies of the militia, surrounded the headquarters of the executive committee at Shuler's Hall, and forced the rebels to capitulate. Seventy-five persons were arrested in the raid, but all of them had to be released, as they appeared to be mere idlers and curiosity seekers in no way connected with the insurrection. Of the much-feared "executive committee" no trace was found.

The socialists of the United States had no part in the instigation of the labor troubles of 1877, but, on the other hand, they did not neglect the excellent opportunity to propagate their theories among the excited masses. They did not overestimate the significance of the strikes, and realized at the very outset that the movement was but a passing phase in the struggle between capital and labor. They were opposed to unnecessary acts of violence, and at the numerous mass-meetings called by them, they dwelt almost uniformly on the futility of planless revolts, and the necessity of organized and intelligent action of the working class.

In Philadelphia the party decided to hold two mass-meetings "to discuss in a quiet and moderate manner the pending dispute between capital and labor, to express sympathy with

the strikers, but to declare energetically against any destruction of property."

The socialists in New Jersey held several mass-meetings in Newark and Paterson. In Brooklyn a mass-meeting of 2,000 working men, called by the local socialists, declared in favor of public ownership of railroads.

In New York large mass-meetings were held under the auspices of the party on Tompkins Square and in the Cooper Union Institute. At the former fully 12,000 persons congregated. John Swinton addressed the meeting in English, and Alexander Jonas and Otto Walther in German. A resolution of sympathy with the strikers was adopted, which wound up with the declaration that it had become necessary "to form a political party with a platform based upon the natural rights of the working men, and with the aim of enacting legislation against the monopolies which oppress the people."

In Chicago the strike agitation was conducted under the direct supervision of the party's National Executive Committee, which had been organized immediately after the unity convention of 1876. Chief among the Chicago agitators were the party's national secretary, Phillip Van Patten, the chairman of the city committee, Schilling, and A. R. Parsons.

But the activity of the party was by no means limited to its agitation during the strike. The many labor troubles and the general condition of popular destitution of the period had made the minds of the working class more receptive to the teachings of socialism than ever before, and the socialists sought to take advantage of the situation by every means at their command. In all great industrial centers demonstrations were arranged, proclamations were issued, street-corner meetings were held, and some of the most eloquent speakers of the party—McGuire, Parsons, Savary, and many others—undertook extended and systematic lecture tours through the country. Socialist newspapers appeared in all parts of

the United States and in many languages. Between 1876 and 1877 no less than twenty-four newspapers, directly or indirectly supporting the party, were established. Of these, eight were in the English language, among them one a daily, the *Star* in St. Louis, and seven weeklies; *The Labor Standard* in New York, the *Working-Men's Ballot* and *The Echo* in Boston, *The Social Democrat* in Milwaukee, the *Emancipator* in Cincinnati, *The Socialist* in Detroit, and *The Times* in Indianapolis. The German press was represented by fourteen newspapers, of which no less than seven were dailies—the *Chicago Sozialist* and *Chicago Volkszeitung* in Chicago, *Volksstimme des Westens* in St. Louis, *Die Neue Zeit* in Louisville, the *Philadelphia Tageblatt* in Philadelphia, the *Vorwaerts* in Newark, and the *Ohio Volkszeitung* in Cincinnati; one, the *Chicago Arbeiter-Zeitung*, appeared three times a week; and six—the *Arbeiterstimme* of New York, *Arbeiter von Ohio* and *Freiheitsbanner* of Cincinnati, *Neue Zeit* and *Vorbote* of Chicago, and *Vorwaerts* of Milwaukee—appeared weekly.

The Bohemians had a weekly under the title *Delnicke Listy*, which was published in Cleveland, and the Scandinavian members of the party published a Swedish weekly in Chicago under the title *Den Nye Tid*.

The energetic activity of the party, aided by the favorable conditions of the time, bore good fruit; the organization grew rapidly in numbers and influence.

On the 26th day of December, 1877, the first national convention of the party was opened at Newark, N. J., thirty-one sections being represented by thirty-eight delegates. The seat of the national executive committee was transferred from Chicago to Cincinnati, and Van Patten was reelected national secretary. The main changes effected by the convention were those relating to political action. The Unity Convention of 1876 had considered the principal mission of the newly organized party to be one of education and propaganda, and its platform and constitution were framed in

accordance with that conception. The platform emphasized the superiority of the economic struggle over politics, the constitution contained no provisions as to the political action of the party or its subdivisions, and a separate resolution adopted on the subject expressly called "upon the members of the party, and all working men generally, for the time being to refrain from participation in elections, and to turn their backs upon the ballot-box."

But the situation had greatly changed since that time: the rapid growth of the party, and its unexpected success at the ballot-box, had demonstrated to the socialists the importance and possibilities of politics, and had created a reaction in favor of it. The party was reorganized on the basis of a political organization, and its platform and constitution were remodeled to meet the requirements of the new situation. It was this convention also which, as already stated, changed the party name from WORKING-MEN'S PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES to SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY.

The growth of the party continued unabated all during the next year, and in the beginning of 1879 the party consisted of about one hundred separate "sections" in twenty-five different States, with a total enrolled membership of about 10,000. But at the same time another change in the industrial conditions of the country was already preparing. The period of industrial depression passed gradually away, and was succeeded by an era of prosperity. The works and factories of the country reopened their doors, new industries sprang up, the demand for labor increased, and wages rose. The general dissatisfaction which had made the working men so responsive to the appeals of socialism during the past two or three years rapidly subsided, and the socialist agitators found only scanty and indifferent audiences where they had formerly met enthusiastic throngs. "The plundered toilers are rapidly being drawn back to their old paths, and are closing their ears to the appeals of reason. They are selling their birthright for a mess of pottage by rejecting the pros-

pect of future emancipation in their greed for the trifling gains of the present," lamented Van Patten.

The party was young and inexperienced at that time, and its hold on its own membership was rather weak. With the returning wave of prosperity it disintegrated rapidly, and the efforts of its leaders to stem the tide of disorganization were of but little avail. Its membership fell off, its sections disbanded, and its press succumbed for lack of readers. Of the eight English party papers reported as existing at the Newark convention of 1877, not a single one survived in 1879. A new party organ in the English language, under the title of *The National Socialist*, was established in May, 1878, and was with great sacrifices kept alive a little over one year. Of the German papers the *Philadelphia Tageblatt* and the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, and *Vorbote* of Chicago, were the only ones to survive the general wreck.

In the beginning of 1878 the party press received, however, a notable reenforcement by the establishment of the *New Yorker Volkszeitung*, a daily newspaper in the German language, devoted to the interests of the socialist and trade-union movement. The paper was edited with exceptional ability by a staff of the most efficient and experienced journalists in the American socialist movement, including in its numbers Alexander Jonas and Dr. Douai, who have already been mentioned on these pages, and S. E. Schewitsch, a Russian of noble birth, who had received his education in Germany and England, and was an eloquent speaker and brilliant writer. On the death of Dr. Douai, a more than competent substitute was found in the person of Herrman Schlueter, a veteran in the socialist movement of both hemispheres, who still stands at the head of the *Volkszeitung's* editorial management.

The *Volkszeitung* from the very day of its appearance assumed a position of leadership among the socialist press of this country, and it has maintained this position ever since. Its good judgment and deliberate attitude have helped the

party to sail safely through many a crisis in the early days of its career.

On the 26th day of December, 1879, the second national convention of the Socialist Labor Party was opened at Allegheny City, Pa. Twenty sections were represented by twenty-four delegates. The total number of members of the party was not officially stated at the convention, but it certainly was distressingly small. According to a subsequent report submitted by McGuire at the International Socialist Convention held at Chur, Switzerland, in 1881, it was about 2,600, and in the estimate of A. Strasser it was only 1,500.*

The report of the national secretary on the work of the executive committee and standing of the party was rather cheerless in tone. The convention decided to recommend that a daily socialist paper under the title *Union* be established in the city of New York; it divided the territory of the United States into four geographical "agitation districts" for the purpose of socialist propaganda, made some minor changes in the constitution, and devoted the greater part of its deliberations to the question of the participation of the party in the presidential election of 1880.

On the whole the Allegheny convention had accomplished but little toward raising the drooping spirit of the movement Toward the end of 1880 and the beginning of 1881 the socialist movement received some reenforcement by the arrival of several parties of political refugees from Germany. These were mostly men who had been active in the social democratic movement in their fatherland, and who for that reason had been exiled by the German government during the crusade against socialists inaugurated by the anti-socialist laws of 1878. They were warmly welcomed by their comrades on this side of the ocean, and a number of public meetings were arranged for their reception.

In August, 1880, the Social Democratic Party of Germany,

*See "Sartorius von Waltershausen," p. 162.

at its convention held in Castle Wyden, decided to send a deputation to the United States for the purpose of informing the German-American working men of the condition of the party under the anti-socialist law, and collecting funds for the approaching elections to the German Diet. F. W. Fritsche and Louis Viereck, two socialist deputies to the German Imperial Diet, and popular speakers, were selected for that purpose, and they arrived in the United States in February, 1881. They were warmly welcomed not only by the party but also by a number of trade-unions and other labor organizations. They spoke at large mass-meetings before enthusiastic audiences in New York, Boston, Newark, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Chicago, and other cities. As a rule their meetings were made the occasion for the general propaganda of socialism, and addresses in the English language were frequently interspersed with their German speeches. Thus the agitation tour of the German deputies, altho undertaken for a different purpose, had the effect of reviving the local socialist movement.

But the revival was but temporary. As soon as the two German agitators left the shores of this country, the newly acquired members fell gradually off, and the party relapsed into its previous state of inaction. In December, 1881, the third convention of the party met in the city of New York; seventeen sections were represented by about twenty delegates, most of whom had come from New York and Brooklyn either as representatives of the local sections or as proxies for other sections. No business of importance was transacted, and the national secretary regretfully stated that the majority of the socialists in the United States were outside of the party.

The struggles of the Socialist Labor Party grew harder and harder: the social contentment and political indifference of the masses seemed impregnable, no new converts were made, while the old party members, growing disheartened, dropped out in large numbers.

What made the position of the party still more precarious, however, was the new and threatening apparition which at that period loomed upon the horizon of the American labor movement—the apparition of anarchism.

2. Struggles with Anarchism

Socialism and anarchism proceed equally from a criticism of the present organization of society, and are in accord in condemning existing social and economic institutions.

But there the similarity between the two social theories ends; in all other respects they are diametrically opposed to each other.

Socialism implies the supremacy of the collective social body over the individual, while anarchism in its purest form signifies the complete emancipation of the individual from society. This fundamentally different conception of the respective rights and functions of society and the individual accounts for all differences in the social theories of the two schools.

The socialist regards society as an organic body, of which the individuals are but separate organs performing different functions for the organism as a whole, and in turn deriving their strength from the well-being of the entire organism. A healthy and well-regulated organism, social or biological, is one in which every organ attains the maximum of its normal individual development and fully performs all of its useful functions. On the other hand, where the functions of one or more organs are over-exercised while others remain inactive, the equilibrium of the organism is disturbed, and the organism itself becomes abnormal and diseased. The socialist finds fault with the present state of society inasmuch as it is characterized by the absence of a proper social equilibrium; his ideal of human civilization is the cooperative commonwealth—*i.e.*, that state of society in which social life and industry are organized on a rational and

scientific basis, exacting from each individual his proper share of usefulness in his own sphere, and guaranteeing to each an equal opportunity to develop all of his faculties.

The anarchist, on the other hand, considers society as a mere inorganic aggregation of independent individuals. He sees the highest state of development in the absolute sovereignty of the individual, and considers all social restraints upon the absolute and untrammeled personal liberty as injurious and reactionary elements in human civilization. He regards the State as an arbitrary contrivance to curb the individual liberty of the citizen, and abhors all government and laws as so many unnecessary checks upon the free exercise of the individual will and whim. The anarchist finds fault with the present state of society, not because it is insufficiently organized for the general public welfare, but because it is too much organized. His ideal state is one consisting of a multitude of autonomous groups of individuals freely and loosely organized for the purpose of production and exchange, somewhat on the line of the Fourieristic Phalanxes. The anarchist is opposed to a systematic regulation of production and industry, he relies on the natural results of the free play of demand and supply. He is opposed to all forms of administration and social restrictions, his faith in the inherent goodness of human nature is unlimited, and he confidently predicts that all crime will disappear and that proper relations of man to man will be established automatically as soon as the present artificial social and governmental institutions will be abolished. The anarchist abhors majority rule as the worst form of tyranny, and points to the fact that the most useful innovations in the history of our race have as a rule been introduced after hard battle with the majority.

And the opposite tactics and methods of procedure of socialism and anarchism are but the results of the practical application of their antagonistic social philosophies.

Conceiving society as an organic body, the socialist recognizes that its development is gradual and subject to

certain sociological laws. He does not admit the possibility of a radical social transformation unless the same was prepared by a series of social and industrial evolutions and a corresponding gradual change in the social and political views of men. It is the system, not the individuals, that he combats. His hope of social regeneration is based upon the tendencies of development of modern industry as he sees them, and he expects the realization of his ideal to be brought about by the concerted efforts of the greater portion of the population. He believes the working class will be the prime factor in the social transformation, for the reason that the benefits of such transformation appeal more directly to the interests of that class, and hence his energies are bent upon the work of preparing the working men for the rôle to be played by them.

He seeks to develop the consciousness of their class interests by the oral and written propaganda of the views and theories of socialism. In the industrial organizations and struggles of the working men he sees the symptoms of an incipient discontent with the evils of the present industrial system, he encourages them, and seeks to imbue them with the spirit and philosophy of socialism. In politics the socialist perceives a powerful agent for the molding, expressing, and enforcing of popular views and demands, and hence he advocates political action of the working class on socialist lines. The watchwords of socialism are education and organization, and its weapons the propaganda, cooperation with the trade-unions, and the ballot-box.

From the point of view of the revolutionary anarchist philosophy, however, these methods of procedure are altogether unnecessarily tedious and slow. Not recognizing the organic character of human society, the anarchist denies the gradual and logical course of its development. The world is ready for the most radical revolutions at all times, and all that is required for their successful accomplishment is a handful of determined men, ready to jeopardize their lives for the welfare

of the oppressed population. And it matters little that the daring revolutionists may not have the support or sympathy of the majority of the population: the great majority of the population never knows its own interests, and appreciates a brave and noble deed only after it has been successfully performed. All great revolutions, argue the anarchists, have been accomplished by small minorities, and all great public benefits have been forced upon mankind.

Consistently with these views the anarchists reject political action as a useless farce, and deprecate all efforts of trade-unions and socialists to ameliorate the present condition of the working class as reactionary measures, retarding the revolution by smothering the dissatisfaction of the workers with their present conditions. Their efforts are directed toward sowing the seed of revolt among the poor, and carrying on a personal war with those whom they regard as responsible for all social injustice, the high and mighty of all nations. Their weapons are the "propaganda of the word" and the "propaganda of the deed."

Anarchism is thus the extreme but logical deduction of the individualist philosophy of the French and English schools. The theories of Herbert Spencer and those of John Most differ but in degree, but not in quality.

The first man to formulate the theory of modern anarchism was the French reformer and economist, P. J. Proudhon, whose work, "Qu'est-ce que la Propriété," published in 1840, contained the first allusions to the new social theory, and who developed his system of anarchism more minutely in his principal work, "Système des Contradictions Économiques." *

The system was somewhat modified and popularized by Michael Bakounin, whose name we had occasion to mention in connection with the history of the International, and in recent days its chief apostles have been Prince Kropotkin and John Most. Each of these men has added something

* See G. Plechanow, "Anarchismus und Sozialismus," Berlin, 1894.

to the theory, and has in turn been called "the father of anarchism." Altho the fundamental premises of all of these authors are identical, the conclusions drawn by them from the premises vary indefinitely, and it has frequently been said that there are as many anarchistic systems as there are anarchistic authors. The latest contribution to these systems is the theory of "anarchistic communism," a rather awkward attempt to combine the principle of extreme individualism with that of collectivism.

Under the influence of Bakounin's agitation, anarchism at one time gained considerable ground in France, Spain, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland; in Germany it was but little known, as it is generally a noteworthy fact that anarchism thrives least where the socialist movement is strongest.

In the United States the first symptoms of anarchism manifested themselves at about the same time that the Socialist Labor Party showed the first signs of decline. Already at the Allegheny convention of 1879 a division between the moderate and more radical elements of the party was noticed. Shortly before, the socialists of Chicago and Cincinnati had organized some military organizations of working men under the name of "Educational and Defensive Societies" (Lehr und Wehr Vereine). The national executive committee of the party was opposed to these organizations, on the ground that they tended to create a false impression of the aims and character of the socialist movement. "As they carried the red flag and acknowledged their socialistic tendencies, the public were informed that the socialists were determined to accomplish by force what they could not obtain by the ballot," Van Patten reported to the convention. The national executive committee publicly disavowed any connection with the military organizations, and requested all party members to withdraw from them.

The sponsors of the military labor organizations resented this interference of the executive committee, and when the convention assembled they moved for a vote of censure

against the latter. The motion was adopted by a small majority after a heated debate.

On the whole, however, the convention was dominated by the moderate rather than by the radical elements, and the latter soon developed an open dissatisfaction with the party administration. In November, 1880, a number of members of the New York sections* of the party left the organization and formed a Revolutionary Club, which adopted a platform modeled in the main after the Gotha program of the German Social Democracy, but was interspersed with some violent anarchistic phrases. The leading spirit of the movement was Wilhelm Hasselmann, an old Lassallean, and former deputy to the Imperial German Diet, who had once played a prominent part in the socialist movement of his fatherland, and who had then shortly arrived in New York. Other prominent men in the new movement were Justus Schwab and M. Bachmann. Similar revolutionary clubs soon sprang up in Boston, Philadelphia, and Milwaukee. But of the greatest significance were the Chicago clubs, of which Paul Grottkau, August Spies, and R. Parsons were the leading members.

In October, 1881, a national convention of the revolutionary clubs was held in Chicago, and the "Revolutionary Socialist Labor Party" was organized by them.

The character of the new movement was as yet rather indefinite; it vacillated between socialism of a more radical color and outspoken anarchism, it lacked a leader of sufficient strength and influence to direct it into definite channels. That leader was soon found in the person of John Most.

John Most was born at Augsburg, Germany, in 1846, as the son of a poor subaltern officer. A sickness of five years' duration, an operation which left his face deformed forever, a cruel stepmother, and later on a still more cruel employer to whom he was apprenticed, are the cheerless events which

*The local branches or subdivisions of the Socialist Labor Party were styled "sections."

filled out the childhood of the future apostle of anarchism. He received a very scanty school education, but he read a good deal, and as a young man he traveled extensively through Germany, Austria, Italy, and Switzerland. In the latter country he came in contact with the International, whose theories he eagerly adopted, and he has ever since been active in the International revolutionary movement.

In the summer of 1869 he was sentenced to one month imprisonment for an inciting speech delivered by him in Vienna. The next year he participated in the organization of a large popular demonstration for the freedom of speech, press, and assembly, was arrested on the charge of high treason, found guilty and sentenced to state prison for a term of five years. After a few months, however, he was pardoned, and after a few months more he was expelled from Austria. During the seven years following, he took a leading part in the socialist movement of Germany, and in 1874, and again in 1877, he was elected to the Diet to represent the District of Chemnitz. During that time he served two terms of imprisonment, both times for riotous speeches, and in 1878, immediately after the enactment of the anti-socialist laws, he was expelled from Berlin. Most now settled in London, where he began the publication of a weekly magazine under the title *Freiheit* (Freedom). It was at that time also that he commenced to depart gradually from the principles of social democracy, inclining more and more toward revolutionary anarchism.

On the occasion of the assassination of Alexander II. by the Russian Nihilists in 1881, Most published an article in his *Freiheit* glorifying the deed and calling for its emulation by others. For this article he was tried by the English courts and sentenced to imprisonment at hard labor for sixteen months. It was shortly after he had served out this sentence that Most landed in New York.

For the members of the revolutionary clubs, or the "Social Revolutionists," as they styled themselves, Most was no

mean acquisition. A forceful and popular speaker, a brilliant journalist, and a "martyr" to the cause, he was the ideal man to gather the disheartened and demoralized elements in the socialist movement of America under the banner of revolt and destruction.

The great mass-meeting arranged for his reception in the large hall of the Cooper Union Institute in December, 1882, turned into a veritable ovation for the "victim of *bourgeois* justice," and his tour of propaganda through the principal cities of the country in the early part of 1883 resembled a triumphal procession. His meetings were well attended and enthusiastic, they were extensively commented on by the press, and a number of anarchistic "groups" were organized as a result of his agitation.

In October, 1883, a joint convention of the social revolutionists and anarchists was held in Pittsburg. The convention was attended by representatives from twenty-six cities, Most, Spies, and Parsons being among the delegates. Letters of congratulation and encouragement were received from many parts of the United States, and from anarchistic groups in France, England, Mexico, Italy, Spain, and Holland. The convention created a national organization of all social-revolutionary and anarchistic groups under the name "International Working People's Association." The administration of the groups remained autonomous, and a general "Information Bureau" for the purpose of communication between the groups, but without executive powers, was established with headquarters in Chicago.

The principal work of the convention was, however, the adoption of a declaration of principles which has since become famous as the "Pittsburg Proclamation," and which is still regarded as the classic exposition of "communistic anarchism."

This declaration of principles is, like the theory of communistic anarchism itself, a rather peculiar mixture of many not always very consistent elements.

The Declaration of Independence is curiously interspersed with the conflicting theories of Marx and Proudhon, and the philosophy of the French encyclopædists of the eighteenth century. The object of the movement is stated to be "the destruction of the existing class government by all means, *i.e.*, by energetic, implacable, revolutionary, and international action," and the establishment of a system of industry based on "the free exchange of equivalent products between the producing organizations themselves and without the intervention of middlemen and profit-making."

The Pittsburg convention and the repeated lecture tours of Most and other prominent anarchists had their effect.

Anarchism became a power in the radical circles of the labor movement of the United States, especially in the German-speaking part of it. The "groups" multiplied from year to year, and their membership increased steadily. The *Freiheit* gained in circulation, some of the former socialist papers, such as the Chicago *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and *Vorbote*, deserted the socialist camp and joined the anarchist movement, and some new anarchist organs were established.

The growth of the anarchist movement served to deplete the weakened ranks of the Socialist Labor Party still more. Disheartened by their recent failures in politics, and despairing of the final success of the slow methods of socialist propaganda, many members lent a willing ear to the convenient anarchist theories of general negation, and section after section seceded from the party to join fortunes with the Internationalists.

In 1883 the membership of the Socialist Labor Party had shrunk to about 1,500, and its leaders were forced to concentrate their energies on an effort to prevent further inroads.

A spirited controversy ensued between the *Freiheit* and the *Bulletin*, the official organ of the Socialist Labor Party. The controversy was conducted with a great deal of earnestness on the part of the latter, and with considerable wit and skill by the former. On the whole, it may be said that if

the *Freiheit* did not always have the best of the argument, it mostly had the laugh on its side, and was generally the more successful combatant.

Defeated in this struggle and disheartened by the general run of things in the party, Philip Van Patten, who had been its national secretary over six years, abandoned the fight in despair. On the 22d day of April, 1883, he suddenly disappeared, announcing his intention to commit suicide in a letter left behind him. It subsequently developed, however, that the letter was but a stratagem calculated to divert the attention of his former comrades from his trail: in reality Van Patten had sought and found a more peaceful and remunerative existence in the employ of the Government. The loss of Van Patten at that juncture was a hard blow to the organized socialist movement of this country. Van Patten was an American of good family, with an excellent education, and had been active and prominent in the socialist movement for ten years without interruption. He was a man of much enthusiasm and devotion, but by no means a strong and popular leader. It was not so much the loss of his personality as the moral effect of his retreat that reflected a deep discouragement on the socialist movement. Van Patten was succeeded in the office of national secretary by one Schneider, and when the latter resigned in October, 1883, Hugo Vogt was elected to fill the vacancy until the next convention of the party, which was decided to be held in December.

When the Pittsburg convention of the social revolutionists was held earlier in the year, the Socialist Labor Party had been invited to send delegates to it, but the national executive committee declined the invitation, declaring that there could be no common ground between social democrats and anarchists.

The "proclamation" adopted at Pittsburg, however, was much more moderate than was expected, and seemed to afford some ground for united action. The International

Working-People's Association created by the Pittsburg convention was not as yet a purely anarchistic body, but rather a confederation of radical socialist and revolutionary organizations of all shades. As soon as the results of the deliberations of the convention were published, voices for union with the new body were raised in the Socialist Labor Party, and now that the party was thoroughly disorganized, the clamor for union became general. In December, 1883, some prominent members of the Socialist Labor Party took it upon themselves to propose formally a consolidation of the party with the Internationalists. This was done by means of a written communication addressed to the Chicago "groups," and signed by Alexander Jonas, Henry Emrich, George Lehr, and H. Molkenbuhr. The brunt of the writer's argument was the wisdom of united action and the similarity of views of the two organizations. "Reading the Proclamation of the Internationalists as adopted at the Pittsburg convention," they declared, "we can hardly find anything in it with which the Socialist Labor Party has not always agreed, except perhaps some obscure clauses of a reactionary coloring."

The answer came from A. Spies, writing in behalf of the Chicago "groups." It expressed anything but enthusiasm over the proposed union, and in substance advised the Socialist Labor Party to dissolve into autonomous groups to be affiliated with the International Working-People's Association in the same manner as the other groups of that body. It was under these circumstances that the fourth national convention of the Socialist Labor Party met at Baltimore from December 26 to 28, 1883.

It was the most dismal convention ever held by the party. Only sixteen delegates attended, and of these, four came from Baltimore and ten from New York and vicinity.

The convention made some changes in the platform and constitution of the party, with the apparent view of placating the more radical elements in the movement. The office of

national secretary was abolished, the powers of the national executive committee were curtailed, and the sections were given greater autonomy in the administration of their own affairs. In addition to the party platform, the convention, following the Pittsburg precedent, adopted a "proclamation." The document was more radical in tone than any previous pronunciamentos of the party: politics were recommended as a means of propaganda only, and the conviction was expressed that the privileged classes would never surrender their privileges without being compelled to do so *by force.* Having made these concessions to the "social revolutionists," the convention proceeded to define its attitude toward outspoken anarchism in very unambiguous language.

"We do not share the folly of the men who consider dynamite bombs as the best means of agitation," the delegates declared; "we know full well that a revolution must take place in the heads and in the industrial life of men before the working class can achieve lasting success."

The principal significance of the convention lay in the fact that it drew a sharp line of demarkation between socialism and anarchism. The somewhat vague species of "social revolutionism" rapidly disappeared; the more moderate elements of the movement, such as Paul Grottkau, rejoined the ranks of the Socialist Labor Party, and the extremists cast their lot definitely with the anarchists.

Henceforward all attempts at conciliation were given up as useless, and there was nothing but war between the two hostile camps.

The socialist as well as the anarchist papers of that period are filled with controversial articles on the merits and demerits of the theories and practise of the two contending social movements, and public discussions on the subject were frequent and heated.

The most notable of these discussions was the one conducted between Paul Grottkau and John Most at Chicago, on the 24th day of May, 1884. It was a well-matched con-

test, the opponents being equally well versed in the subject of discussion, and both being fluent speakers and ready debaters. The discussion was very thoroughgoing and dealt with almost every phase of the subject. It was reported stenographically, published in book form,* and widely circulated.

Of considerable benefit to the party were also the lecture tours of Alexander Jonas, F. Seubert, H. Walther, and O. Reimer, undertaken at about the same time. The tours were arranged by the party's executive committee, and the special mission of the lecturers was to combat anarchism. The speakers visited the most important centers of the anarchist movement, addressed public meetings as well as some meetings of social revolutionary clubs, exposing the weak points of anarchism, and urging the party members to new activity. Simultaneously with this oral propaganda, the agitation against anarchism was vigorously conducted by tracts and leaflets published under the supervision of the national executive committee, and distributed in many thousand copies.

But the activity of the party at that period was by no means limited to the struggle with anarchism. A systematic campaign of education was conducted, principally through the medium of socialist tracts and pamphlets, of which no less than 160,000 were disposed of during the years 1884 and 1885.

The result of this renewed activity was a steady growth of the Socialist Labor Party. In March, 1884, the party consisted of about thirty sections; during the two years following the number was doubled. Three party papers in the English language—*The Voice of the People* in New York, the *Evening Telegram* in New Haven, and the *San Francisco Truth* in San Francisco—had been established at different times, but all were compelled to suspend publication after a

* "Discussion über das Thema 'Anarchismus oder Communismus,' gefürt von Paul Grottkau und Joh. Most," Chicago, 1884.

brief trial. Of the German party papers, the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* and the *Philadelphia Tageblatt* were the only ones to survive, and the *Sozialist*, a weekly magazine in the German language, was created as the official organ of the party under the editorial management of Joseph Dietzgen. On the 5th day of October, 1885, the fifth national convention of the Socialist Labor Party met at Cincinnati. Forty-two sections were represented by thirty-three delegates. The principal work of the convention was to regulate the workings of the party and to strengthen its organization.

The Socialist Labor Party had now somewhat recuperated from the onslaughts of anarchism, but it had by no means vanquished the foe. On the contrary, the International Working-People's Association had during the last two years gained more in proportion than the Socialist Labor Party. In the year 1885 the International embraced about eighty organized groups, with a total of 7,000 enrolled members, and its press was represented by seven German, two English, and two Bohemian papers.

3. The Chicago Drama

The main strength of the anarchist movement lay in Chicago, in which the "Information Bureau" was located, and in which the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the *Vorbote*, and the *Fackel*, as well as the English *Alarm*, edited by Parsons, were published. There were toward the end of 1885 no less than twenty groups, with a membership of about 3,000, in Chicago and vicinity.

What made the ground especially favorable for the propaganda of anarchism at that time was the new industrial crisis which set in about 1884 and lasted until 1886. As in 1877, the large industrial cities of the country were again filled with throngs of destitute and embittered working men out of employment, and these supplied eager and appreciative audiences for the apostles of violence.

And here again Chicago was in the lead. The Internationalists of that city held numerous mass-meetings, a great street demonstration was arranged by them on Thanksgiving Day of 1884, and the *Freiheit*, the *Alarm*, and other anarchist papers counseled their adherents to arm themselves, and even published minute instructions for the preparation and use of dynamite. Similar instructions were contained in a pamphlet written by Most at that time, under the title "Revolutionary Science of War," which was reprinted by several anarchist papers and had a pretty extensive circulation. The climax of the agitation, however, was reached in 1886.

In 1884 the annual convention of the Federation of Trades and Labor Unions of the United States of America had decided to revive the movement for an eight-hour work-day, and later the first day of May, 1886, was fixed as the day on which the new system should be inaugurated. As the ominous day approached, the movement gained in width and determination. The trade-unions of the country doubled and trebled their membership, eight-hour leagues were formed, and the subject was warmly agitated in public meetings and in the labor press.

In Chicago the excitement ran highest. In 1885 the "Eight-Hour Association of Chicago" was organized on the initiative of George A. Schilling and others, the Trade and Labor Assembly, the principal central body of organized labor in Chicago, immediately fell in line, the Central Labor Union, a smaller body dominated by anarchist influence, followed, and the movement soon became general.

The Internationalists of Chicago were at first quite indifferent to the movement, and even deprecated it as a compromise with capital and as a hopeless and useless battle But when the eight-hour movement assumed larger proportions and became the all-absorbing topic in labor circles, the anarchists gradually changed their position, and ultimately supported it. Parsons, Spies, Fielden, Schwab, and other

anarchist orators became the most popular speakers at eight-hour meetings, and at such meetings, as well as in their press, the anarchists frequently took occasion to advise the working men to provide themselves with arms on the first day of May. The first serious trouble occurred among the striking employees of the McCormick Reaper Works. These had been "locked out" from the works in February, and the battle between employers and employees was fought with unusual bitterness, which was still more intensified by the fact that the McCormicks had hired no less than 300 armed Pinkerton detectives to protect the strike breakers in their employ. On the third day of May the Lumber Shovers' Union, of which the majority of the locked-out McCormick employees were members, held a mass-meeting in the vicinity of the works to discuss the terms of a peace proposal to be submitted to the employers. Spies was addressing the meeting with "unusual calmness and moderation," as he relates in his autobiography, when the bell of the McCormick factory rang and the "scabs" were seen leaving. An excited crowd of about 150, separating itself from the meeting, made a move toward them. A street battle ensued, stones being liberally thrown on each side. The police were telephoned for, and a patrol-wagon filled with policemen immediately rattled up the street. A few minutes later about seventy-five policemen followed the patrol-wagon on foot, and these were again followed by three or four more patrol-wagons. The police were received with stones, and in turn opened fire on the crowd, shooting indiscriminately on men, women, and children, killing six and wounding many more. Frantic and infuriated beyond measure over this act of brutality, Spies hurried back to the office of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, and there composed the proclamation to the working men of Chicago which has since become famous as the "Revenge Circular."

It was headed "REVENGE!" and called upon the working men to arm themselves and to avenge the "brutal murder"

of their brethren. Five thousand copies of the circular were printed in English and German, and distributed in the streets. On the next evening a mass-meeting was called to be held at the Haymarket for the purpose of "branding the murder of our fellow workers." About 2,000 working men responded to the call, and Spies, Parsons, and Fielden spoke. Mayor Carter H. Harrison of Chicago, apprehending trouble, was present at the meeting, and what occurred was subsequently described by him in the following language:

"With the exception of a portion in the earlier part of Mr. Spies' address, which for probably a minute was such that I feared it was leading up to a point where I should disperse the meeting, it was such that I remarked to Captain Bonfield that it was tame. The portion of Mr. Parsons' speech attracting most attention was the statistics as to the amount of returns given to labor from capital, and showing, if I remember rightly now, that capital got eighty-five per cent. and labor fifteen per cent. It was what I should call a violent political harangue against capital. I went back to the station and said to Bonfield that I thought the speeches were about over; that nothing had occurred yet or was likely to occur to require interference, and I thought he had better issue orders to his reserves at the other stations to go home."

Mayor Harrison left at about ten o'clock, and the meeting was then practically concluded. At least two-thirds of the audience had dispersed in view of the heavy clouds which had gathered up foreshadowing a rainstorm. Fielden addressed the remaining crowd, a very few hundred in number. He had spoken about ten minutes, when 176 policemen suddenly marched upon the little crowd in double-quick step. Captain Ward, in charge of the squad, commanded the meeting to disperse, and Fielden retorted that the meeting was a peaceable one. At this juncture a dynamite bomb was thrown from an adjoining alley; it alighted between the first and second companies of the policemen and exploded with a terible detonation, killing one policeman and wounding many

more. Instantly an indiscriminate firing was opened on both sides, which lasted about two minutes without interruption; when it was all over it appeared that seven policemen had been killed and about sixty wounded, while on the side of the working men four were killed and about fifty wounded.

Who threw the bomb which precipitated the riot? The question has never been satisfactorily answered. One Rudolph Schnaubelt, a brother-in-law of Michael Schwab, is commonly credited with the fatal deed, but Schnaubelt fled immediately after the Haymarket tragedy, and through the anarchistic press of Europe he has repeatedly denied any connection with the act. The opinion was also frequently expressed that the bomb was thrown as an act of personal vengeance by some relative or friend of a victim of the police brutalities perpetrated on the preceding day, and there were not wanting even those who believed that the dastardly act had been committed by an "agent provocateur" at the behest of the police or capitalists in order to break up the eight-hour agitation, which had just then assumed very powerful proportions.

But be this as it may, the Haymarket incident was laid at the door of the anarchists, and popular indignation against them and their agitation knew no bounds. The daily press loudly clamored for the hanging of the leading anarchists, all labor meetings were broken up, and the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* was placed under the censorship of the chief of police. The speakers at the Haymarket meeting and the entire editorial board and staff of compositors of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* were immediately placed under arrest. Parsons, who could not be found by the police, surrendered himself voluntarily on the trial. On the 17th day of May the grand jury convened and found an indictment against August Spies, Michael Schwab, Samuel Fielden, Albert R. Parsons, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, Louis Lingg, Oscar W. Neebe, Rudolph Schnaubelt, and William Seliger, charging them with the murder of M. J. Degan, the policeman who was killed by the fateful bomb.

Of these, Schnaubelt made his escape, Seliger turned State's evidence and was granted immunity, the other eight were placed on trial.

The men thus singled out were not only the backbone of the local anarchistic movement, but they were also among the most prominent and influential leaders in the eight-hour agitation, and generally popular in the labor movement of Chicago.

August Spies was at that time thirty-one years of age. He was born in Germany and emigrated to the United States in 1872. In 1877 he joined the Socialist Labor Party. He became business manager, then editor-in-chief of the Chicago *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, and retained the latter position until the day of his arrest. Upon the advent of the "social revoluntary" clubs, he joined the movement and later became an avowed anarchist. His anarchism, however, was of a rather mild and philosophical type. He was a Marxian student, spoke and wrote English and German with equal fluency, and was by all odds the most cultured and intellectual of the defendants.

Albert R. Parsons was born at Montgomery, Ala., in 1844. At the age of fifteen he learned the trade of typesetting. He fought in the civil war on the Confederate side, but in 1868 he published a newspaper for the defense of the rights of the colored race, and thereby incurred the enmity of his relatives. In 1875 he joined the Social Democratic Party, and one year later he organized the Chicago Trade Assembly of the Knights of Labor. He was one of the first to join the "social revolutionary" movement in 1880, and since 1884 he edited the ultra-anarchistic *Alarm*. He was an eloquent and magnetic speaker and talented organizer, and between 1875 and 1886 he is said to have addressed no less than 1,000 mass-meetings and to have traveled over sixteen States as organizer for the Socialist Labor Party, and later for the International Working-People's Association.

Michael Schwab was a man of smaller caliber than either

Spies or Parsons. He was a German of good education, thirty-three years old, and at the time of his arrest had been eight years in the United States. He was associated with Spies on the editorial staff of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, and was a lucid tho not original writer and a fluent speaker. His influence in the labor movement was due principally to his great earnestness and unbounded devotion to the cause of the working class.

George Engel was the oldest of the defendants. He was born in 1836 in Kassel, Germany. A life of hardship and privation had early matured in him the spirit of bitterness. His hatred of existing society was more a personal sentiment than the result of any social philosophy. He joined the anarchistic movement upon the first signs of its appearance in the United States, and had been one of its extremest and most earnest devotees ever since.

Louis Lingg was but twenty-two years old. He was a passionate and enthusiastic fanatic and an untiring worker for the cause of anarchy.

Samuel Fielden was born in England in 1847. He was successively a weaver, a lay Methodist preacher, and a driver. His knowledge of socialism and anarchism he gathered mostly from newspaper articles and public discussions. His speeches were direct, somewhat abrupt, passionate, and eloquent, and he was a great favorite with the masses.

Adolph Fischer was but two years older than Lingg. He was born in Germany, but emigrated to the United States at the age of fifteen. His education in socialism he received from his parents. He turned anarchist a few years before his arrest, and was one of the most indefatigable workers of the movement.

Oscar Neebe was born in New York in 1849. He settled in Chicago in 1866, and since that time was identified with almost every phase of the labor movement He was a delegate to the National Labor-Union, and later he joined first the Socialist Labor Party and then the International

Working-People's Association. He was never very prominent in the anarchistic propaganda, but was always active in the trade-union movement, and took a leading part in the eight-hour agitation of 1886.

The trial of the eight men commenced on the 21st day of June, 1886. It was presided over by Judge Joseph E. Gary, and lasted forty-nine days. The defendants were not charged with any personal participation in the act of killing Degan. The theory of the prosecution was that they had by speech and print advised large classes of the people to commit murder, and that in consequence of that advice somebody not known had thrown the bomb that caused Degan's death.

The trial of the anarchists has frequently been called a farce by many impartial observers who were in no way connected with the anarchist movement, and it is hard to read the records of the case without coming to the conclusion that it was the grossest travesty on justice ever perpetrated in an American court. The jury was not drawn in the customary way, but Judge Gary appointed one Henry L. Ryse as a special bailiff to go out and summon such jurors as he might select. Out of a panel of about 1,000 only five were working men, and these were promptly excused by the State. The remainder were employers of labor, or men dependent on such. Most of them declared that they had a prejudice against anarchists and a preconceived opinion of the guilt of the defendants, but upon their statement that they believed their prejudice could be overcome by strong proof of innocence, the judge ruled that they were qualified to serve as jurors. The most important witnesses for the State were Seliger, who had betrayed his comrades for a promise of immunity, and a number of detectives and newspaper reporters, many of whom contradicted themselves on the trial to such an extent as to render their testimony of no value. With all that, the prosecution did not succeed in establishing the most vital point of their theory—*i.e.*, that the person who threw the bomb did so upon the advice, directly

or indirectly, of any of the defendants, or that he was in any way influenced by their teachings. Since the identity of the direct culprit was unknown, his acts could, of course, not be brought into any connection with the defendants.

But the most revolting feature of the trial was the partial manner in which it was conducted by the judge: not only did he rule all contested points in favor of the prosecution, but his repeated insinuating remarks made within the hearing of the jury were of such a nature that they could not fail to influence the latter against the defendants. In vain did Spies and Fielden disclaim any connection with the tragedy; in vain did Parsons show that he did not anticipate any violence at the meeting, since he had permitted his wife and children to accompany him to the same; in vain did Fischer and Engel show that they were quietly at home playing cards while the Haymarket meeting took place; in vain did Schwab, Lingg, and Neebe prove that they had not been at the Haymarket meeting, and that they did not know of the preparations for it; and in vain did their attorney, Captain Black, demonstrate that the State's case was built up on perjured testimony. The Haymarket affair was but a pretext. What the defendants were really tried for was not the murder of Degan, but their anarchist views. They were bound to be convicted, and convicted they were. On the 20th day of August the jury brought in the following verdict:

"We, the jury, find the defendants, August Spies, Samuel Fielden, Michael Scwhab, Albert R. Parsons, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, and Louis Lingg guilty of murder in the manner and form charged in the indictment, and fix the penalty at death. We find the defendant, Oscar W. Neebe, guilty of murder in manner and form as charged in the indictment, and fix the penalty at imprisonment in the penitentiary for fifteen years."

Upon an appeal taken to the Supreme Court of the State the judgment was affirmed, and the further appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States was dismissed on the

ground that the court had no jurisdiction in the matter. The only other recourse left was a petition to the governor for executive clemency. Some of the condemned men adopted this course, with the result that the sentences of Schwab and Fielden were commuted to life imprisonment. Lingg committed suicide in his cell by exploding a cartridge in his mouth. Spies, Parsons, Fischer, and Engel were hanged on the 11th day of November, 1887. They died bravely. "The time will come when our silence in the grave will be more eloquent than our speeches," declared Spies as the noose was placed about his neck. Parsons' last words were: "Let the voice of the people be heard," and Fischer's dying statement as he ascended the scaffold with elastic step and radiant face was: "This is the happiest moment of my life." Six years later John P. Altgeld, then recently elected governor of Illinois, granted an absolute pardon to Samuel Fielden, Oscar Neebe, and Michael Schwab, accompanying the pardon by a thoroughgoing analysis of the trial before Judge Gary, and a scathing arraignment of the unfair and partial methods of the judge.

4. Period of Reconstruction

The Chicago incident was practically the closing chapter in the history of the anarchist movement in this country. While the anarchists disclaimed responsibility for the particular act of throwing the fatal bomb, it could not be denied that the act was in accord with the methods of violence advocated by them. The Haymarket tragedy and its direful consequences were a concrete illustration of anarchism reduced to practise, and had a sobering effect on its adherents and sympathizers.

Whatever little support organized labor had heretofore given to the movement was rapidly withdrawn, and anarchism was henceforward confined to a few insignificant "groups" in the East with little power or influence.

The coast was once more clear for the propaganda of socialism, and the socialists were not slow to take advantage of the favorable situation.

The work of reviving the socialist movement was begun in earnest, and was greatly facilitated by the great industrial and political struggles which marked the labor movement of that period.

The Socialist Labor Party gained in membership and strength. New party papers were established, new "sections" organized, and extensive lecture tours were arranged. Of the latter the most noteworthy were those undertaken by Wilhelm Liebknecht, the veteran leader of the German Social Democracy, in conjunction with Eleanor Marx Aveling, the eloquent and brilliant daughter of Karl Marx, and her husband, Dr. Edward Aveling. This tour was arranged by the Socialist Labor Party in the fall of 1886. The lecturers addressed about fifty meetings in all principal cities of the Union, Liebknecht speaking in German and the Avelings in English. Their work had a marked effect on the socialist movement of this country.

In the month of September, 1887, the sixth national convention of the Socialist Labor Party was held at Buffalo, N. Y. The convention was attended by thirty-seven delegates, representing thirty-two sections, but the full number of party sections was reported to be about seventy.

The most interesting feature of the convention was the discussion on the question of the proposed unity between the Socialist Labor Party and the International Working-Men's Association.

The International Working-Men's Association (not to be confounded with the "International Working-People's Association," created at Pittsburg in 1883) was organized in the latter part of 1881. It was composed principally of American working men and farmers, and had its main strength on the Pacific coast. The social views and principles of the

organization were a somewhat curious mixture of anarchism and socialism.

With the anarchist these Internationalists discarded the ballot. "We believe," * they declared, "that if universal suffrage had been capable of emancipating the working people from the rule of the loafing class, it would have been taken away from them before now, and we have no faith in the ballot as a means of righting the wrongs under which the masses groan."

But they differed from the revolutionary anarchists inasmuch as they discountenanced methods of violence and laid greater stress on education and propaganda.

Their aims and objects were stated by them to be: "To print, publish, and circulate labor literature; to hold mass-meetings; to systematize agitation; to establish labor libraries, labor halls, and lyceums for discussing social science; to maintain the labor press; to protect members and all producers from wrong; to aid all labor organizations, etc." The Association was organized on the "group" system. Its principal organ was *Truth*, published in San Francisco under the editorial management of Burnette G. Haskell. It was established as a weekly in 1882; in the beginning of 1884 it was converted into a monthly magazine, and toward the end of the same year it suspended publication for lack of subscribers. *Truth* was succeeded by the *Labor Enquirer*, published in Denver.

In 1887 the International Working-Men's Association claimed an enrolled membership of about 6,000, distributed in the following manner: In Washington Territory and Oregon, about 2,000; in California, 1,800; in Colorado, Utah, Montana, Dakota, and Wyoming, about 2,000; and about 200 members scattered in the South and East.

Mr. Haskell, who conducted the negotiations in behalf of the Association, made several demands upon the Socialist Labor Party as conditions precedent to the unification of

* R. T. Ely, "The Labor Movement in America."

the two organizations, the most important of these being that the party change its name to "Socialist League" or "Socialist Association"; that it declare against political action; that it devote less means to the support of the socialist movement in Germany and more to the propaganda at home; that it admit the Chicago anarchists to membership, and continue the publication of the *Labor Enquirer.*

After a somewhat lengthy discussion on the subject, the following resolution was adopted by the convention:

"*Whereas,* A friendly offer of union with our party has been received from the Denver Socialist League;

"*Resolved,* That we, in the spirit of fraternity, reciprocate the offer and welcome the outstretched hand; and

"*Whereas,* The platform and principles of the Socialist Labor Party are acknowledged to be complete, comprehensive, and satisfactory to our brothers of the International Working-Men's Association and the Socialist Leagues connected therewith;

"*Resolved,* That said platform be the basis of the union.

"*Whereas,* Many other socialist organizations in Chicago and other places in the Middle and Western States are believers in our platform and principles, tho still isolated;

"*Resolved,* That we shall welcome them, with our comrades of the Socialist League, to our party upon a formal acceptance of our platform under the provisions of our constitution, to the end that the socialist agitation and propaganda may be made the more effective, and our common cause may finally triumph."

No formal union was thus accomplished, and the International Working-Men's Association soon disbanded.

Next to the matter of unity the larger portion of the convention's deliberations was occupied with the question of political action. The views of the delegates were divided on the question of continuing to cooperate with the various political labor parties then in the field, entering the political arena independently, or abstaining from politics altogether.

A temporary compromise was finally effected by the adoption of a resolution recommending to the members "wherever one or more labor parties are in the field to support that party which is the most progressive."

But the adoption of the resolution by no means disposed of the controversy, and the disappointing experience of the socialists with the several "Progressive" or "Radical" labor parties in the ensuing elections accentuated the difference of views. The New York *Volkszeitung* and its adherents held that socialist politics were as yet premature, and advised the party to concentrate its attention on the trade-union movement, while the official party organs, *The Workmen's Advocate* and *Der Sozialist*, were enthusiastic advocates of independent socialist politics, and rather inclined to underrate the importance of socialist activity in the trade-unions.

The antagonism between the two camps grew more pronounced within the next two years, and finally developed into open hostilities. The *Volkszeitung* was charged by the party officers with disloyalty, and it retorted by styling the national executive committee an incompetent clique. In this controversy the bulk of the membership of "Section New York," which had elected the members of the national committee and had the right to recall them, sided with the *Volkszeitung*. In the month of September, 1889, the section preferred charges of incompetency against the national officers of the party, and called a meeting for the purpose of investigating into the charges. The meeting deposed the national secretary, W. L. Rosenberg, and the members of the national committee—Hinze, Sauter, and Gericke—and elected in their place S. E. Schewitsch, Otto Reiner, C. Ibsen, and R. Praast. This summary action precipitated a crisis within the party organization. The deposed officers refused to recognize the validity of the procedure by which they had been removed from office. They continued to assert their rights as the national committee of the party,

and called a convention, to be held by the end of the same month in the city of Chicago.

In the mean while the new national committee entered on the discharge of its duties.

The "sections" were pretty evenly divided in their allegiance between the two committees, and in the ensuing chaos the control committee of the party, with headquarters at Philadelphia, stepped in, suspending both contesting committees from office and taking temporary charge of the administration of the party affairs.

The control committee postponed the date of the convention to October 12th, and this date was accepted by the *Volkszeitung* wing of the party, while the Rosenberg faction adhered to the date originally fixed by the deposed committee. Thus two separate conventions were held by the party sections, each claiming to represent the regular organization and decrying the other as bogus.

The convention of the Rosenberg faction was but poorly attended, and the majority of the delegates were "proxies." The organization led a rather precarious existence for several years longer. Efforts were repeatedly made to reunite the two factions, but no union was accomplished, and the Rosenberg faction, or "Social Democratic Federation," as it styled itself in later years, gradually disappeared.

In the mean while the *Volkszeitung* faction held its convention in Chicago in October, 1889. Thirty-three sections were represented by twenty-seven delegates. Notwithstanding the recent split within the party, the proceedings of the convention were marked by a spirit of confidence and hopefulness. The most important work was the adoption of a new platform drafted by Lucien Sanial. While all previous platforms of the party had consisted of a concise and unimpassioned exposition of the abstract principles of modern socialism, the platform of 1889 was more of a campaign document, and was given a national coloring by basing its arguments on the Declaration of Independence. This docu-

ment was readopted with insignificant modification at every succeeding convention of the Socialist Labor Party, and is still in force. (See Appendix II.)

The next convention of the party was held in Chicago in July, 1893, and was attended by forty-two delegates. It was at that convention that the demand for the abolition of the office of President of the United States was struck from the platform.

The progress of the party was now undisturbed and steady for a number of years. In 1889 the number of "sections" was reported to be seventy. During the four years following 113 new sections were organized; of these, forty-three were German, thirty-nine American, fourteen Jewish, and the remainder were made up of Poles, Bohemians, Frenchmen, Italians, and other nationalities. The sections were distributed in twenty-one States. Many of the newly organized sections disbanded, but others were organized in their stead, and on the whole their number increased. In 1896 the national secretary reported the existence of over 200 sections in twenty-five States. In that year the ninth national convention of the Socialist Labor Party was held in the city of New York. It commenced its labors on the 4th day of July, and remained in session seven full days. Ninety-four delegates were present, representing seventy-five sections in twelve States.

The proceedings of the convention were unusually animated, and covered a wide range of subjects. The most significant and fateful act of the delegates was the attitude assumed by them toward the trade-union movement. The subject was brought up by the introduction of a resolution to indorse the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance which had then recently been called into existence by some prominent party leaders in opposition to the American Federation of Labor and the Order of the Knights of Labor. The debate on the subject occupied the convention during several consecutive sessions, and at times grew exceedingly intense. A

resolution condemning the existing trade organizations as hopelessly corrupt and commending the organization of the Alliance was finally adopted by a vote of seventy-one to six.

Thus the Socialist Labor Party for the first time in the history of its existence declared war on the existing national bodies of organized labor.

This was a radical departure from the established policy of the party toward the trade-union movement. How fateful this new policy became to the organization the following chapters will show.

During the three succeeding years the number of sections increased to over 350, the operations of the party extended over thirty States, and the party press received several notable additions and gained in circulation.

In 1899 the Socialist Labor Party had reached the zenith of its power.

III.—THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY IN POLITICS

1. Independent Politics

The Socialist Labor Party, or the Working-Men's Party of the United States, as the organization was named during the first year of its existence, was primarily organized for propaganda only. On the question of the party's attitude toward participation in politics, the Philadelphia Unity Convention adopted the following resolution:

"*Whereas*, The economic emancipation of the working class is the great end to which every political movement must be subordinated;

"*Whereas*, The Working-Men's Party conducts its struggles primarily on the economic field;

"*Whereas*, It is only the economic struggle in which the soldiers for the Working-Men's Party can be trained;

"*Whereas*, The ballot-box has in this country long ceased to be the expression of the popular will, but has rather be-

come an instrument for its subversion in the hands of the professional politicians;

"*Whereas*, The organized working men are as yet by no means strong enough to root out this corruption:

"*Whereas*, This *bourgeois* republic has produced a multitude of middle-class reformers and quacks, and the penetration of these elements into the party will be largely facilitated by a political movement;

"*Whereas*, The corruption of the ballot-box and the reform humbug reach their highest bloom in the years of presidential elections, and the dangers for the Working-Men's Party are accordingly greatest in these years;

"For these reasons the Unity Convention of the Working-Men's Party, in session at Philadelphia on the 22d day of July, 1876, *resolves:*

"The sections of this party and all working men generally are earnestly requested for the time being to abstain from all political movements, and to turn their backs upon the ballot-box.

"The working men will thereby spare themselves many disappointments, and they can devote their time and energies with much more profit to the organizations of the working men, which are frequently injured and destroyed by premature action.

"Let us bide our time! It will come!"

It will be readily seen from the wording of the resolution that the party's abstention from active participation in politics was a measure of necessity rather than a matter of choice, and the reasons for that attitude may be easily traced in the condition of the party and the political situation of the time. In 1876 the Working-Men's Party consisted of about 2,500 to 3,000 enrolled members all told, and the overwhelming majority of these were Germans. The party had just been created by the union of several not quite homogeneous elements, its organization was loose, its means scanty, and its influence insignificant. Under these circumstances

an independent national campaign was, of course, not to be thought of. And the prospects of fusion with any existing reform party were by no means more seductive: the only party which could lay claim to that title in the elections of 1876 was the Greenback Party, and this was very insignificant, and the issues presented by it were not of a nature to appeal to the labor interests. Abstention from politics was, therefore, the only course left open to the new party.

But the following year wrought many significant changes in the condition of the party. The industrial depression and the great railway strikes described in a preceding chapter had brought the social questions to the front. The ranks of the party were swelled, and many of the new converts were American working men. The popular sentiment was favorable to radical and reform politics, and the Socialist Labor Party was not slow in following up its advantage.

From 1877 till 1879, during which time the labor excitements continued, the party conducted many spirited campaigns in state and local elections, and in some of its strongholds it met with considerable success. In the city of Chicago about 7,000 votes were cast for the Socialist Labor Party in the fall of 1877, and in the spring of the following year one of its members, F. Straubert, was elected to the Common Council. In the fall of 1878 the Chicago socialists elected three State Representatives—C. Ehrhardt, C. Meier, and Leo Meilbeck, and one State Senator, Sylvester Artley. These introduced in the legislature some bills providing for the cash payment of wages, for the limitation of the hours of labor for women and children, an employers' liability act, and several similar bills, all of which were promptly defeated. They did, however, succeed in inducing the legislature to establish a bureau of labor statistics. In the spring of 1878 four socialists—Altpeter, Lorenz, Meier, and Straubert—were elected aldermen. In these elections the Socialist Labor Party ticket was headed by Dr. Ernst Schmidt, as candidate for the office of Mayor. Dr. Schmidt

was a popular and influential German physician, a noted Marxian scholar, and a steadfast friend of the cause of labor. He received over 12,000 votes.

In Cincinnati the Socialist Labor Party polled 9,000 votes in the fall elections of 1877, and in Cleveland it received 3,000 votes. In St. Louis the party received 7,000 votes at the same time, and elected five members of the school board and two aldermen.

In New York a state ticket was nominated in the fall of 1879, with Caleb Pink as the candidate for Governor and Osborne Ward as candidate for Lieutenant-Governor. The ticket was supported by the sections of the party in New York, Brookyn, Albany, Troy, Utica, Syracuse, and Buffalo, but the state organization was extremely weak on the whole, and the total vote did not reach 10,000.

Candidates were also nominated by the party in Detroit, Boston, New Orleans, and Denver. The party organizations in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, and Kentucky took no part in the political campaigns of that period, and in St. Louis and in a few other places the socialists occasionally cooperated with the Greenbackers.

In California the organized working men, under the leadership of the eloquent agitator, Denis Kearney, had organized for political action as the "Working-Men's Party of California," and the Socialist Labor Party refrained from nominating candidates of its own, "deeming it unwise and imprudent to divide the forces of the labor movement." *

The party as a whole did not participate in any national

* The Kearney agitation forms one of the most picturesque pages in the history of the American labor movement. In 1877 the State of California presented a most critical economic and political situation. The waves of the great industrial depression which had struck the East in 1873 reached the Pacific coast much later, and its effects were still felt very keenly in 1877. The crisis was rendered still more acute by the wild stock speculations in which almost all social strata in California had engaged during the preceding years. Business was practically suspended. Mines, factories, and shops were closed, and

election, and its total voting strength at the period under consideration is, therefore, largely a matter of conjecture: it has been variously estimated between 50,000 and 100,000.

whatever little work there was was done principally by Chinese, who were at all times ready to work for half of the customary wages.

The needs and sufferings of the population were intense, and the notoriously corrupt and incompetent State officials showed themselves unable or unwilling to devise any efficient measures of relief. The army of unemployed working men in California, and particularly in the city of San Francisco, swelled on to tremendous proportions. Their discontent with the existing state of affairs grew louder and louder, and finally it found expression in the formation of the "Working-Men's Party of California." The leading spirit of the party was Denis Kearney, a man of but little education and powers of reasoning, but endowed with the gift of popular oratory and possessed of indefatigable energy. Under the leadership of Kearney the party soon became a power in local politics. Its open-air meetings on the "Sand Lots" of San Francisco were attended by thousands of enthusiastic listeners, its agitation became the all-absorbing topic of discussion in the press, its adherents grew daily, and when the city elections in San Francisco arrived the party carried the majority of offices. It was the Working-Men's Party of California also which, by its votes, decided that a new State constitution should be framed, and when the Constitutional Convention assembled in 1879 the party exercised a controlling influence in the framing of the document.

The new State constitution of California introduced a number of radical reforms intended for the purification of the State administration, legislature, and judiciary; the curbing of the powers of corporate capital, and the abolition of Chinese labor. This instrument for a time occasioned a good deal of fear among the possessing classes, but subsequent events proved the apprehension quite unfounded.

The Kearney movement was but the expression of a vague and unenlightened discontent. It was not based on any definite social theory; it offered no constructive measures; its battle-cry was: "Down with the rich!" and its platform was: "The Chinese must go!" The movement lasted as long as the industrial crisis continued, and as soon as the first signs of returning prosperity appeared, it collapsed, leaving little, if any, traces behind it. The Working-Men's Party of California disbanded, and the new State constitution, which was its principal achievement, was so circumvented by succeeding legislatures and so "construed" and "trimmed" by the courts as to render it quite insignificant.

This was certainly a promising beginning, considering the extraordinary difficulties with which the young organization had to cope, and enthusiasm ran high in the ranks of organized socialists in the United States.

But the following year by no means justified the enthusiastic expectations. The returning prosperity of the country cut off the ground from the socialist agitation, which had just commenced to gain a foothold among the American working men. The Socialist Labor Party lost rapidly in membership and strength, and when the presidential elections of 1880 drew nearer, the party was in not much better condition to meet it than it had been in the previous election of 1876. "It is to be regretted," said Van Patten in his official report to the Allegheny convention of the party (December 26, 1876, to January 1, 1880), "that our party has lost valuable opportunities offered during the past two years, but which could not be properly grasped, as our own organization had not the experience and confidence necessary to control the vast numbers of discontented workmen who were ready to be organized. It is especially to be regretted that we had not secured the election of at least a dozen representatives in the legislature of every Northern State, since a party which has elected a number of representatives is considered tolerably permanent, while one who has not, is regarded by the public as transient and uncertain."

The same report recommended participation in the approaching presidential election, and this recommendation was the subject of the most heated discussions of the convention.

With very few exceptions the delegates were agreed upon the advisability of taking part in the election, but the controversy turned on the question of entering the campaign independently or in conjunction with other reform parties.

The national executive committee suggested that the party might unite on a ticket with the Working-Men's Party of Cali-

fornia, the Greenback Party, and the Liberal Party, which last organization had recently been called into existence by the Liberal League, and had held a convention at Cincinnati in September, 1879, at which a semi-socialist platform was adopted. The suggestion was received with favor by a number of delegates—Parsons and McGuire among them—but was strenuously opposed by others. Upon a vote the motion to fuse with other reform parties was defeated by a narrow margin, and the convention decided to make independent nominations for the offices of President and Vice-President.

Caleb Pink, of New York, O. A. Bishop, of Illinois, and Osborne Ward, of New York, were placed in nomination. Of the twenty-four delegates present, nine abstained from voting, ten voted for Pink, four for Bishop, and one for Ward. Caleb Pink was thereupon declared the choice of the convention.

At a later stage of the proceedings, however, the vote whereby Pink was nominated was reconsidered, and a resolution adopted to the effect that the names of all three candidates be submitted to a general vote of the party members, the person receiving the highest vote to be the party's candidate for President, and the one receiving the next highest vote to be its candidate for Vice-President. This resolution changed the entire situation. The proposition to nominate independent candidates for the offices of President and Vice-President was rejected *in toto* by the party, and in the elections of 1880 the Socialist Labor Party supported the candidates of the Greenback Party.

2. The Greenback Party

The Greenback movement was the immediate result of the financial crisis of 1873. It was the first and rather uncouth expression of popular protest against the aggressions of money capital, and took the shape of a currency-reform movement.

It was claimed that the bankers and bondholders of the country had conspired: to depreciate the war greenbacks by depriving them of their character of legal-tender for customs and for the payment of the national debt; then to buy United States bonds with such depreciated greenbacks; and finally to induce the Government to redeem the same bonds in gold. A popular agitation against this alleged conspiracy sprang up, and the movement finally crystallized in the formation of the Greenback Party.

The first convention of the party was held in Indianapolis in 1874, and a platform was adopted demanding several currency reforms, chief among which were:

1. The withdrawal of national bank-notes.

2. That the only currency should be paper, and that such currency be exchangeable for United States interest-bearing bonds.

3. That coin be used only for the payment of such bonds as called expressly for payment in coin.*

These demands appealed principally to the farmers and small business men who had mortgages and other debts to pay, and the movement was for a long time confined to those classes. The industrial laborers manifested but little interest in it.

In 1876 the party nominated the well-known New York philanthropist, Peter Cooper, for President of the United States, and Samuel F. Cory, of Ohio, for Vice-President. The ticket received little over 80,000 votes.

The movement was almost exploded, when the great strikes and labor agitation of 1877 brought new life into it and gave it an entirely new turn. The financial issues were relegated to the background, and the demands of labor took their place. In 1878 the national convention of the party, held at Toledo, Ohio, was attended by a number of labor leaders, and the party name was changed to "Greenback Labor Party."

* See article on "The Greenback Party" in the "Encyclopedia of Social Reforms," by Wm. D. P. Bliss, New York, 1898.

The movement gained popularity among the industrial workers in the East, and in the ensuing congressional elections the party polled about 1,000,000 votes and elected fourteen representatives to Congress. In the presidential elections of 1880 the Greenback Labor Party nominated James B. Weaver, of Iowa, and B. J. Chambers, of Texas, as its candidates for President and Vice-President. But the popular excitement had already subsided, and the Greenback vote sank to 300,000. Henceforward the party was declining steadily. The last national ticket nominated by it was that of 1884, when Gen. B. F. Butler, ex-congressman and ex-governor of Massachusetts, who had in turn been Democratic, Republican, and labor politician, was its candidate for President. Butler also received the indorsement of the anti-monopolists, and polled a vote of about 175,000. After that election the Greenbackers drifted gradually into the ranks of the old parties and ceased to exist as an independent political factor.

As long as the Greenback Party had limited its agitation to currency reform, the Socialist Labor Party strenuously discountenanced all political alliances with it, but since 1878, when it came in closer touch with the labor movement, the party's attitude toward it was more friendly. As shown in the preceding chapter, some sections of the party had supported the Greenbackers in the elections of 1878 and 1879, but this support was given unofficially, and was tolerated, but not encouraged, by the party administration. It was only in 1880 that the Socialist Labor Party, as such, officially decided to support the Greenback Party. As soon as the decision was reached, the national executive committee of the party issued a call to all of its sections and to all trade-unions in sympathy with it to send delegates to a conference to be held in Chicago on August 8, 1880. The national nominating convention of the Greenback Labor Party was to be held in the same city on the 9th day of August, and it was understood that the conference of August 8th would prac-

tically be a caucus meeting of the socialist elements expected to attend the Greenback convention. About ninety delegates responded to the call. Of these, more than half were Chicago residents who had received credentials as proxies from various minor sections, and thirty-eight were direct representatives of their respective sections. Among the latter were Philip Van Patten, the party's secretary; Dr. Douai, P. J. McGuire, R. Parsons, Mrs. L. Parsons, T. J. Morgan, and other prominent members of the Socialist Labor Party.

In the socialist caucus it was decided to apply for admission to the Greenback convention as a body, and to vote as a unit on all questions. It was further resolved that the party insist upon the admission of twenty to fifty delegates from its midst, and upon the appointment of seven socialists on the platform committee.

Dr. Douai, as the spokesman of the caucus, presented these demands to the convention "in behalf of 100,000 voters represented by the Socialist Labor Party."

The demands were substantially conceded; the socialists were given the required representation on the platform committee and were allowed forty-four votes on the floor of the convention. At a later stage of the proceedings, however, a ruling was made all that votes be taken by States, to which ruling the socialists refused to submit, and during the remainder of the convention they abstained from voting altogether.

The main work of the socialists in the convention was in connection with the drafting of the platform. They strove to bring the views expressed in that document as close to their conception of social evolution and the class struggle as possible. But they had an extremely hard task. The Greenback convention was composed of many heterogeneous reform elements with many incongruous social views; the currency reformer, the land reformer, the anti-monopolist, the Chinese-exclusion advocate, and the pure and simple trade-unionist were all represented. Each of them demanded

recognition of his special hobby in the platform, and in most instances the demands were acceded to with little regard to the unity and consistency of the document as a whole. The influence of the socialist thought is unmistakable in the opening clauses of the platform, which were as follows:

"Civil government should guarantee the divine right of every laborer to the results of his toil, thus enabling the producers of wealth to provide themselves with the means for physical comfort and the facilities for mental, social, and moral culture; and we condemn as unworthy of our civilization the barbarism which imposes upon the wealth producers a state of perpetual drudgery as the price of bare animal existence.

"Notwithstanding the enormous increase of productive power, the universal introduction of labor-saving machinery, and the discovery of new agents for the increase of wealth, the task of the laborer is scarcely lightened, and the hours of toil are but little shortened, and few producers are lifted from poverty into comfort and pecuniary independence."

It was also on motion of the socialist Morgan that the convention, after much discussion, adopted a plank calling for the collective ownership of the land.

On the whole, however, the socialists were not well satisfied with the platform and management of the Greenback Party, and participated in its presidential campaign in a half-hearted way.

Immediately after the campaign the alliance with the Greenbackers was dissolved, never to be renewed again, except in a few isolated instances.

In the elections of 1881 the socialists took no part. "A socialist campaign in this country is useless," argued the New York *Volkszeitung*, "unless the American vote can be reached by it. But as the party is constituted at present, it can only reach the German working men." The *Volkszeitung*, therefore, advised the party members to concen-

trate their efforts on the establishment of an English socialist daily newspaper.

The disorganized state of the socialist movement during the years following, and the all-absorbing struggles with anarchism, made it impossible for the party to conduct a systematic political campaign, and only local candidates were occasionally nominated by way of exception. Thus the party invariably nominated a candidate for Assembly in the Tenth Assembly District of New York, which during these years uniformly cast from 700 to 1,000 socialist votes.

In the presidential elections of 1884 the Socialist Labor Party nominated no candidates, and supported none of those nominated by the other parties. The continued abstention from voting and the seemingly hopeless condition of American politics had made the party skeptical as to the efficacy of the ballot-box, and the following correspondence, published in the Zurich *Social Democrat* on November 14, 1884,* is probably a correct expression of the contemporaneous attitude of the socialists on the subject:

"Our comrades in America have taken no part in the elections, but have proclaimed abstention from voting. Both great political parties, the Republican and the Democratic, are capitalistic. The struggle against corruption was a war cry in which the socialists would surely have joined, but the men who first sounded it were of such quality that the incorrigible skeptics doubted their ability and even their desire to clean out the Augean stables. The third party, composed of former Greenbackers and others, with General Butler at the head, our party could also not support, because the society was a rather promiscuous one, and General Butler, a skilful demagog but by no means a reliable customer. To enter into the campaign independently, our party was too weak, and, what is still more important, it was of the opinion that the presidential elections are nowadays but a humbug and cannot be anything else."

* Reprinted in Waterhausen's "Moderner Sozialismus," p. 268.

It was only in 1886 that the Socialist Labor Party was roused from its political lethargy. The intense labor excitements of that year, engendered by a long period of industrial depression and the struggles for an eight-hour work-day, assumed the form of a political movement in many important places.

In Chicago a "United Labor Party" was organized on the initiative of the Central Labor Union. The party was composed of members of the American Federation of Labor, Knights of Labor, radical elements of all kinds, socialists, and even anarchists. It cast over 20,000 votes for its county ticket in the fall of 1886, and in the following spring elections it mustered no less than 28,000 votes for its candidate for Mayor.

In Wisconsin a "Union Labor Party" was organized by the Knights of Labor in conjunction with the remnants of the Greenback Party. The movement was strongly supported by the local socialists, and obtained some practical results in the city of Milwaukee.

In Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan, Iowa, Missouri, and Colorado similar parties were organized. The parties were composed principally of trade-unionists, Knights of Labor, and Greenbackers; and in New York, New Jersey, Missouri, and Ohio the socialists also supported the movement. The parties were known in different places as "United Labor Party," "Union Labor Party," "Industrial Labor Party," "Labor Reform Party," or simply "Labor Party." They reached their highest bloom in the fall elections of 1886, when several of their local tickets were elected; the next year witnessed a rapid decline of the movement, and in 1888 very few of them survived. By far the most important political campaign of that period conducted by organized labor was that of the City of New York.

Here the Central Labor Union inaugurated a movement for independent political action of the working men in the

early part of the summer of 1886. On the 5th day of July of that year a conference of representatives of labor organizations was held in Clarendon Hall for the purpose of launching the movement. Over 300 delegates were present, and on a vote being taken, 286 of these declared themselves emphatically in favor of nominating an independent labor ticket in the ensuing mayoralty campaign, and only forty opposed the plan. Several more conferences were held, and the movement grew in strength and enthusiasm from week to week. A municipal platform was adopted, and a permanent party organization was created under the name of "United Labor Party" of New York. On the 2d day of September, 1886, a city convention of the party was held in Clarendon Hall, and amid deafening cheers and shouts of enthusiasm the convention nominated as its candidate for Mayor and standard bearer of the young movement—Henry George.

3. The Henry George Movement

Henry George was born in Philadelphia in 1839. He finished his school education at the age of thirteen, worked a short time as office boy, then went to sea, visiting many parts of the world. At the age of sixteen he returned to Philadelphia and learned the trade of typesetting, but following his irrepressible love for travel, he soon enlisted again on shipboard, went to Calcutta, and thence to San Francisco, where he finally settled.

In San Francisco he worked successively as compositor and reporter, and in 1871 he was one of the founders and part owners of the San Francisco *Evening Post*. It was at this time that George became interested in the study of social problems. In 1871 he published his first work, "Our Land and Land Policy," which attracted but scanty attention. But an altogether different reception was accorded to his second work, published eight years later under the title "Progress and Poverty."

As intimated by the rather striking title, the work is devoted to an inquiry into the causes of the persistence of popular poverty amid advancing wealth. Our present era, argues George, has been marked by a prodigious development of wealth-producing power. It should have been expected that the increase of general wealth and material comfort would benefit humanity as a whole; that poverty would vanish; that all vices and crimes engendered by it would disappear, and that a state of general social happiness and contentment would ensue. But instead of it we see that the increased blessings of civilization are being enjoyed by a comparatively small number of men, while the greater part of the population still succumbs to poverty, and destitution is most appalling where luxury is greatest. There is evidently some factor in our system of wealth production and distribution, concludes the author, which associates poverty with the progress of our civilization. What is that factor? Henry George finds it to be the private ownership of land, *i.e.*, all "natural opportunities," such as soil, mines, rights of way, etc., exclusive of the improvements connected therewith. There can be no right to property in land, he declares. Man has a right to the possession of the products of his labor. A man who makes a coat, builds a house, or constructs a machine, has an exclusive right of ownership in it. But who made the earth, and what man can claim the right to give or sell it? The value of land has no reference to the cost of production or the labor expended on it. The value of the labor expended on it is the value of the improvement, but the value of land as land depends on natural causes, such as fertility; or social causes, such as the agglomeration of a vast number of people in a certain area. Justice, therefore, requires that the land and the increase of its value be the common heritage of the whole nation. But, instead, it is being monopolized by a small class of landowners, who appropriate all the benefits of it, and tax a high rent for its use and occupation. This system makes it possible for a

number of men to hold large areas of land for speculative purposes, thus withdrawing it from actual use. And as land is in the last analysis the source of all wealth, the withholding of any part of it results in the curtailment of wealth production for the nation.

Furthermore, so long as land is free to all, everybody can gain his subsistence by agriculture or by industrial pursuits on a small scale, but so soon as land becomes private property, it is only the man who can afford to pay a high rent—the capitalist—who can engage in any industry, while the poor man is compelled to sell his labor for the best price obtainable.

And, lastly, rent being an arbitrary tax on production, it draws from the profits of capital and wages of labor alike, impoverishes both, gives rise to industrial crises, and produces an unjust distribution of wealth which is building up immense fortunes in the hands of a few while the masses grow relatively poorer and poorer.

"Nothing short of making land common property can permanently relieve poverty," concludes George.

This object, however, the author desires to attain gradually by means of an increasing tax on land values, so that the tax shall ultimately equal the full rental value of the land, with the result that, tho the title to it would still be nominally in the individual owner, all income from it would go to the State.

George proposes to abolish all taxes save this tax on land value, and his theory hence assumed the designation of the "Single-Tax" theory.

To understand the great influence of the work it must be borne in mind that it appeared at a time when social problems and land-reform theories were warmly agitated. The fascinating style in which the book was written and the tone of self-assurance and sincerity of conviction with which the novel and bold conclusions of the author were announced, contributed largely to its success. It was one of the popu-

lar books which, like popular leaders, appear occasionally as the embodiment of a vague public sentiment, and give color and direction to that sentiment.

The book engendered a spontaneous enthusiasm, it was printed in many editions, translated into many languages, and became the universal topic of discussion in labor circles and scientific publications. The obscure Western journalist all of a sudden became one of the most famous men of his day. His name became a household word in all parts of the United States. He gained thousands of ardent disciples in this country as well as on the continent of Europe, and numerous "land and labor" clubs were organized for the purpose of propagating his theories. George was an eloquent and convincing speaker, and the extensive lecture tours arranged for him in the principal cities of the United States, as well as in Ireland and England, served to enhance his popularity still more.

Such was the man whom the working people of New York chose for their leader in the municipal campaign of 1886.

George did not accept the nomination without attaching a rather unusual condition to it. He demanded that his constituents obtain the signatures of at least 30,000 citizens and residents of the City of New York to a statement that they desired his nomination and would vote for him. This, he explained, would accomplish two purposes: It would demonstrate that there was a popular demand for his candidacy, and would show to the indifferent that he had good chances of being elected, so that they could vote for him without fear of "throwing away" their votes. The extraordinary condition did not impair the enthusiasm of the movement by any means. On the contrary, it instigated the working men to greater activity. Within a very short time more than the required number of signatures were obtained, and the campaign was under full steam. Meetings were held by the score, campaign literature was distributed broadcast, and when, toward the end of September, a street demonstration

was arranged, no less than 35,000 people marched in line enthusiastically shouting the name of Henry George under the loud applause of the sympathetic crowds of bystanders.

In October the United Labor Party established *The Leader*, a daily newspaper published in the interest of the Henry George campaign. It was a four-page paper, sold at one cent, and soon reached a circulation of 100,000.

The movement assumed such proportions that the old parties took alarm at it and sought to offset the popularity of George by nominating the strongest available candidates at the head of their tickets. The Democrats nominated the noted philanthropist and son-in-law of Peter Cooper, Abram S. Hewitt, while the Republicans nominated the present chief executive of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, then a young and promising politician.

The day of election was one of great excitement for the City of New York, and when the vote was finally counted it was found that George had received over 68,000 votes to about 90,000 cast for Hewitt and 60,000 for Roosevelt.* Thus closed the most memorable political campaign ever conducted by the working men of New York.

The socialists were at no time in sympathy with Henry George as the apostle of a new social creed. While they agreed with him on the criticism of the present system of wealth production and distribution, they differed widely from him in the analysis of the causes of the evil and the remedy proposed.

The single-taxer regards land-ownership as one of the most fundamental factors in our industrial life; the socialist considers modern factory production the dominant feature of

* The supporters of Henry George contended that the latter had actually been elected Mayor by the popular vote and that he had been "counted out." Certainly this belief formed a main incentive to George and his followers in causing them subsequently to agitate for the introduction of the Australian secret-ballot system in the State of New York, a reform which has been accomplished in various phases, not only in that State, but throughout the Union.

present civilization. The single-taxer recognizes but one form of economic exploitation—rent, *i.e.*, the return made for the use of land; the socialist asserts that "surplus value," *i.e.*, the unpaid part of the working man's labor, is the source of all exploitation, and that it is from this "surplus value" that rent as well as interest and profit are drawn. The single-taxer thus consistently sees the root of all social and economic evils of our civilization in the private ownership of land—in which term he includes all franchises and special privileges in the use of land—while the socialist opposes the private ownership of *all* means of production, machinery, etc., as well as land as above defined.

The single-taxer would abolish the landlord and monopolist of "land values," but continue the existence of the capitalist and wage-worker; the socialist strives to wipe out all class distinction and to introduce complete economic equality. The single-tax theory professes to be an absolute and scientific truth applicable to all ages and conditions alike, while socialism claims to be a theory growing out of modern economic conditions, and expecting its realization from the steadily growing concentration and socialization of industry. The single-taxer, lastly, is an earnest supporter of the competitive system of industry, while the socialist is as ardent a collectivist.

Thus the two social theories differ very materially in their views, aims, and methods.

The socialists of New York never attempted to conciliate or minimize this difference. They supported the Henry George movement solely for the reason that they saw in it a movement of labor against capital, and they indorsed the candidacy of Henry George "not on account of his single-tax theory, but in spite of it," as the *Volkszeitung* put it.

Nor did Henry George and his most prominent supporters feel any friendlier toward the socialists. The platform of the United Labor Party as originally drafted consisted substantially of the so-called "immediate demands" of the So-

cialist Labor Party, and wound up by the classic declaration of the Communist Manifesto that "the emancipation of the working class can only be accomplished by the working class itself;" but as soon as George accepted the nomination, the platform was replaced by a document of an entirely different tenor, based in the main on the land theory of Henry George, and demanding various land, currency, and tax reforms, along with some factory and labor legislation.

During the campaign the antagonism between the two camps was carefully repressed by both sides, but as soon as the election was over, it broke out into open hostility.

The war was first carried on on purely theoretical grounds: the socialist press combated the single-tax theory as such, while George retorted in kind by criticizing the theories of socialism in his *Standard*.

But when the campaign of 1887 drew nearer, the controversy gradually assumed a more practical aspect, and finally it came to an open clash within the organization. The immediate pretext for it was the interpretation of Article 1, Section 2, of the constitution of the United Labor Party, which required the members of the organization to sever their connections with other political parties. On a previous occasion the New York County executive committee had decided that the section had no application to the Socialist Labor Party, since the latter was not a political party in the accepted sense of the term; but when the County general committee met on August 4, 1887, the point was raised again, and the previous decision was reversed, thus virtually expelling the members of the Socialist Labor Party. The decision precipitated a general commotion in the organization. Several Assembly Districts protested against the ruling and demanded its rescission, others approved of it, and in a few instances the question produced schisms in the district organizations.

It was under these circumstances that the state convention of the United Labor Party assembled at Syracuse on

the 17th day of August. It was expected that the convention would deal with the status of the socialists in the party, and both sides were represented in full array. Out of the 169 delegates who presented credentials, twenty-six were avowed socialists, while many more were in sympathy with them. The Eighth, Tenth, and Fourteenth Assembly Districts of New York were each represented by two rival delegations, one elected by the socialist elements within the organization, the other by the anti-socialists, and the debate arose on the question of the regularity of the contesting delegations. In the ensuing discussion great latitude was allowed, and all phases of socialism were drawn into the debate.

Socialism was warmly defended by S. E. Schewitsch, Walter Vrooman, Lawrence Gronlund, Hugo Vogt, Col. R. J. Hinton, and others, while the campaign against it was led by Henry George himself, who was ably seconded by McGlynn, McMackin, and others. The discussion lasted about eighteen hours, and when a vote was finally taken, it was found that the socialists were barred from the convention by a large majority.

The convention thereupon nominated a state ticket, headed by Henry George as candidate for the office of Secretary of State, adopted a platform, and adjourned.

The expulsion of the socialists from the United Labor Party had the effect of weakening the organization to a great extent. The socialists had been energetic and devoted workers in the movement, and much of the success of the campaign of 1886 had been due to their activity.

Besides, the labor excitement of 1886 was greatly allayed, the eight-hour day agitation relaxed its intensity, and the working men gradually lost interest in their political organization.

The United Labor Party was on the decline, and its dissolution was accelerated by the strife among the leaders. In the contest between George and McGlynn for the

supremacy within the organization the latter prevailed. George withdrew from the United Labor Party and cast his fortunes with the Democratic Party.

Under the leadership of McGlynn the United Labor Party conducted one more political campaign, that of 1888, but the results were so insignificant that the movement was given up as hopeless, and no attempt was made to revive it for the following campaign.

4. Independent Politics Again

The fate of the socialist delegates in the Syracuse convention of the United Labor Party had only served to enhance the popularity of their cause. The expulsion of the socialists from the organization on technical grounds was resented by many adherents of Henry George and caused a revulsion of feeling in favor of the socialists.

When the defeated delegates returned to New York, they were received with a veritable ovation. Their report and comments were heard by several thousand working men at a mass-meeting held in the large hall of the Cooper Union Institute, and it was then and there decided to call a conference of all radical labor organizations to consider the advisability of organizing a political party in opposition to the United Labor Party.

The first meeting of the conference was held on the 4th day of September, 1887, at Webster Hall, in the City of New York. Eighty-seven organizations were represented, fifty-six of these being trade-unions and thirty-one political organizations, mostly subdivisions of the Socialist Labor Party.

The conference constituted itself as a political party under the name Progressive Labor Party, adopted a platform which was practically identical with the one the United Labor Party had originally adopted and subsequently discarded, and called a state convention for the purpose of nominating candidates.

The convention was held in the City of New York on the 28th day of September. John Swinton was nominated for the office of Secretary of State to run against Henry George, but he declined on account of failing health, and J. Edward Hall * was substituted in his stead.

The campaign of the Progressive Labor Party was practically confined to the City of New York. It was brief and rather dull. The total number of votes cast for its ticket barely exceeded 5,000.

This was the last political campaign conducted by the Socialist Labor Party in conjunction with any other political party.

The enthusiasm of the movement of 1886 had aroused the socialists from their political lethargy, while the disappointments of 1887 had demonstrated to them the futility of fusion politics. Henceforward the socialists adhered unswervingly to the policy of independent political action. The socialists of New York initiated the movement by placing in the field a full ticket in 1888. In the City of New York the gubernatorial, mayoralty, congressional, and presidential elections coincided that year. J. Edward Hall was nominated for Governor, Alexander Jonas for Mayor, and a full list of other state, local, and congressional candidates was put in the field. But a rather embarrassing question arose on the nomination of a presidential ticket. A presidential ticket presupposes a national campaign, but the political activity of the party was practically confined to the City of New York. Besides, the platform of the Socialist Labor Party at that time contained a plank demanding the abolition of the Presidency of the United States, and it seemed inconsistent to nominate a candidate for an office to the existence of which the party was opposed. The difficulty was finally overcome by a rather ingenious device: the party nominated

* Born at Glen Cove, L. I., in 1851. He was a machinist by trade, and very prominent in the local socialist and trade-union movements alike. He died of consumption in 1889.

a full ticket of presidential electors with instructions to cast their votes in the electoral college for "No President."

In that campaign less than 3,000 votes were cast for the socialist ticket in the entire State of New York. Of this number about 2,500 fell to the credit of the City of New York, 232 votes were cast in Albany, 49 in Syracuse, and 32 in Utica. Outside of the State of New York the socialists had nominated candidates in only two places, Milwaukee and New Haven. They received 586 votes in the former and 82 in the latter.

The results were so disheartening that the New York *Volkszeitung*, and with it some of the foremost party leaders, again counseled abstention from politics.

But the advocates of independent political action within the ranks of the party were by no means discouraged by the first failure, and urged the policy of continued participation in all elections regardless of results.

The next national convention of the party held at Chicago in 1889 upheld the latter policy, and in 1890 we find the socialists of New York again actively engaged in politics. In that year some radical reform elements in the City of New York, led by the "nationalists," had constituted themselves into a "Commonwealth Party," and it was at first sought to bring about a political agreement between them and the socialists. But at the very first conference of the two organizations it became manifest that they differed materially in their aims and views, and the thought of political cooperation was abandoned. The Commonwealth Party did not succeed in obtaining the requisite number of signatures for its candidates on the state ticket, and limited itself to local nominations in the City of New York, where it polled less than 700 votes. The Socialist Labor Party nominated a full state ticket headed by Franz Gerau, a popular Brooklyn physician, as candidate for the office of Judge of the Court of Appeals, and polled 13,704 votes in the State.

What had greatly contributed to the comparative success

of the ticket was the introduction of the Australian secret-ballot system in the State of New York. Owing to this system, the names of the party's candidates appeared on the ballot in every one of the sixty-one counties of the State, and, to the great surprise of the socialists themselves, every county but one (Delaware) cast some votes for the ticket.

In the following year the socialist vote in the State of New York rose to 14,651 cast for Daniel De Leon, the party's candidate for Governor. At the same time the socialists of Massachusetts and New Jersey made their début in politics, the former polling a vote of 1,429, and the latter, 472.

In 1892 the socialists for the first time nominated a presidential ticket in the United States. This step was decided upon in a "national" party conference held in the month of September at the party headquarters in the City of New York. The conference was attended by eight representatives coming from the States of New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. Simon Wing, of Boston, Mass., a manufacturer of photographic instruments, was nominated President, and Charles H. Matchett of Brooklyn, N. Y., an electrician, was nominated Vice-President. The party had tickets in six States and polled a total vote of 21,512. From that time on new States were drawn into the circle of socialist politics every year, and the socialist vote rose slowly but steadily, as the following figures will indicate:

1893—25,666;
1894—30,120;
1895—34,869.

In the presidential elections of 1896 the socialists nominated Charles H. Matchett for President and Matthew Maguire for Vice-President, and polled a total vote of 36,275 in twenty States of the Union.

In the following year, however, the Socialist Labor Party vote rose to 55,550, and in 1898 it reached the figure of

82,204;* this was the highest vote ever polled by the Socialist Labor Party as such.

IV.—THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY AND THE TRADE-UNIONS

1. Local Organizations

The efforts of the Socialist Labor Party to gain the friendship of the trade-unions have been described in a previous chapter. These efforts, while not very successful on the whole, still bore good fruit in some instances.

A number of local trade-unions were in outspoken sympathy with the Socialist Labor Party, and the influence of the party was especially pronounced in some of the central organizations formed by such local unions. Of the latter type of organizations, the most important was the Central Labor-Union of New York, of which the following is a brief historical sketch:

In the beginning of 1882, when the Irish land question was warmly agitated in this country, several labor organizations had taken it upon themselves to arrange a mass-meeting in the large hall of the Cooper Union Institute, to express their sympathy with the Irish tenants. The meeting was attended by a number of representative trade-union men, and the formation of a permanent central committee of all trade-unions in the City of New York was then and there suggested. This suggestion was promptly acted upon, and on the 30th day of January, 1882, the first meeting of the Central Labor-Union of the City of New York was held. Fourteen organizations were represented, the German element predominating. The Central Labor-Union adopted a platform containing the principal socialist demands.

Philip Van Patten, national secretary of the Socialist Labor Party, delivered an address to the delegates, and

* The figures are taken from Lucien Sanial's "Socialist Almanac".

Matthew Maguire, another socialist, was elected secretary of the body. Within the six months following, the number of organizations represented in the Central Labor-Union rose to forty-five, and in a very short time the body became the most important factor in the labor movement of New York. The friendly relations of the Central Labor-Union with the Socialist Labor Party continued for several years.

In 1882, and again in 1883, the Central Labor-Union entered on the municipal campaigns of the City of New York as an independent organization, polling a little over 10,000 votes each time, and in 1886 it inaugurated the famous Henry George campaign.

The strength developed by organized labor during the latter campaign attracted the attention of the professional politicians, who now vied with each other in the endeavor to gain the good graces of the delegates to the Central Labor Union. As long as the enthusiasm engendered by the George movement lasted, these attempts were unsuccessful, but with the collapse of the movement, a period of political demoralization set in, and many a labor leader was found to lend a willing ear to the promises of the old party managers. Rumors of "boodle" and "corruption" were ripe in the Central Labor-Union, factions were formed, and finally it came to an open breach. In February, 1889, after a stormy meeting in which charges of bribery in connection with the brewers' pool boycott were freely exchanged, about sixty delegates left the meeting-hall in a body, and formed a new organization under the name Central Labor Federation. After a separate existence of a few months the two organizations opened negotiations for a reunion. Several conferences were held, some objectionable elements were withdrawn from the Central Labor-Union as a concession to the Federation, and the two bodies were formally reunited in December, 1889.

But the union was not lasting. The antagonism between the opposing elements broke out anew, the meetings of the

body were consumed by heated discussions and mutual recriminations, and in June, 1890, another separation took place, and the Central Labor Federation was revived.

The Central Labor Federation consisted originally of thirty trade-unions, but the number soon grew to seventy-two. Among these were some of the strongest and most progressive organizations. The Socialist Labor Party was formally represented in the body, and for a long time exercised a controlling influence on all its deliberations. In 1900 the two organizations again consolidated, assuming the name of CENTRAL FEDERATED UNION.

The Central Labor-Union and the Central Labor Federation were by no means the only organizations of that kind in the United States. Similar organizations under the same or different names sprang up in all industrial cities of the Union, and some of them, notably the Central Labor Federations of Brooklyn and Hudson County, the Central Labor-Unions of Rochester, Buffalo, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, the Trade Council of New Haven, and the Trade and Labor Assembly of Chicago, were in accord with the socialist movement.

The greatest support, however, the Socialist Labor Party received from the German trade-unions in the City of New York, which in 1885 had organized a separate central body under the name UNITED GERMAN TRADES OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK. This body was called into existence primarily for the purpose of supporting the labor press. During the four years of its existence it rendered valuable services to the New York *Volkszeitung* by extending its circulation, increasing its advertisements, and raising funds for its publication. It was also on the initiative of the United German Trades that the English organ of the Henry George campaign, the daily *Leader*, was established in 1886, and when the paper later on passed into the hands of the socialists, the German Trades assisted it financially and otherwise to the very end of its brief career.

The United German Trades were organized by the repre-

sentatives of about twelve trade-unions, but the number was soon quadrupled.

The example of New York was followed by Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Baltimore, Buffalo, and some other places, in all of which central bodies of German trade-unions were formed, and in 1887 the New York organization initiated a plan to form a national confederation of German trade-unions. But the plan never materialized, and the United German Trades themselves soon began to show signs of decline. As long as these bodies adhered to the original object of their creation, the support of the labor press, they performed a useful function in the labor movement, and prospered, but when toward 1888 they commenced to occupy themselves with general trade matters, they came in conflict with existing older and stronger central labor bodies, and not infrequently caused considerable confusion in the local movement. Many trade-unions disapproved of the new policy, and withdrew their delegates, and the United German Trades gradually disbanded.

An organization similar in scope and character to that of the United German Trades was the UNITED HEBREW TRADES, organized in the City of New York toward 1888. In the beginning of the eighties of the last century the immigration of Russian Jews to this country had assumed enormous dimensions. Thousands of these immigrants landed at the port of New York every week, and the majority of them settled on the lower East side of that city. Their principal industry was tailoring in all its branches, and within a few years they acquired a practical monopoly of the trade. Within the bounds of their settlement in the City of New York, which became the most congested spot on the face of the globe, hundreds of tailoring shops sprang up. These shops, popularly known as "sweat-shops," were as a rule conducted by middlemen or "contractors," with whose living rooms they were frequently connected. They were always dingy, uncleanly, and ill-ventilated, and in them scores

of men, women, and children were indiscriminately crowded together, working at times fifteen hours and more at a stretch for incredibly low wages.

Several attempts had been made from time to time to organize them, but the attempts had met with but poor success until the spring of 1888. By that time, however, the wages of the Jewish tailors had sunk so very low, and their conditions of work had become so very wretched, that even they, the men of so few needs, rebelled.

A series of strikes was inaugurated by them. The knee-pants-makers were the first to open fire and they were soon followed by the pants-makers, the cloak-makers, the shirt-makers, and the jacket-makers, and within a very few weeks an army of no less than 15,000 Jewish tailors had laid down work, demanding better pay and shorter hours.

The strikers were unorganized and undisciplined, and it is very doubtful whether they would have accomplished anything substantial without the aid of the socialists. The latter practically assumed the entire charge of the situation. They organized the strikers into trade-unions, collected strike funds for them, directed their battle, and led them to victory. It was shortly after that and likewise on the initiative of the Jewish socialists that the United Hebrew Trades was organized. It is, therefore, natural that there was at all times a strong bond of sympathy between the Jewish trade-union movement and the socialist movement: most of the organizers, leaders, and speakers of the Jewish trade-unions came from the ranks of the Socialist Labor Party, and in return the organized Jewish working men for a number of years heartily cooperated with the party in all it undertook, and promptly responded to all of its appeals.

United Hebrew Trades after the pattern of the New York body were also organized in Newark and Philadelphia, and, I believe, in one or two more places.

The Socialist Labor Party thus acquired considerable influence in several important local organizations of labor, but

its struggles for a footing in the great national confederations of trade-unions were much harder and less successful, as will be shown in the following chapters.

2. The Knights of Labor

The once powerful order of the Knights of Labor had a very humble beginning.

In the sixties of the last century the garment-cutters of Philadelphia organized a Union of their trade. The Union soon incurred the displeasure of the employers, and its members were frequently compelled to choose between their organization and their jobs. Under these circumstances it was deemed best to abandon the open organization, and in December, 1869, seven members of the Union, headed by U. S. Stephens and James L. Wright, organized a secret society under the name of the Noble Order of Knights of Labor.

The first election of permanent officers was held in January, 1870, and the following officers were elected: Venerable Sage, Past-Officer, James L. Wright; Master Workman, U. S. Stephens; Worthy Foreman, Robert W. Keen; Worthy Inspector, William Cook; Unknown Knight, Joseph S. Kennedy.

The society was originally composed exclusively of garment-cutters, and at the end of the first year of its existence it numbered only sixty-nine members. In 1871, however, it was decided to extend the operations of the Order to other trades, and the period of growth of the Knights commenced. During the next year no less than nineteen new unions, denominated "Local Assemblies," were organized under the auspices of the Knights of Labor in Philadelphia alone, and similar organizations soon followed in other cities and States.

In 1873 the locals of Philadelphia formed the first "District Assembly" of the Order. This plan of organization was adopted by other Local Assemblies, and in 1877 there

were over fifteen District Assemblies in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, South Carolina, Connecticut, Ohio, and other States. District Assembly No. 1 of Philadelphia was by tacit consent regarded as the head of the organization.

Up to 1878 the Order was a strictly secret organization, and even its name was not divulged to the uninitiated. On all official communications and calls the organization was designated as "N. and H. O. of the * * * * * of North America," the five asterisks standing for "Knights of Labor."

As the organization grew in membership and power, the veil of secrecy surrounding its existence gave rise to the most adventurous and absurd rumors. The inventive newspapers told gruesome stories of widespread communistic and incendiary plots hidden behind the cabalistic sign of the asterisks. The "criminal combination" was fiercely denounced from the pulpit, and the unknown ever present and dangerous organization seriously disturbed the peace of the good citizens. Under these circumstances U. S. Stephens, the Grand Master Workman of the Order, issued a call for an emergency meeting "to consider the expediency of making the name of the Order public, for the purpose of defending it from the fierce assaults and defamation made upon it by press, clergy, and corporate capital." The meeting was held at Philadelphia in June, 1878, and the name, object, and declaration of principles of the Order were made public.

During the same year the first national convention of the Knights of Labor was held in Reading, Pa., and a central executive body under the title "General Assembly" was created.

Since that time the Order spread with unprecedented rapidity. At the third meeting of the General Assembly, held at Chicago in September, 1879, it was reported that over 700 Local Assemblies had been organized, of which number, however, only 102r eported. In 1883 the membership of the Knights of Labor numbered over 52,000; in 1884

it rose to 71,000, and in 1885 to 111,000. In the year 1886 the Order reached its high-water mark. The strike fever and labor troubles of that year caused a veritable rush of new members to the Order; hundreds of new Assemblies were organized; thousands of new members of all trades were admitted daily, and the total number of members of the Order during that year was variously estimated at from 500,000 to 800,000.

The period of unnatural growth of the Order was soon succeeded by a period of reaction. The numerous defeats of the Knights in the strikes of 1886 created a spirit of dissatisfaction, and when the American Federation of Labor was organized at about that time, members deserted the Order in large numbers to join the new organization. In 1891 the total membership of the Knights of Labor was said to be less than 200,000, and it has been steadily decreasing, until to-day a very few thousand men scattered in different parts of the country are all that is left of the Order.

U. S. Stephens, the founder of the Knights of Labor, was the Master Workman of the Order until 1879, when Terence V. Powderly was elected in his stead, and the latter remained in office continually until 1893, when he was in turn succeeded by J. R. Sovereign.

The first declaration of principles was adopted by the Order in 1878. It was in substance the platform prepared by George E. McNeil for the Rochester labor congress of 1874.*

* A different and more romantic version of the origin of the document is given in the *Sozialist*, vol. iv, No. 10, by the author, writing under the *nom de plume* of "Loma." The writer, a socialist, and at one time a prominent "Knight," relates that on some occasion in 1881 he interrogated the old U. S. Stephens on the subject, and received the following reply: "In the course of my travels through Europe some thirty years ago, I made the acquaintance of a certain London tailor by the name of Eccarius. Later on, when I organized the Clothing-Cutters' Union of Philadelphia, I received from time to time from the same tailor quantities of agitation pamphlets, among them this 'Manifesto.' I had never read the pamphlet before, but I found it con-

The preamble to the declaration opens with the following statement:

"The alarming development and aggressiveness of great capitalists and corporations, unless checked, will inevitably lead to the pauperization and hopeless degradation of the toiling masses.

"It is imperative, if we desire to enjoy the full blessings of life, that a check be placed upon unjust accumulation and the power for evil of aggregated wealth."

The Order further declares it as one of its aims: "To secure for the workers the full enjoyment of the wealth they create," and among others, makes the following demands upon the State:

"IV. That the public lands, the heritage of the people, be reserved for actual settlers; not another acre for railroads or speculators; and that all lands now held for speculative purposes be taxed to their full value."

"XVIII. That the Government shall obtain possession, by purchase, under the rights of eminent domain, of all telegraphs, telephones, and railroads; and that hereafter no charter or license be issued to any corporation for construction or operation of any means of transporting intelligence, passengers, or freight."

One of the immediate tasks of the Order is stated to be the establishment of cooperative works, "such as will tend to supersede the wage system by the introduction of a cooperative industrial system."

This declaration of principles has never been changed or modified in any substantial particular. The radical tone of the document, and especially the passages quoted above, have frequently given rise to the belief that the Order of Knights

tained pretty much everything I had thought out myself, and I used it largely in the preparation of the Declaration of Principles of the Order." The Eccarius referred to by Stephens was the well-known Internationalist and coworker of Marx and Engels, and the pamphlet sent by him was the famous "Communist Manifesto."

of Labor was a socialist organization. But as a matter of fact it was far from it. The founders of the Order were undoubtedly men of radical views on social problems, as appears from the public utterances of U. S. Stephens and his early associates. The declaration of principles, apparently influenced by socialist thought, probably expressed their actual views, but in later years, and especially since the advent to power of T. V. Powderly, it was a dead letter, and the efforts of the socialists to gain a foothold in the Order were productive of very poor results.

As early as 1881 several leading members of the Socialist Labor Party, and among them Philip Van Patten, the National Secretary of the party, joined the Order, and the official organ of the party repeatedly expressed its sympathy with the aims and objects of the Knights of Labor. But the relations of the two organizations remained purely platonic, and only when the Order was already on the decline, toward the beginning of the nineties, the socialists gained some actual influence in the organization. In the City of New York one Local Assembly, known as the "Excelsior Club," was composed almost exclusively of socialists, and many other locals were in sympathy with socialism. In 1893 the Socialist Labor Party obtained control of the New York District Assembly, the erstwhile famous District Assembly 49 of the Knights of Labor, and succeeded in having some of its members elected delegates to the General Assembly. The socialist delegates were largely instrumental in the defeat of Powderly for re-election that year, and their influence in the Order was so great that J. R. Sovereign, the newly elected Master Workman, promised to appoint a member of the Socialist Labor Party to the editorship of the "Journal of the Knights of Labor," the official organ of the Order. The promise was not kept, and gave rise to a heated controversy between Sovereign and Daniel De Leon, the leader of the socialists in the Order, and the editor of *The People*, the official organ of the Socialist Labor Party. As a result of

the controversy the annual convention of the Order, held at Washington, in December, 1895, refused to seat De Leon as a delegate from District Assembly 49. The greater portion of the District withdrew from the Order, and all connections between the Socialist Labor Party and the Knights of Labor were severed.

3. The American Federation of Labor

The ultimate aim of the Knights of Labor was to unite all working men of the United States into one body. The organization was not by trades, but by localities; it was strictly centralized, the General Assembly being the supreme authority for all organizations within the Order, and no national trade-union being allowed in its midst. This form of organization, as well as the complicated ritual and ceremonies which still survived after the veil of secrecy had been removed from the Order, and the autocratic demeanor of its officers, largely impaired the usefulness of the organization for the purpose of practical labor struggles. The feeling of discontent with the Order grew steadily, and in 1881 representatives of several national labor organizations called a convention of "international and national unions, trade councils, and local unions" for the purpose of forming a confederation of autonomous labor organizations for mutual support and for the furtherance of the general interests of labor.

The convention met at Pittsburg on the 15th day of November, 1881, and an organization was formed under the name "Federation of Organized Trades and Labor-Unions of the United States and Canada." The Federation was not at that period regarded as a rival of the Knights of Labor, and no less than forty-eight out of the 107 delegates who assisted in the formation of the new body represented locals of the Knights of Labor.

The second convention of the Federation was held at Cleveland in November, 1882, and was attended by only

seventeen delegates. The Knights of Labor were not represented, and the first note of hostility between the two bodies was sounded by the adoption of a resolution setting forth the objects of the Federation. The resolution contained the following passage aimed against the Knights of Labor:

"The Federation seeks to attain the industrial unity of the working men not by prescribing a stereotyped, uniform plan of organization for all, regardless of their experience or necessities, nor by antagonizing or aiming to destroy existing organizations, but by preserving all that is integral in them and widening their scope, so that each, without submerging its individuality, may act with the others in all that concerns them."

The third convention was held at the City of New York in August, 1883. Twenty-two organizations were represented by twenty-seven delegates, among them one woman, representing the National League of Working Women. Significant for the spirit prevailing in this convention was the passage of a resolution demanding of the Republican and Democratic parties that they make public declarations of their next national conventions, of their attitude on the question of the enforcement of the eight-hour law, the incorporation of national trade-unions, and the establishment of a national bureau of labor.

The fourth annual convention of the Federation was held in Chicago in October, 1884, and was attended by twenty-five delegates. Resolutions condemning child labor were adopted, and the Supreme Court of New York was censured for having declared unconstitutional the law against manufacturing cigars in tenement-houses. But the most important and far-reaching act of the convention was the adoption of a resolution "that from May 1, 1886, eight hours shall constitute a legal work-day, and that all labor organizations should prepare for it."

The fifth convention met at Washington in December,

1885, attended by only eighteen delegates. Further preparations for the struggle for an eight-hour day were made, but in other respects the proceedings were of no significance. In the mean time the labor movement of the country had developed enormously. The eight-hour agitation inaugurated by the Federation, and the industrial prosperity had encouraged the working men to general demands for improved conditions of labor. The ranks of existing trade-unions were rapidly swelled, and new organizations were formed.

At the same time the rivalry between the Order of Knights of Labor and the Federation of Organized Trade and Labor Unions developed into open hostility. Some attempts at conciliation and unification of forces were made by the Federation, but its advances were uniformly repelled by the Knights, who insisted on their narrow and oligarchic form of organization. The result was that a number of unaffiliated trade-unions, mistrusting the efficiency of both bodies, called an independent convention of labor organizations, to be held on December 8, 1886, at Columbus, Ohio. The Federation of Organized Trade and Labor Unions showed its diplomatic acumen by calling its convention for December 7th, at the same place. Here delegates from twenty-five national organizations, affiliated and unaffiliated, representing a membership of 316,469, met for a common purpose.

The old Federation was dissolved, and the American Federation of Labor was founded in its stead.

The convention radically modified the declaration of principles and the constitution of the old Federation, appointed an executive committee of five officers, provided for larger revenues, and elected Samuel Gompers its first president.

After the reorganization the Federation progressed with large strides. Its annual convention of 1887 was attended by fifty-eight delegates, representing a membership of 618,000, according to official reports.

The convention of 1888, held at St. Louis, fixed the 1st day of May, 1900, as the date on which the general move-

ment for an eight-hour work-day was to be reinaugurated. A similar resolution was adopted one year later by the first international convention of socialists assembled at Paris, and the 1st day of May has since become an international holiday of labor.

The resolution of the Federation was partly carried out. In 1900 the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, who were selected to lead the movement, struck for an eight-hour day; the brotherhood was successful in 137 cities and benefited over 46,000 working men of the trade. The cigar-makers and German typesetters had gained a similar reduction of hours of labor about two years earlier.

At the tenth annual convention of the Federation, held at Detroit in December, 1890, 83 organizations were represented by 103 delegates. The president reported having issued 282 charters during the preceding year, and the national organizations had established over 900 branches during the same period; since the convention of 1889, 1,163 strikes had taken place, of which 989 were successful, 98 compromised, and only 76 lost.

The Federation gained in popular favor and routed the Knights of Labor completely. Since 1887 the total number of its members had vacillated around the figure of 600,000, but since 1891 every year marked a new increase.

The declaration of principles and objects of the American Federation of Labor is much more conservative in tone than that of the Knights of Labor, and still the former organization was certainly the more radical of the two.

The Order of the Knights of Labor was an aristocratic body removed from the uninitiated world by a cover of secrecy and a complex system of rituals and ceremonies. The Federation, on the other hand, was at all times a democratic organization, freely and openly discussing all labor problems brought to its attention, in touch with the labor interests of the country, and ever engaged in open struggle with capital.

It is largely for these reasons that the Federation became

a favorite field of operation for the socialists from the very start. Out of the 107 delegates who assisted at the formation of the body in 1881, six were outspoken socialists; and even Samuel Gompers, the president of the Federation, who in later days was its most decided opponent, was at that time very friendly to socialism. Some papers even went so far as to class him with the socialists.

Every convention of the Federation had a larger or smaller representation of socialists, who endeavored to utilize the occasion for the propaganda of their theories.

At the convention of 1885 the socialists for the first time introduced a resolution advocating independent political action of the working class. The resolution was defeated, but at its next annual convention the Federation by a large majority decided to urge upon its members "to give cordial support to the independent political movements of the working class."

At every one of the subsequent conventions of the Federation the socialists managed to bring up their theories for general discussion in one form or another, and especially at the convention of 1890 the subject received a most thorough treatment. In the summer preceding that convention the Central Labor Federation of New York had applied to the American Federation of Labor for a charter. The charter was refused on the ground that the list of organizations affiliated with the body contained the name of the "American Section" of the Socialist Labor Party. This, Mr. Gompers declared, was in direct contravention of the provisions of Article IV., Section 5, of the constitution of the Federation, which prohibits affiliation with political parties.

The Central Labor Federation appealed from this decision to the convention, and sent Lucien Sanial, the representative of the "American Section," to argue the appeal.

The debate was long and heated. The socialists contended that their organization was not a political party in the ordinary sense of the term; that the Socialist Labor Party was

an organization devoted to the interests of labor exclusively; and that its participation in politics was merely an incident in its struggle for the emancipation of the working class.

Gompers and his followers, on the other hand, argued that a political party is a political party, no matter what its ultimate objects may be. The issue was by no means drawn squarely on the indorsement of socialism. Several delegates expressly declared that they were not hostile to socialism or to independent political action, but that they would vote against the seating of Sanial on the ground that they were opposed to the introduction of politics in the Federation. On the whole, however, the ultimate vote on the admission of the Central Labor Federation—535 for to 1,699 * against—was probably a good test of the strength of socialism in the Federation at that time.

The subject of Socialism was brought before the Federation in a more direct manner at its Chicago convention of 1893, when Thomas J. Morgan, a member of the Socialist Labor Party, introduced the following resolution:

"*Whereas*, The trade-unionists of Great Britain have, by the light of experience and logic of progress, adopted the principle of independent labor politics as an auxiliary to their economic action; and

"*Whereas*, Such action has resulted in the most gratifying success; and

"*Whereas*, Such independent labor politics are based upon the following program, to wit:

"1. Compulsory education;

"2. Direct legislation;

"3. A legal eight-hour work-day;

"4. Sanitary inspection of workshop, mine, and home;

"5. Liability of employers for injury to health, body, or life;

* The vote in the conventions of the Federation is by representation, each delegate having one vote for every one hundred constituents.

"6. The abolition of the contract system in all public work;

"7. The abolition of the sweating system;

"8. The municipal ownership of street-cars, and gas and electric plants for public distribution of light, heat, and power;

"9. The nationalization of telegraphs, telephones, railroads, and mines;

"10. The collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution;

"11. The principle of referendum in all legislation; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That this convention hereby indorses this political action of our British comrades; and

"*Resolved*, That this program and basis of a political labor movement be and is hereby submitted for the consideration of the labor organizations of America, with the request that their delegates to the next annual convention of the American Federation of Labor be instructed on this most important subject."

The resolution was discussed with much earnestness and skill on both sides, but the socialists had decidedly the better end of the debate: the general destitution of the working men brought on by the industrial crisis of that year had made the minds of the delegates more receptive to radical social views, and the fact that the resolution called for a referendum vote on its final adoption, placed its opponents in the unpleasant position of withholding an important question from the consideration of their constituents. The resolution was carried by a comfortable majority, and during the next year the members of the numerous labor organizations affiliated with the Federation were discussing and voting on it. The socialists have always claimed that the resolution *in toto* had been overwhelmingly indorsed on this popular vote; their opponents in the trade-union movement deny it. Neither contention could be substantiated by proof, for, at

the next convention of the Federation in December, 1894, when the resolution came again before the delegates for a vote in accordance with their instructions, the managing powers of the convention succeeded in side-tracking the issue by a clever trick. When the vote was to be taken on plank 10, which was the very substance of the resolution, calling as it did for the collective ownership of all means of production and distribution, a substitute was suddenly offered, calling for the grant of public lands to actual tillers of the soil only. The substitute was adopted after some debate, and the original motion was thus superseded by it.

The issues of Socialism were introduced in the three succeeding annual conventions of the American Federation of Labor in the shape of one resolution or another, and on the average such resolutions received about one-fourth of the delegates' votes.

In 1898, finally, the Kansas City convention of the Federation, after defeating a socialist resolution introduced by Max S. Hayes, of Cleveland, defined its attitude on the question in the following language:

"We hold that the trade-unions of America, as comprised in the American Federation of Labor, do not now, and never have, declared against discussion of economic and political questions in the meetings of the respective unions. We are committed against the indorsement or introduction of partizan politics, religious differences, or race prejudices. We hold it to be the duty of trade-unionists to study and discuss all questions that have any bearing upon their industrial or political liberty."

4. The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance

The battles for socialism in the conventions of the Federation had since 1890 been waged by individual members of the Socialist Labor Party, without the sanction or approval of the official party administration. The recognized party

leaders and the official party press had withdrawn their support and sympathy from the Federation ever since the Sanial incident at the Detroit convention, and, while many prominent party members, such as Thomas J. Morgan of Chicago, Max S. Hayes of Cleveland, and J. Mahlon Barnes of Philadelphia, continued their efforts to infuse the principles of socialism in the Federation, the party officials, headed by Daniel De Leon, inaugurated a campaign to capture the Knights of Labor with the results shown above.

When the breach between the Socialist Labor Party and the Knights became final in November, 1895, the former, for the first time in the history of its career, found itself in open opposition to both existing national bodies of trade-union organizations.

The experience of the editor of *The People* and his associates during their brief but tempestuous careers in the American Federation of Labor and in the Order of the Knights of Labor had utterly discouraged them. They renounced all hope of ever winning over the "corrupt" bodies to socialism, and the creation of a rival organization —THE SOCIALIST TRADE AND LABOR ALLIANCE—followed.

When the leaders of the Socialist Labor Party first laid their plans to obtain control of the Order of the Knights of Labor, they induced a number of friendly trade-unions in the city of New York, consisting principally of German and Jewish working men, to join the Order. These unions remained loyal to the Socialist Labor Party, even after the final breach between the party and the Knights; and when, in December, 1895, De Leon publicly repudiated the Order and called on them to withdraw from it, the great majority of unions followed the call.

These seceders from the Knights of Labor formed the nucleus of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, and other labor-unions in sympathy with the socialist movement followed their lead.

Within the first two or three years of its existence the

Alliance issued over 200 charters to various labor organizations, the most important among them being the Central Labor Federation of New York with twenty-seven unions, the United Hebrew Trades of New York with twenty-five unions, the Socialist Labor Federation of Brooklyn with twelve unions, the Socialist Labor Federation of Newark with seven unions, and a Chicago Central organization consisting of eight unions.

The Alliance had besides a number of local organizations in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and other States, and in the period of its bloom its membership was said to exceed 20,000.

The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, altho an organization of trade-unions, was to be a kind of a supplement of the Socialist Labor Party.

In direct opposition to the views of the Federation and the Knights, it laid more stress on the political action of the working class than on their economic struggles; it invited the various "sections" of the Socialist Party to send representatives to its local councils; it requested the party as a whole to be represented in its conventions, and exacted a pledge from every local and national officer "that he would not affiliate with any capitalist party and not support any political action except that of the Socialist Labor Party."

In form of organization the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance was an almost exact copy of the Order of Knights of Labor. The separate organizations were denominated Local Alliances, the locals of a city formed a District Alliance, and the supreme power of the organization was vested in a general executive board.

The Alliance was a failure from the start. Its inconsistent and rather vague aims and its highly centralized and antiquated system of organization rendered it very inefficient for practical labor struggles, and the dictatorial policy of its leaders made the organization distasteful to many of the

most important organizations affiliated with it. The first organizations to leave the Alliance were the Brewers' Unions of Brooklyn and Newark, of whom the general executive board had demanded that they sever their connections with their national organizations. Other unions soon followed the lead of the brewers. Out of the 228 organizations chartered by the Alliance between December, 1895, and July 4, 1898, only 114 survived at the opening of its third annual convention, held at Buffalo in July, 1898, and of these only 54 were paying dues to the Alliance.* Shortly after the Buffalo convention the Central Federated Union of New York, by far the strongest organization of the Alliance, seceded, and the latter was left with a mere handful of men.

The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance still exists in name, but it plays no part in the trade-union movement of the country.

* "The Attitude of the Socialists toward the Trade-Unions," by N. I. Stone, New York, 1900.