

most salutary laws." It is not always easy for local judges to make straight decisions in the face of local police custom, local fiscal custom and local judicial custom, as Judge Gorman has done in these cases. The service of judges who lead the way courageously in matters of this kind should not be overlooked.

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THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND "CAPITALISM."

Socialists have a theory of class war as characteristic of the great historical epoch upon which the world has entered. It is to be a war by discussion and legislation, as they hope and are trying to make it, but a war nevertheless,—a clash of classes.

On one side in this war they foresee a "capitalistic" or labor exploiting class struggling to carry all before it; and on the other a "labor" or exploited class, struggling to conquer the world and finally succeeding.

In the "capitalistic" or exploiting class, they discern, as they believe, psychological phenomena which they call "class consciousness"—an impulsive homogeneity of all those whose actual or expectant interests are of the "capitalistic" or labor exploiting species. On the side of the "labor" or exploited class, they find a great (though, as they believe, a diminishing) heterogeneity of impulse, which leaves this class very much at the mercy of the other.

What militant Socialists primarily seek, therefore, is to cultivate in all individuals of the "labor" or exploited class (actual or expectant), the same sense of oneness with reference to "labor" interests that prevails already in the opposite class with reference to "capitalistic" interests. As the "capitalistic" elements are "class conscious" *for* labor exploitation, they would inspire the labor elements with "class consciousness" *against* labor exploitation.

Whether this can be done or not, either by industrial organization or political organization or no organization, or in any other way, is beyond the scope of our immediate subject.

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Reserving those considerations for another time, we may at once concede, however, that the Socialists, be they right or wrong as to the possibility of developing a "labor class-consciousness," are substantially right as to the present fact of what they call "capitalistic class-consciousness." In our communities the world over, there is in truth today a labor-exploiting class which oper-

ates homogeneously in obedience to sinister psychological impulses that answer well enough to the "capitalistic class-conscious" appellation which Socialists adopt.

An impressive example is afforded in Chicago at this moment in connection with the administration of the public schools. "Capitalistic class-consciousness" is here shamelessly exhibited in its efforts to transform an educational or developing institution for children into an engine for "capitalistic"* exploitation.

Similar examples might be found in any large city. We mention Chicago because peculiar circumstances here give emphasis to conditions that are universal.

Measures are pending before the legislature which are evidently designed to subordinate the Chicago public school system and its property to the purposes of a class of exploiters, who, as a class, differ from the old "grey wolf pack" only in the conventional respectability and legislative legality of the means they employ to divert the products of labor from producers.

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A sidelight was thrown upon those measures at a hearing last week before the educational committee of the lower house of the legislature.

John J. Sonstebly, the member of the Chicago school board who has exposed the school book steal from which Chicago has suffered for ten years, argued for a salaried school board. This was opposed by the president of the present board.

"You don't believe the City of Chicago could hire a man like Joseph Downey, for instance, to serve on the school board at any price it could afford to pay," said the chairman of the committee, one of the "capitalistic" class of Chicago.

"Precisely," said Mr. Schneider, another of the same class. "I would not serve myself for pay; the best men available for this work do not want a salary and would not want the positions if they were salaried."

Now Mr. Downey bears the personal reputation of an honest man, and so he doubtless is. The same may be said of Mr. Schneider.

But, except for "capitalistic" utilization of the school system, neither of these two excellent men is any better for a position on the school board, and in some important public respects neither is

*We use the term "capitalistic," not as a derivative from "capital" in the technical economic sense of artificial implements of industry; but as a derivative from "capital" in its common and loose commercial sense of everything that is capitalized—natural as well as artificial implements of industry, and even of laborers if chattel slavery existed.

as good, as Mr. Sonstebly, who, though now a lawyer, continues fraternal relations with the union of his original trade of clothing cutter; or as John J. Fitzpatrick, the blacksmith, who is the able and justly trusted president of the Federation of Labor; or as John C. Harding, the business agent of the printers, who as a member of the school board proved his honesty and efficiency beyond question, and in addition unearthed the school land steals that had been sanctioned by boards dominated by "capitalistic" members, as Mr. Sonstebly has uncovered the book steals of the same "capitalistic" boards.

But men like Sonstebly and Harding and Fitzpatrick can serve on unpaid school boards only at great personal sacrifice; whereas men like Schneider and Downey—all such men as have thrived in the labor-exploiting class—can without sacrifice graciously lend some of their leisure to the public, and at the same time make the public service conserve the interests of the "capitalistic" class, which, in contradistinction to the whole public, they really represent.

We emphasize our disclaimer of any disrespect toward these men personally. Unlike many of their class with whom they consort and co-operate in class affairs, they are personally honest men. But they are class-bound men, they are "capitalistic class-conscious" men.

It is wholly to the control of such men, at the best (we say nothing of the worst), that the interests of the schools are intrusted when school trustees are unpaid. Equally good men of the exploited class cannot afford to serve for nothing; and to men of the exploiting class, though they be personally honest, the voice of their class is the voice of God. Unpaid public positions like that of school trustee, are therefore necessarily "capitalistic" positions. Their tendency is to place the school children, mostly children of the exploited class, under the domination of the class that exploits them, and without even a minority representation of their own class on the school board to guard their interests.

Its further tendency is to subject school property to "capitalistic" policies in opposition to public policy.

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In that direction the measures before the legislature go to still greater lengths.

They originate in the Commercial Association—the most powerful and aggressive "capitalistic" trade union in Chicago.

They are promoted principally by Theodore W. Robinson, vice president of the Chicago branch

of the steel trust, which is at this very moment asking the legislature to give it the fee of public lands of enormous prospective value, just as "capitalistic" interests of seventy years ago diverted school lands from public school uses to private "capitalistic" purposes.

They contain clauses well calculated to protect the "capitalistic" landgrabbers of Chicago, who, with the connivance of unpaid business school boards, have well nigh divested the school system of all its remaining patrimony, thereby making it possible to undo the good work that the John C. Harding committee did.

They contain provisions with reference to school books and the power of the superintendent, that will make it possible to undo the good work that John J. Sonstebly's committee has done in that connection.

They contain provisions that will enable the Mayor, with the co-operation of a majority of his own appointees, to summarily dismiss from the board any member whose opposition to a "capitalistic" exploitation may make the exploitation difficult or dangerous.

Altogether these measures, if adopted by the legislature, would amount to little less than a reference with power, of the whole school system—land, teachers, children, and all—to the ring which dominates the "capitalistic" class of Chicago.

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Can this kind of thing go on without reaction in the socialistic direction? Can these object lessons of "capitalistic class-consciousness" and "capitalistic" exploitation be flaunted in the faces of exploited workingmen without soon producing the class clash which Socialism predicts and endeavors to promote? Can we have "capitalistic class consciousness" without generating "labor class-consciousness"? However each may for himself answer those questions, it seems clear enough that the time has come for everyone who professes to deplore class conflicts, to prove his good faith by renouncing his allegiance to the "capitalistic" combiners that are provoking class controversies, and making his renunciation effective by withdrawing his support from their programs of exploitation.

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It will greatly help thee * * * if thou rememberest that what does the work of a fig-tree is a fig-tree, and that what does the work of a dog is a dog, and that what does the work of a bee is a bee, and that what does the work of a man is a man.—Marcus Aurellus Antoninus.