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EDITORIAL

A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR.

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THE first year of the Twentieth Century has closed with capitalism rioting in the profits it has wrung from labor: with speculation mad, but still fearful in its madness: with municipal, state, national, commercial, and industrial enterprises, either under way or proposed, to an extent that has no parallel: and with the increase of richness piling up at a rate that would stagger even the most sanguine twenty years ago. There can be no doubt that there has been prosperity, but it has been prosperity for those who held in their control all the vast social and industrial machinery whereby wealth is produced. It has been a mad debauch of production, a merciless exploitation of labor. Great though it has been, limitless as has been the wealth amassed by the capitalist class, there are evidences of a halt, and a halt, temporary though it may be, indicates the coming of an absolute cessation.

Statisticians and economic experts, who hold the pulse of the nation, in order to see how much more the great bulk of the people can be bled, already feel an irregularity that indicates trouble. They can foretell the inevitable disease, but they are as powerless to prevent it, as impotent to cure it as the medical profession is when confronted with a case of leprosy or consumption. Their failure is the result of their ignorance, and their ignorance is the result of their steadfast adherence to ideas which are as false and worthless as the incantations of so many savage medicine men would be in trying to set a fractured bone by howling.

Capitalism has had everything its own way. It has had the best of service from the political party it placed in power in the nation. It has good and obedient servants in all branches of the Government. It has ousted from office, here in New York, a party that did not seem to give adequate returns for the spoils it controlled, and it has placed in power a party of whose loyalty there cannot be a shadow of a

doubt. Whatever could be desired on the political or the industrial field has come to capitalism, and yet it is not easy, it is not content. There is the haunting certainty that a break is coming, and that when it does come there will be many stately edifices go down into the chasm.

The old year saw the working class defeated in all its strikes. It saw the working class, despite the gigantic swing of production, poorer than ever. It saw thousands in the city and millions in the nation crawling humbly to pick up the crumbs that fell from the table of plenty during Christmas. It saw more destitution, more misery, more violent deaths, more workingmen murdered through the criminal and wanton carelessness of the capitalist, more women driven to shame, more children made outcasts, and more families shattered than during any previous year.

Both classes, the capitalist class freighted and almost smothered in the wealth it has stolen, the working class stripped of all, lean, and practically naked, now face this, the New Year. What will the story be when it is run?

Perhaps an indication can be given from an incident that occurred yesterday. The *Evening Telegram*, a paper owned by James Gordon Bennett, who spends his luxurious time in the luxurious capital and watering places of France, announced with much trumpeting and circumstance that it would give free to the newsboys on Christmas Day, its entire edition. It would also give, to-day, a fine dinner to those same boys. That was "charity." But list to the tale of yesterday, a modest piece of "charity" of which the modest *Evening Telegram* said not a word in the many columns it devotes to its own sweet self. From now on the price of the paper, to the newsboys, will be ten cents more on the hundred. That means, the little boy who formerly received ten papers for four cents, now must pay five cents for his ten papers. In other words, the *Evening Telegram*, owned by the luxurious James Gordon Bennett, has invested in one edition and a dinner, so that it might dazzle the boys sufficiently to allow their being squeezed of a little additional profit. That, too, is capitalist charity.

What is true of the *Evening Telegram* is also true of every other capitalist concern. They are going to make money, and they are going to make it by a little closer shearing of the ones who work for them. That is, the fleece of the working class must go to keep the capitalist class warm. Such was the aspect of the fight at

the beginning of the last year; such it is at the beginning of this year. The working class was ground to a fine point last year; it will be ground to a finer point this year.

The only ray of hope that lightens the dark sky of the working class is the steadily burning and stronger flame of socialism as taught by the Socialist Labor Party. That party has not been dimmed, much less extinguished, by all the storms, by all the outpourings against it. The hope of a happy New Year to the working class rests in it, and in it alone. It will be a happy New Year in the exact proportion in which the workers turn to it and follow it. It will suffer as in the past from all the former mistakes and errors with their dire consequences in just the proportion in which it follows the will-o'-the-wisp that capitalism eternally exhales.

**Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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