

# THE MONTANA NEWS.

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## Work of Butte Socialist Guild

The women of the Butte Socialist Guild recently set the ball rolling in the direction of a much needed reformation movement when, last week, they so successfully secured the release of Agnes Benson from the Silver Bow county jail, where the girl had been placed for little other reason than the unfortunate fact that she was destitute and physically unable to support herself. After she had been in jail several days and it had become evident that the authorities could no longer hold her legally behind the bars, the philanthropists, who were supposed to be caring for the child, put their heads together and decided to launch the charge of insanity against her, which was emphatically denied and condemned by every person who interviewed her. At this stage of the illegal charity farce, the attention of the ladies of the Butte Socialist Guild was attracted by an article, which was published in the Butte Evening News, regarding this case, and with a sense of honest indignation and pity for the girl, they determined to investigate the matter and if the circumstances as reported were found to be true, they would canvass every home in Silver Bow county before this helpless child should be so unjustly dealt with. Accordingly, one of the ladies set forth on the errand of investigation and succeeded in gaining an interview with the little prisoner. After being convinced that Agnes was neither insane nor guilty of crime, a special meeting of the Guild was called and three ladies were appointed as a committee to take the necessary steps to secure the girl's release. Inasmuch as they had learned that she was a Catholic, it was decided to first call upon the Rev. Father De Siere, and ask his assistance in securing Miss Benson's release and also to intercede in having her admitted to the Good Shepherd's Home in Helena, where she had made a request to be taken, as she had usually attended Catholic schools previous to coming to Butte.

It was 10 p. m. on June 21st before they were able to secure an interview with Father De Siere and at this late hour there had not been a voice raised—Catholic or otherwise—in behalf of Miss Benson as far as could be learned. Notwithstanding, however, it has since been falsely stated that Miss Benson was rescued from the county jail and a probable future in the madhouse through the efforts of the Catholic ladies.

The Socialist Guild is composed of ladies of all denominations, and in matters of charity and principle, recognize no sect or creed, but take the stand for humanity in general. Immediately after being released from jail, the young woman was offered a home by two respected citizens, both of which she refused, preferring to be taken to the Good Shepherd's Home, and in compliance with this request, the ladies of the Socialist Guild dressed the forsaken girl clean and comfortable, defraying all expenses, and placed her in the care of Mrs. R. Anna German, a prominent member of the Guild and nominee on the state Socialist ticket for superintendent of state public instruction, who took the young girl to Helena and safely placed her in the convent, where she will be well treated and have a good home.

It was generally supposed by the community of Butte, as will be remembered, that the Women of the Crittenden Circle were caring for Agnes Benson, until it was discovered that she was behind the bars in the county jail, although as far as could be learned she was a proper subject for the

charitable institution mentioned above and not the jail or insane asylum. What is the matter? Can it be, as many persons in the community intimate, that some of our philanthropic institutions are being converted into rendezvous for society gatherings, high noon teas, and aristocratic functions, while the unfortunate waif of circumstances is neglected and allowed to be taken from a pitiful lodging at the mid-hour of night and led off to jail, there to be cared for by men, who have grown more or less hardened from constant handling of unruly criminals.

It is a disgrace to the dignity of a county as wealthy as Silver Bow not to have a competent woman

in attendance in the woman's ward at the county jail, here where women are placed almost every day of the year, and every self-respecting person and taxpayer in the county should raise a voice against this unwarranted negligence. What is being done with the county funds? Some say that the county is trying to curtail expenses, but it is evident that the taxes are not growing less. If we would improve conditions for the general welfare, where shall we begin our reform work but in the public institutions of the nation? We must secure a solid foundation, if we would build aright, and it looks as though there would have to be some hauling down and cleaning out before a better condition of things can be successfully established.

Wake up, comrades! Perhaps there is a little something after all in this recent construction which the old party representatives have placed upon poverty, as is shown in the Benson case,

i. e., insanity. Then come out of the old party-stricken hallucinations, and when you are called to the polls to cast your vote this fall for better principles, stand in unison shoulder to shoulder, and with one mighty voice make your desires so intelligently known that they will be felt and recognized from Castle Garden, New York, to the Golden Gate, California.

**Ladies of the Butte Socialist Guild.**  
Butte, Mont., July 18, 1904.

It is amusing to read some of the country exchanges from the east, and especially so from Nebraska. Populism is still alive according to those papers—that is the papers that are still holding to the public teat. The farmer of that section, who so readily rallied to the call of the populist party or its 16 to 1 proposition, fails to now rally to the Socialist cause, which promises something, not only to the farmer, but his hand as well.

## Classconscious, What Means

Before the working class can intelligently appreciate the animus of the Socialist movement they must have a more or less comprehensive knowledge of what constitutes class lines, what Socialists are aiming to destroy and what they are attempting to establish.

Indeed consciousness means knowledge in its last analysis.

We are proud of the progress the American movement has made, delighted and encouraged that so many thousands have definitely arrayed themselves with the industrial revolutionary forces of society. And yet no one knows better than the Socialists themselves that a bare half million votes are but a handful compared with the majority that it will require to establish the co-operative commonwealth. And all Socialists realize that they are comparatively a lonely voice in a vast wilderness of desolate stupidity.

How to arouse these dense toiling masses to a realization, a consciousness of how unnecessary their worry, and anxiety, and brutalizing toil are, a knowledge that they are crushed and oppressed that others may enjoy the delights of the world, and a clear, rational conception of how this barbarous and senseless oppression may be ended, these are the pressing questions of the hour that perplex the mind of every Socialist, who knows that we might build a better world if we only knew how.

The degrading influence of a system of slavery upon the mind is shown in the well-nigh universal opinion among the unfortunate classes that their misfortunes are of their own making, and that the successful class have earned and deserve their success.

Class consciousness must be based on a knowledge of their own exploitation. That is why the economic facts of our industrial system must be reiterated over and over again. Class consciousness cannot exist without a knowledge of what economic classes consist, a knowledge of the class nature of government, and the true causes of aggregated wealth.

To instill this resisting consciousness into the minds of the wealth producers, who continually face poverty and despair, is the gigantic task of the Socialist educators, speakers, writers, editors, private talkers. Sometimes, even to the most ardent Socialist, the task seems stupendous and impossible. The farmer class is almost a solid mass of ignorance on the subject. The reasons for this are that the farmers have enough to eat and a place to die. They never live. My experience is that mentally they are the most degraded class of workers that we have. Collective workers, no matter how miserable their condition, learn something by association. This the farmers never do, and their ideas are of the primitive sort of thousands of years ago. And even though they own their farm and have all the material comforts, their stinginess is monumental, proverbial and amazing. It is the one great virtue on which they pride themselves. Consequently it is almost impossible to maintain propaganda among the farmers without a special fund behind the work. For this reason the farmer districts of America are still comparatively untouched. The farmers know nothing of what the Socialist movement is, if they are well to do they are satisfied; if they lose everything they are unfortunate. They constitute forty per cent of the voting population. They must be instructed through continuous and patient labor.

There are those who feel dis-

couraged at the enormous amount of people to be reached and the slowness of the propaganda, and if the co-operative commonwealth depended entirely on the intelligent knowledge of all the people it would look as though it might be indefinite years before the goal were reached. No such condition is anticipated. Even our most experienced thinkers estimate that when the Socialist change is made not more than a tenth of the workers will be class conscious or have an intelligent comprehension of what is to be done. The underlying industrial or economic forces which are constantly in operation in the universe are forming necessities of action which will push men in the line of their self-interest, which can only be eventually the co-operative system of production. And there will be enough, there are already enough, of those who have a practical, comprehensive knowledge of the advantages of co-operation to organize the foundations of the new society.

The organization of Socialists at any point is of course an immense step for the education of that community. And yet there is occasion for caution in regard to premature organization. Thorough educational work by those who understand Socialism is better than forming a local of those who have only vague ideas of what the Socialist movement is, and no knowledge of how the party affairs are conducted.

Where the struggle of the classes is not immediately perceived by the conditions of industrial life, it must be pointed out, defined and emphasized. This ever present class struggle is evident in all the forming interests of society around us. Even in the great woman's club movement social interests are at work which will finally disrupt it. In the great city clubs women are dividing along the line of their class interests. Each class resents the attitude of the other, though unconscious of the cause. It is to change this unconscious antagonism into consciousness that is the purpose of the Socialist propaganda, and thus hasten the evolutionary process.

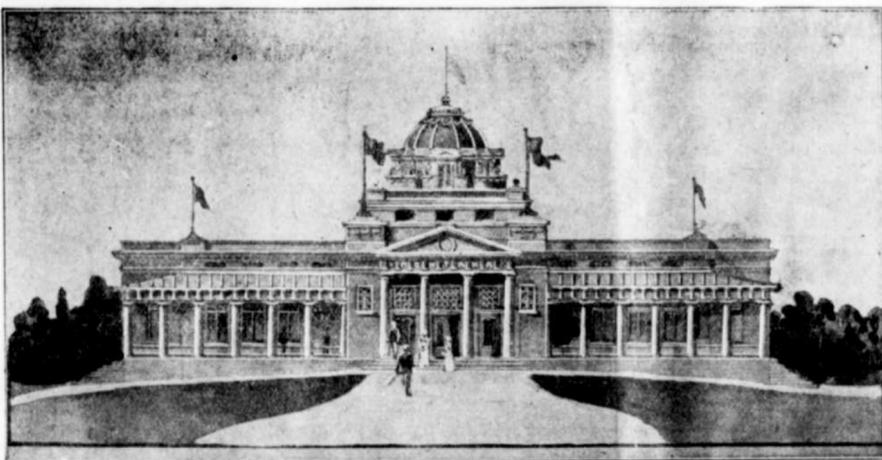
The acceptance speech of Debs at his nomination for president, in Chicago, is one of the clearest and finest expressions on the nature of class consciousness that exists. It should be spread broadcast over the land, and will teach workmen their position wherever it goes.

The crisis is close upon us—is here now. The Socialists have the only magic that will build the new cosmos out of the existing chaos. And "There within the world new built shall our earthly deeds abide. Though our names be all forgotten, and the tale of how we died."

IDA CROUCH-HAZLETT.

All union and laboring men in general who belong to the republican party can spend their spare moments looking for a "labor plank" in the republican national platform. It isn't needed, however, for laboring mules who at this day and age belong to the old parties are dupes enough to vote for anything.

Congressman Dixon and Senator Carter of Montana were both honored guests at the Peabody-Walsh banquet given in honor of the anarchistic reign of the butcher that puts the acts of Weyer to shame. Union men might remember this and have them explain why they were there; of course they can do it.



MONTANA BUILDING AT THE ST. LOUIS EXPOSITION

## THE AMERICAN FARMER UNDER THE PRESENT SYSTEM

The American farmer and his exploiter are two of the greatest factors which keep the social revolution in the rut of slumber, and there it will stay until the farmer realizes that he is the worst played sucker on the American continent. The farmer has been the slowest to help himself, of any laborer in the world.

The commercial robber is cute, "foxy," and unprincipled, so, because he has nothing else to do but to study the shortcomings of the class he is in the field to rob, by making him believe he is his friend, and going to do that for him he cannot (or will not) do for himself, while he (the farmer) as yet, studies not the schemes of the commercial robber who never earns, but fixes the plans for the farmer, that he may earn that he (the commercial robber) may make off this stupid farmer class.

I speak now of the farmer who owns (that is, he thinks he owns) his farm. Of all the thick-headed men on earth, it is the farmers of this class; and next, comes that class of farmers with mortgages.

First, these two classes believe they own their own lands, because the class who are robbing them tell them so, and they are so busy producing wealth for the robbers that they don't have time to think, and learn that they don't own a foot of land in reality.

The commercialists know this and that it why they say to these farmers: "Why do you want to vote for those Socialists who are going to pass laws so you can't own your farms?" knowing full well that the Socialist program means a system through which every man can own his land, and all that land produces; and that no man can get any rent, interest, or profit from that land; for if they did not know that, do you think they would be fighting Socialism—if Socialism means to take away the lands, wouldn't they be right for that? For are these commercial robbers not tak-

ing hundreds of farms away from you every day through the mortgage and tax process?

Second, no farmer owns his land, even though it is not mortgaged. He is a renter of the state.

Why? Because he pays taxes; and taxes are rents to keep up the expenses of the state. If this farmer fails to keep up his rent (taxes) the state, through its commercial agents, sells it to some other man.

The capitalist class pays no taxes.

How so? Why, because, when the assessor assesses him for \$10,000, \$60,000, or \$1,000,000, the amount is added on to the oil, coal, freight, groceries, clothing and rents, besides a profit of from 40 to 100 per cent, and all this is added to the farmer's and laborer's taxes.

The commercial class is the government, and that is the class who fixes the tax for the farmer and the laborer; and they fix it so the class that earns pays for everything and the commercial robber class who don't earn, pays for nothing. And the producing class votes the commercial robber class to be the government to do the robbing—and to take away the lands and homes.

The commercial robbers do not want to own the land, if they can help it, however. They would rather the deeds would run to the farmer, because the farmer, thinking he owns the land, will work sixteen hours a day, year after year, "for himself," (?) and turn the proceeds all over to the capitalist—all but just enough to buy back from him a few cheap overalls and scant adulterated food to keep him producing more wealth to turn over to these robbers; for it is the products from the land and not the land the capitalist wants; while the thick-headed farmer wants the land, and is willing to turn all the products over for fifty years, and when he is worn out and ready to die, turns

the land over too.

On the other hand, if the capitalists should make the deeds running to them, by foreclosure or purchase, they would be forced to hire the farmer to do the work at so much per day or month, and he would refuse to work 16 hours a day, him and his whole family, and the consequences would be, the establishment of an eight-hour day on the farms, and that would cut the profits for the capitalists down, and make it too bothersome for them.

So you see it is better for the capitalist to make the farmer think he owns the land, when in fact he is only a renter in any way you can put it, and a slave worse than the chattel slave of fifty years ago.

E. B. FORD.

How superbly exquisite it is to behold the Bill Clark and Faug Heinze wage slaves, who have eloped from the drought-ridden corn fields of Kansas and less afflicted states of the east, and are now posing as editors (men of letters) on these subsidized organs, and exchanging slime, vituperation and oxidized hot air with each other, exculpating the corrupt acts of their masters. Under the wage system this is necessary to obtain bread. The matter has a parallel, in a lesser degree, to the wage slave yawns in the Butte mines, who recently blasted each other into eternity, with the assotie idea of preserving their masters' (the Amalgamated and Heinze's) rights. Meanwhile Rogers and Faug are in New York enjoying "Red top," blue points and aristocratic blandishments. Wage slaves, do you see the point?

Socialism means the fulfillment of the saying of the declaration of independence that "men are born free and equal." Not until we have Socialism will this be true.