

Unity and Victory:  
Speech to the Kansas State Convention of the American  
Federation of Labor, Pittsburg, Kansas  
(August 12, 1908)

Mr. Chairman, Delegates and Fellow Workers:—

It is with pleasure, I assure you, that I embrace this opportunity to exchange greetings with you in the councils of labor. I have prepared no formal address, nor is any necessary at this time. You have met here as the representatives of organized labor and if I can do anything to assist you in the work you have been delegated to do I shall render that assistance with great pleasure.

To serve the working class is to me always a duty of love. Thirty-three years ago I first became a member of a trade union.<sup>1</sup> I can remember quite well under what difficulties meetings were held and with what contempt organized labor was treated at that time. There has been a decided change. The small and insignificant trade union has expanded to the proportions of a great national organization. The few hundreds now number millions and organized labor has become a recognized factor in the economics and politics of the nation.

There has been a great evolution during that time and while the power of the organized workers has increased there has been an industrial development which makes that power more necessary than ever before in all the history of the working class movement.

This is an age of organization. The small employer of a quarter of a century ago has practically disappeared. The workingman of today is confronted by the great corporation which has its ironclad rules and regulations, and if they don't suit he can quit.

In the presence of this great power, workingmen are compelled to organize or be ground to atoms. They have organized. They have the numbers. They have had some bitter experience. They have suffered beyond the power of language to describe, but they have not yet developed their latent power to a degree that they can cope, successfully with the great power that exploits and oppresses them. Upon this question of organization, my brothers, you and I may differ widely, but as we are reasonable

men, we can discuss these differences candidly until we find common ground upon which we can stand side by side in the true spirit of solidarity — and work together for the emancipation of our

Until quite recently the average trade unionist was opposed to having politics even mentioned in the meeting of his union. The reason for this is self-evident. Workingmen have not until now keenly felt the necessity for independent working class political action. They have been divided between the two capitalist parties and the very suggestion that the union was to be used in the interest of the one or the other was in itself sufficient to sow the seed of disruption. So it isn't strange that the average trade unionist guarded carefully against the introduction of political questions in his union. But within the past two or three years there have been such changes that workingmen have been compelled to take notice of the fact that the labor question is essentially a political question, and that if they would protect themselves against the greed and rapacity of the capitalist class they must develop their political power as well as their economic power, and use both in their own interest.

Workingmen have developed sufficient intelligence to understand the necessity for unity upon the economic field. All now recognize the need for thorough organization. But organization of numbers of itself is not sufficient. You might have all the workers of the country embraced in some vast organization and yet they would be very weak if they were not organized upon correct principles; if they did not understand, and understand clearly what they were organized for, and what their organization expected to accomplish.

I am of those who believe that an organization of workingmen, to be efficient, to meet the demands of this hour, must be organized upon a revolutionary basis; must have for its definite object not only the betterment of the condition of workingmen in the wage system, but the absolute overthrow of wage slavery that the workingman may be emancipated and stand forth clothed with the dignity and all other attributes of true manhood.

Now let me briefly discuss the existing condition. We have been organizing all these years, and there are now approximately three millions of American workingmen who wear union badges, who keep step to union progress. At this very time, and in spite of all that organized labor can do to the contrary, there is a condition that prevails all over this country that is well calculated to challenge the serious consideration of every workingman. To begin with, according to the reports furnished us, 20 percent of

the workingmen of this country are now out of employment. I have here a copy of the *New York World* containing a report of the labor commissioner of the state of New York who shows that during the quarter ending June 30 there were in that state an army of union men out of employment approximating 35 percent of the entire number; that is to say, in the state of New York today, out of every one hundred union men (these reports are received from the unions themselves, verified by their own officers, so there can be no question in regard to them), out of every 100 union men in New York, 35 are out of employment. The percentage may not be so large in these western states where the industrial development has not reached the same point, but go where you may, East or West, North or South, you will find men, union men, who are begging for the opportunity to work for just enough to keep their suffering souls within their famished bodies. A system in which such a condition as this is possible has justified its mission, stands condemned, and ought to be abolished.

According to the Declaration of Independence, man has the inalienable right to life. If that be true it follows that he has also the inalienable right to work. If you have no right to work you have no right to life because you can only live by work. And if you live in a system that deprives you of the right to work, that system denies you the right to live.

Now man has a right to life because he is here. That is sufficient proof, and if he has the right to life, it follows that he has the right to all the means that sustain life. But how is it in this outgrown capitalist system? A workingman can only work on condition that he finds somebody who will give him permission to work for just enough of what his labor produces to keep him in working order.

No matter whether you have studied this economic question or not, you cannot have failed to observe that during the past half century society has been sharply divided into classes — into a capitalist class upon the one hand^ into a working class upon the other hand. I shall not take the time to trace this evolution. I shall simply call your attention to the fact that half a century ago all a man needed was a trade and having this he could supply himself with the simple tools then used, produce what he needed and enjoy the fruit of his labor. But this has been completely changed. The simple tool has disappeared and the great machine has taken its place. The little shop is gone and the great factory has come in its stead. The worker can no longer work by and for himself. He has been recruited into regiments, battalions and armies and work has been subdivided and specialized; and

now hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands of workingmen work together cooperatively and produce in great abundance, not for themselves, however, for they no longer own the tools they work with. What they produce belongs to the capitalist class who own the tools with which they work. A man fifty years ago who made a shoe owned it. Today it is possible for that same worker, if still alive, to make a hundred times as many shoes, but he doesn't own them now. He works today with modern machinery which is the property of some capitalist who lives perhaps a thousand miles from where the factory is located and who owns all the product because he owns the machinery.

I have stated that society has been divided into two warring classes. The capitalist owns the tool in modern industry, but he has nothing to do with its operation. By virtue of such ownership he has the economic power to appropriate to himself the wealth produced by the use of that tool. This accounts for the fact that the capitalist becomes rich. But how about the working class? In the first place they have to compete with each other for the privilege of operating the capitalist's tool of production. The bigger the tool and the more generally it is applied, the more it produces, the sharper competition grows between the workers for the privilege of using it and the more are thrown out of employment. Every few years, no matter what party is in power, no matter what our domestic policy is, how high the tariff or what the money standard, every few years the cry goes up about "overproduction" and the working class is discharged by the thousands and thousands, and are idle, just as the miners have been in this field for many weary months.

No work, no food, and after a while, no credit, and all this in the shadow of the abundance these very workers have created.

Don't you agree with me, my brothers, that this condition is an intolerable and indefensible one, and that whatever may be said of the past, this system no longer answers the demands of this time? Why should any workingman need to beg for work? Why forced to surrender to anybody any part of what his labor produces?

Now, I ask this question, and it applies to the whole field of industry: If a hundred men work in a mine and produce a hundred tons of coal, how much of that coal are they entitled to? Are they not entitled to all of it? And if not, who is entitled to any part of it? If the man who produces wealth is not entitled to it, who is? You say the capitalist is necessary and I deny it. The capitalist has become a profit-taking parasite. Industry is

now concentrated and operated on a very large scale; it is co-operative and therefore self-operative. The capitalists hire superintendents, managers and workmen to operate their plants and produce wealth. The capitalists are absolutely unnecessary; they have no part in the process of production — not the slightest.

Now I insist that it is the workingman's duty to so organize economically and politically as to put an end to this system; as to take possession in his collective capacity of the machinery of production and operate it, not to create millionaires and multimillionaires, but to produce wealth in plenty for all. That is why the labor question is also a political question. It makes no difference what you do on the economic field to better your condition, so long as the tools' of production are privately owned, so long as they are operated for the private profit of the capitalist, the working class will be exploited, they will be in enforced idleness, thousands of them will be reduced to want, some of them to vagabonds and criminals, and this condition will prevail in spite of anything that organized labor can do to the contrary.

The most important thing for the workingman to recognize is the class struggle. Every capitalist, every capitalist newspaper, every capitalist attorney and retainer will insist that we have no classes in this country and that there is no class struggle. President Roosevelt himself has declared that class-consciousness is a foul and evil thing. Now, what is class-consciousness? It is simply a recognition of the fact on the part of the workingman that his interest is identical with the interest of every other workingman. Class-consciousness points out the necessity for working-class action, economic and political.

What is it that keeps the working class in subjection? What is it that is responsible for their exploitation and for all of the ills they suffer? Just one thing — it can be stated in a single word. It is Ignorance. The working class have not yet learned how to unite and act together. There are relatively but few capitalists in this country; there are perhaps 20 million wage workers, but the capitalists and their retainers have contrived during all these years to keep the working class divided, and as long as the working class is divided it will be helpless. It is only when the working class learn — and they are learning daily and by very bitter experience — to unite and to act together, especially on election day, that there is any hope for emancipation.

The workingmen you represent, my brothers, are in an overwhelming majority in every township, county and state of this nation. You declare you are in favor of united action, but still you don't unite. You unite under certain conditions within your union, you get together upon the economic field to a limited extent, but you have yet to learn that before you can really accomplish anything you have got to unite in fact as well as in name. The time is coming when workingmen will be forced into one general organization. The time is coming when they will be compelled to organize on the basis of industrial unionism.

At this very hour there is a strike on the Canadian Pacific. Eight thousand workingmen who are more or less organized and who have been wronged in many ways, have finally gone out on strike. There are other thousands remaining at their posts and non-union men flowing in there will be hauled to their destination by union men, and union men will continue to work until their eight thousand brothers have lost their jobs and many of them have become tramps. That is called organization, but it is not so in fact. It is at best organization of a very weak and defective character. Now, the right kind of organization on the Canadian Pacific would embrace all the workers. They should all be included within the same organization and then have one general working agreement with the company so that if there was a violation of it, it would concern every man in the service. But how is it at present? The engineers, conductors, trainmen, and switchmen are in separate unions and after they have been signed up, the company can treat the rest just as they please, for they know that if they strike and the others remain in their service, as they are bound to do under their agreement, they can very easily supplant them and remain in perfect control of the system. We have had enough of that kind of experience and we ought to profit by it. We ought to realize that there is but one form of organization that answers completely, one in which all subscribe to the same rules and act together in all things, and you will have to organize upon that basis or see your unions become practically worthless.

Now let us consider another line briefly for the benefit of those who have opposed political action. We are all aware of the trend of the decisions recently rendered by the United States supreme court. Three decisions have been rendered in rapid succession which strike down the rights of labor and virtually strip organized labor of its power. Under these decisions organized labor has been outlawed, and while upon this question I want to suggest that this body at the proper time in its deliberations put the

following questions to the candidates for the United States senate and house of representatives in the State of Kansas and request them to answer:

In view of the fact that the United States supreme court has rendered a number of decisions placing the working class at a tremendous disadvantage in its struggle with the employing class for better conditions, we respectfully submit to the candidates for the United States senate and house of representatives the following questions:

1. Are you in favor of issuing injunctions against trade union members because they refuse to patronize a non-union employer and advise their friends to do likewise?

2. Will you introduce and vote for a measure setting aside the decision of the supreme court of the District of Columbia in the case of Buck Stove and Range Company against officers of the AF of L making it a criminal act for a labor union to place an employer on its unfair list?

3. Are you in favor of classifying trade unions as “trusts in restraint of trade” as was done by the supreme court in the case of *Loewe vs. Lawler*,<sup>2</sup> and will you introduce a measure, should you be elected, providing for the exemption of trade unions from the operation of the anti-trust law under this court decision?

4. Do you endorse the supreme court decision making it lawful for a corporation to discharge a man because of his membership in a labor union? If you do not, will you introduce and vote for a bill setting aside this decision of the supreme court and making it unlawful for a corporation to discharge a man because he is a member of a trade union?

Here are these candidates in the state of Kansas for the United States senate and house of representatives and if they are elected they will have the power to control legislation, and it is perfectly proper that you, as the representatives of the workers, should put these questions squarely to these candidates and demand that they answer them. They are very simple questions. The United States court has rendered a decision to the effect that a trade union is a trust and that if it exercises its ultimate powers it is a criminal conspiracy in restraint of trade. That decision of the court congress has the power to set aside, and if a man stands as a candidate for congress in the upper or lower branch and appeals to you for your vote — and bear in mind he can only be elected by your vote — it is right and proper that you should know if he is in favor of the decision or opposed to it. And if he is in favor of this decision he is your enemy.

Now, these candidates are trying to carry water on both shoulders. They declare they will give both labor and capital a square deal, and I want to say that is impossible. No man can be for labor without being against capital. No man can be for capital without being against labor.

Here is the capitalist; here are the workers. Here is the capitalist who owns the mines; here are the miners who work in the mines. There is so much coal produced. There is a quarrel between them over a division of the product. Each wants all he can get. Here we have the class struggle. Now, is it possible to be for the capitalist without being against the worker. Are their interest not diametrically opposite?

If you increase the share of the capitalist don't you decrease the share of the workers? Can a door be both open and shut at the same time? Can you increase both the workers' and the capitalist's share at the same time? There is just so much produced, and in the present system it has to be divided between the capitalists and the workers, and both sides are fighting for all they can get, and this is the historic class struggle.

We have now no revolutionary organization of the workers along the lines of this class struggle and that is the demand of this time. The pure and simple trade union will no longer answer. I would not take from it the least credit that belongs to it. I have fought under its banner for thirty years. I have followed it through victory and defeat, generally defeat. I realize today more than ever before in my life the necessity for thorough economic organization. It must be made complete. Organization, like everything else, is subject to the laws of evolution. Everything changes, my brothers. The tool you worked with twenty-five years ago will no longer do. It would do then; it will not do now. The capitalists are combined against you. They are reducing wages. They have control of the courts. They are doing everything they can to destroy your power. You have got to follow their example. You have got to unify your forces. You have got to stand together shoulder to shoulder on the economic and political fields and then you will make substantial progress toward emancipation.

I am not here, my brothers, to ask you, as an economic organization, to go into politics. Not at all. If I could have you pass a resolution to go into politics I would not do it. If you were inclined to go into active politics as an organization I would prevent such action if I could. You represent the economic organization of the working class and this organization has its own clearly defined functions. Your economic organization can never become a political machine, but your economic organization must



recognize and proclaim the necessity for a united political party. You ought to pass a resolution recognizing the class struggle declaring your opposition to the capitalist system of private ownership of the means of production, and urging upon the working class the necessity for working class political action. That is as far as the economic organization need to go. If you were to use your economic organization for political purposes you would, disrupt it, you would wreck it. But I would not have you renounce politics, nor be afraid to discuss anything. Who is it that is so fearful you will discuss politics? It is the ward-heeling politician, and isn't it because he knows very well that if you ever get into politics in the right way he will be out of a job? He is afraid you will get your eyes open.

Why should a union man be afraid to discuss politics? He belongs to a certain party; his father belonged to that party and his grandfather belonged to that party, and perhaps his great-grandfather belonged to the same party, and that is probably the only reason he can give for belonging to that party. He don't want anybody to suggest to him the possibility of being lifted out of that party and into some other.

Parties change. The party that was good forty years ago is completely outgrown and corrupt and has now no purpose but the promotion of graft and other vicious practices.

Workingmen in their organized capacity must recognize the necessity for both economic and political action. I would not have you decUre in favor of any particular political party. That would be another mistake which would have disastrous results. If I could have you pass a resolution to support the Socialist Party I would not do it. You can't make socialists by passing resolutions. Men have to become socialists by study and experience, and they are getting the experience every day.

There is one fact, and a very important one, that I would impress upon you, and that is the necessity for revolutionary working class political action.

No one will attempt to dispute the fact that our interests as workers are identical. If our interests are identical, then we ought to unite. We ought to unite within the same organization, and if there is a strike we should all strike, and if there is a boycott all of us ought to engage in it. If our interests are identical, it follows that we ought to belong to the same party as well as to the same economic organization. What is politics? It is simply the reflex of economics. What is a party? It is the expression politically of certain material class interests. You belong to that party that you believe

will promote your material welfare. Is not that a fact? If you find yourself in a party that attacks your pocket do you not quit that party?

Now, if you are in a party that opposes your interests it is because you don't have intelligence enough to understand your interests. That is where the capitalists have the better of you. As a rule, they are intelligent, and shrewd. They understand their material interests and how to protect them. You find the capitalists as a rule belonging only to capitalist parties. They don't join a working class party and they don't vote the Socialist ticket. They know enough to know that socialism is opposed to their economic interests. Now, both Republican and Democratic parties are capitalist parties. There is not the slightest doubt about it. It can be proved in a hundred different ways. You know how the republican party treated the demands of labor in its recent national convention. You know, or ought to know, what has taken place under the present administration. You know, or ought to know, something about the democratic party, national, state and municipal. If there are those who say that the Democratic Party is more favorable to labor than the Republican Party it is only necessary to point you the Southern states where it has ruled for a century. In no other part of the nation are workingmen in so wretched a condition. In no other part are working people so miserably housed, so wretchedly treated as they are in the southern states where the Democratic Party rules supreme.

At this very hour miners in Alabama are on strike under a Democratic administration. I know the condition there, for I have been in the mines. I know many of those men personally. I know under what conditions they have had to work. I have been in the shacks in which they live and have seen their unhappy wives and ill-fed children. I know whereof I speak. Only in the last extremity have those men gone out on strike. They bore all these cruel wrongs for years and were finally forced out on strike. And then what happened? The very first thing the Democratic governor did was to send the soldiers to scab the mines. It doesn't make any difference to you, if workingmen are starved and shot down, which party is in power. It occurs under both Republican and Democratic administration. There will be no change as long as you continue to support the prevailing capitalist system, based upon the private ownership of the tools with which workingmen work and without which they are doomed to slavery and starvation.

Now, I repeat that this body should declare against this system of private ownership and in favor of the collective ownership by the workers of

the tools of production. This will give you a clear aim and definite object. This will make your movement revolutionary in its ultimate purpose, as it ought to be, and as for immediate concessions in the way of legislation by capitalist representatives and more favorable working conditions, you workingmen have only to poll 2 million Socialist votes this fall, and you will get those concessions freely and you will not get them in any other way. You will not frighten, you will not move the great corporations by dividing your votes between the Republican and Democratic parties. It doesn't make any difference which of these two parties wins, you lose! They are both capitalist parties and I don't ask you to take my mere word for it. I simply ask, my brothers, that you read and study the platforms for yourself. I beg of you not to have an ignorant, superstitious reverence for any political party. It is your misfortune if you are the blind follower of any political leader, or any other leader. It is your duty as a workingman, your duty to yourself, your family, to quit a party the very instant you find that that party no longer serves you; and if you continue to adhere to a party that antagonizes your interests, if you continue to support a system in which you are degraded, then you have no right to complain. You must submit to what comes, for you yourself are responsible.

Let me impress this fact upon your minds: the labor question, which is really the question of all humanity, will never be solved until it is solved by the working class. It will never be solved for you by the capitalists. It will never be solved for you by the politicians. It will remain unsolved until you yourselves solve it. As long as you can stand and are willing to stand these conditions, these conditions will remain; but when you unite all over the land, when you present a solid class-conscious phalanx, economically and politically, there is no power on this earth that can stand between you and complete emancipation.

As individuals you are helpless, but united you represent an irresistible power.

Is there any doubt in the mind of any thinking workingman that we are in the midst of a class struggle? Is there any doubt that the workingman ought to own the tool he works with? You will never own the tool you work with under the present system. This whole system is based upon the private ownership by the capitalist of the tools and the wage slavery of the working class, and as long as the tools are privately owned by the capitalists the great mass of workers will be wage slaves.

You may, at times, temporarily better your condition within certain limitations, but you will still remain wage slaves, and why wage slaves? For just one reason and no other — you have got to work. To work you have got to have tools, and if you have no tools you have to beg for work, and if you have got to beg for work the man who owns the tools you use will determine the conditions under which you shall work. As long as he owns your tools he owns your job, and if he owns your job he is the master of your fate. You are in no sense a free man. You are subject to his interest and to his will. He decides whether you shall work or not. Therefore, he decides whether you shall live or die. And in that humiliating position any one who tries to persuade you that you are a free man is guilty of insulting your intelligence. You will never be free, you will never stand erect in your own manly self-reliance until you are the master of the tools you work with, and when you are you can freely work without the consent of any master, and when you do work you will get all your labor produces.

As it is now the lion's share goes to the capitalist for which he does nothing, while you get a small fraction to feed, clothe and shelter yourself, and reproduce yourself in the form of labor-power.

That is all you get out of it and all you ever will get in the capitalist system.

Oh, my brothers, can you be satisfied with your lot? Will you insist that life shall continue a mere struggle for existence and one prolonged misery to which death comes as a blessed relief?

How is it with the average workingman today? I am not referring to the few who have been favored and who have fared better than the great mass, but I am asking how it is with the average workingman in this system? Admit that he has a job. What assurance has he that it is his in 24 hours? I have a letter from an expert glass worker saying that the new glass machine which has recently been tested, has proven conclusively that bottles can be made without a glass blower. Five or six boys with these machines can make as many bottles as ten expert blowers could make. Machinery is conquering every department of activity. It is displacing more and more workingmen and making the lot of those who have employment more and more insecure. Admit that a man has a job. What assurance has he that he is going to keep it? A machine may be invented. He may offend the boss. He may engage in a little agitation in the interest of his class. He is marked as an agitator, he is discharged, and then what is his status?

The minute he is discharged he has to hunt for a new buyer for his labor-power. He owns no tools; the tools are great machines. He can't compete against them with his bare hands. He has got to work. There is only one condition under which he can work and that is when he sells his labor-power, his energy, his very life currents, and thus disposes of himself in daily installments. He is not sold from the block, as was the chattel slave. He sells ten hours of himself every day in exchange for just enough to keep himself in that same slavish condition.

The machine he works with has to be oiled, and he has to be fed, and the oil sustains the same relation to the machine that food does to him. If he could work without food his wage would be reduced to the vanishing point. That is the status of the workingman today.

What can the present economic organization do to improve the condition of the workingman? Very little, if anything. If you have a wife and two or three children, and you take the possibilities into consideration, this question ought to give you grave concern. You know that it is the sons of workingmen who become vagabonds and tramps, and who are sent to jail, and it is the daughters of workingmen who are forced into houses of shame.

You are a workingman, you live in capitalism, and you have nothing but your labor-power, and you don't know whether you are going to find a buyer or not. But even if you do find a master, if you have a job, can you boast of being a man among men?

No man can rightly claim to be a man unless he is free. There is something godlike about manhood. Manhood doesn't admit of ownership. Manhood scorns to be regarded as property.

Do you know whether you have a job or not? Do you know how long you are going to have one? And when you are out of a job what can your union do for you? I was down at Coalgate, Oklahoma, on the Fourth of July last, where six hundred miners have been out of work for four long months. They are all organized. There are the mines and machinery, and the miners are eager to work. But not a tap of work is being done, and the miners and their families are suffering, and most of them live in houses that are unfit for habitation. This awful condition is never going to be changed in capitalism. There is one way only and that is to wipe out capitalism, and to do that we have to get together, and when we do that we will find the way to emancipation.

You may not agree with me now, but make note of what I am saying. The time is near when you will be forced into economic and political solidarity.

The Republican and Democratic parties are alike capitalist parties. Some of you may think that Mr. Bryan, if elected, will do great things for the workers. Conditions will remain substantially the same. We will still be under capitalism. It will not matter how you many tinker with the tariff or the currency. The tools are still the property of the capitalists and you are still at their mercy.

Now let me show you that Mr. Bryan is no more your friend than is Mr. Taft. You remember when the officials of the Western Federation of Miners were kidnaped in Colorado, and when it was said they should never leave Idaho alive. It was the determination of the Mine Owners' Association that these brave and loyal union leaders should be foully murdered. When these brothers of ours were brutally kidnaped by the collusion of the capitalist governors of two states, every true friend of the working class cried out in protest. Did Mr. Bryan utter a word? Mr. Bryan was the recognized champion of the working class. He was in a position to be heard. A protest from him would have tremendous weight with the American people. But his labor friends could not unlock his lips. Not one word would he speak. Not one.

Organized labor, however, throughout the length and breadth of the land, took the matter in hand promptly and registered its protest in a way that made the nation quake. The Mine Owners' Association took to the tall timber. Our brother unionists were acquitted, vindicated, and stood forth without a blemish upon their honor, and after they were free once more, Mr. Bryan said, "I felt all the time that they were not guilty."

Now if your faithful leaders are kidnapped and threatened to be hanged, and you call upon a man who claims to be your friend, to come to the rescue and he refuses to say a word, to give the least help, do you still think he is your friend? Mr. Bryan had his chance to prove his friendship at a time when labor sorely needed friends, when organized labor cried out in agony and distress. But not a word escaped his lips.

Why did not Mr. Bryan speak? He did not dare. Mr. Bryan knew very well that the kidnapers of those men were his personal friends, the association of rich mine owners, who had largely furnished his campaign funds. For Mr. Bryan personally I have always had a high regard. I am not attacking him in any personal sense at all.

But the extremity to which a man is driven who tries to serve both capital and labor! It can't be done. Mr. Bryan did not dare to speak for labor because if he had he would have turned the mine owning capitalists against him. He is afraid to speak out very loudly for capitalists for fear the workers will get after him. He has compromised all around for the sake of being president

You have heard him denounce Roger Sullivan.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Bryan, four years ago, in denouncing this corruptionist, at the time of the nomination of Alton B. Parker, said he was totally destitute of honor and compared him to a train robber. Notwithstanding this fact, Mr. Bryan recently invited Sullivan to his home in Lincoln, took him by the hand and introduced him to his family. Mr. Bryan also invited Charley Murphy,<sup>4</sup> the inexpressibly rotten Tammany heeler of New York. Mr. Bryan had him come to Lincoln so as to conciliate Tammany, and they were photographed together shaking hands.

No man can serve both capital and labor at the same time.

You don't admit the capitalists to your union. They organize their union to fight you. You organize your union to fight them. Their union consists wholly of capitalists; your union consists wholly of workingmen. It is along the same line that you have got to organize politically. You don't unite with capitalists on the economic field; why should you politically?

You have got to extend your class line. You can declare yourselves in this convention and make your position clear to the world. You can give hope and inspire confidence throughout the state.

And now in closing, I wish to thank you, each of you, from my heart, for your kindness. I appreciate the opportunity you have given me to address you and whether you agree with me or not, I leave you wishing you success in your deliberations and hoping for the early triumph of the labor movement.

Stenographic report by Frankie Cox, probably first published in *Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Kansas State Federation of Labor*, text unavailable. Stenogram revised by Debs and published as the pamphlet *Unity and Victory: Speech of Eugene V. Debs Before the State Convention of the American Federation of Labor, at Pittsburg, Kansas, August 12, 1908*. (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., Feb. 15, 1910).

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<sup>1</sup> Debs was a founding member of the Vigo Lodge No. 16 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen in February 1875. The organization favored individual betterment and opposed

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strikes and was more akin to a fraternal benefit society than a modern trade union. See: *Selected Works of Eugene V. Debs: Volume 1, Building Solidarity on the Tracks, 1877-1892, passim.*

<sup>2</sup> *Loewe v. Lawler*, commonly known as the Danbury Hatters' case, was a 1908 supreme court decision which ruled that a boycott by the United Hatters of North America against the open shop D. E. Loewe & Co., represented a violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890 and overturned the dismissal of the suit by a lower court. A new trial resulted in 1909 which found against the union to the tune of \$74,000 in damages, trebled to \$222,000 under terms of the Sherman Act. This result was upheld by the supreme court in 1914 with the union ultimately paying out \$234,000 in 1917.

<sup>3</sup> Roger C. Sullivan (1861-1920) was a Democratic Party power broker from Chicago and was a leading figure in the Cook County Democratic Party. A long-time nemesis of William Jennings Bryan, Sullivan was influential in tipping the Democratic nomination to Woodrow Wilson at the 1912 Democratic convention, stymying Bryan's effort to deadlock the convention and gain nomination as an alternative unity candidate.

<sup>4</sup> "Boss" Charles F. Murphy (1858-1924) a former teamster and saloon owner, was the head of New York City's corrupt Tammany Hall Democratic Party establishment from 1902 until the time of his death. Murphy was the kingmaker back of New York mayor George B. McClellan, Jr., who defeated a challenge by William Randolph Hearst and his Municipal Ownership League in 1905, thereby assuring continued private ownership of the city's subway system — operated by a firm with financial ties to Murphy.