Émile Pouget
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1912

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whilst he struggles for his family's existence and his own, aims also to better the social conditions of his class and to deliver it from the exploitation that strangles and crushes it.

It is the ferment of a better life. he capitalist sabotage, on the other hand, is nothing but a means of increasing exploitation and profits. It does nothing but whet the ravenous appetites of the exploiters, that are never satisfied.

It is the expression of a loathsome voracity of an unquenchable thirst of riches which does not even stop at crime!

Saboters the grocers who sell pulverised pepper made with almond shells and olive stones.

Saboters the confectioners who sell glucose taffy, creams made with vaseline, honey with starch and chestnut meal.

Saboters the manufacturers of vinegar with sulphuric acid.

Saboters the dairymen who sell cheese made of starch and butter of margarine.

Saboters the brewers whose beer is distilled from corn leaves.

Saboters the great patriotic and public-spirited contractors of the great army supplies with paper soles, cartridges with dust and who sell fermented wheat, rotten canned goods, etc.

Saboters the iron and steel barons who build the powerful boilers of the warships with cracks and weak spots that will cause their explosion and the murder of thousands.

Saboters the great importers of meat from clandestine abattoirs where tuberculous cattle are slaughtered.

Saboters the building and railway contractors, the furniture makers, the manufacturers of chemicals and fertilisers — in short, all the captains of industry of any calibre, cut and make. All saboters — all, without one single exception, because all trick, fake, adulterate, defraud and swindle.

Sabotage reigns supreme in the capitalist world it is everywhere — in industry, commerce, agriculture.

Now, this sort of capitalist sabotage which saturates the present society and constitutes the element in which this society breathes, as we breathe in the oxygen of the air, this sort of sabotage which will only disappear with the downfall of capitalist society itself, is much more damnable than the sabotage of the workers.

The latter — it is well to emphasise the point — hits capital only in the bank account, whilst the former strikes at the sources of human life, ruins the health of the people and fills the hospitals and the cemeteries. From the wounds produced by the proletarian sabotage only gold flows out. From those inflicted by the capitalist sabotage, it is human blood which gushes out in streams.

The workers' sabotage is inspired by generous and altruistic principles. It is a shield of defence and protection against the usuries and vexations of the bosses; it is the weapon of the disinherited who,

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Chapter 6. Proletarian Sabotage and Capitalistic Sabotage

Proletarian sabotage and capitalistic sabotage. The saboters of the mile. Saboters of the mills. Saboters of iron and steel. The great contractors of the fatherland. From the workers sabotage drops the gold of the bourgeoisie. From the capitalist sabotage oozes out human blood.

As we have stated, in examining the various systems of proletarian sabotage, under whatever form and at whatever moment it manifests itself, its chief characteristic consists — absolutely always — in hitting at the bosses' pocketbook.

For the workers' sabotage which is aimed only at the means of exploitation, against the machines and the tools, that is against inert, painless and lifeless things, the bourgeoisie has nothing but curses and maledictions. OD the other hand, the detractors and slanderers of the working class were never scandalised and never show any anger against another sort of sabotage truly criminal, monstrous and abominable, which is the very life essence of modern society: the sabotage of the capitalists which reaps human victims and deprives men of their health by sticking like a leech at the very sources of life.

This bourgeois impassiveness and indifference to this sort of sabotage which is actually criminal — arises from the fact that the bourgeoisie draws most of its profits from it.

Saboters are the farmers and traders who, by adulterating the milk, chief nourishment of childhood, sap the very root of the growing generation.

Saboters are the millers and boss bakers who, by mixing talcum, chalk or other cheap but harmful ingredients with flour, adulterate the bread, a nourishment of first necessity.

Saboters the manufacturers of chocolate made with palm and cocoa oil.

Saboters the manufacturers and sellers of coffee mixed with starch, chicory and acorns.

Part 1: Introduction by Arturo M. Giovannitti

inspected, and it is found out that they are obstructed; more or less accidentally, a trowel full of mortar has fallen in the smoke shaft.

Elsewhere another accident — some fine morning upon arriving to the yard they find a wagon load of cement or stucco abundantly sprinkled over, and so on.

Our good friends, the varnishers, next, know very well how to treat white lead with a special chemical composition so that after a few hours all sort of varnishes appear as if they had been done with lampblack.

The consequence of all this is that the wages of masons and painters have increased while the working hours have been reduced, and with them the overbearing arrogance of the bosses.

We hardly need speak at all of the methods of sabotage in the printing industry. During the last strikes, the boss printers have been sufficiently rough-handled and had ample opportunity to appraise the cost of printed matter full of errors, ink spots, uncorrected proofs, etc., of compositions upset and broken up, of full pages fallen to the ground, whole cases of types mixed up and confused, linotypes which would not run, presses seized by rheumatism and gout, and so forth

All this was the clumsy and awkward work of some supposed scabs who were none else but the strikers themselves who were scabbing for the purpose of saboting the boss into submission. Passing from the industrial to the commercial field, sabotage consists here in safeguarding the interests of the customers and clients instead of taking to heart that of the boss. For instance, in the line of alimentary merchandise, the drug clerk, butcher, grocery clerk, etc., will give the customers the right weight instead of giving to the scale the professional snap of the finger.

We could cite many more instances and means, but as we are not writing a technical treatise on sabotage, we believe it unnecessary to deal here with all the forms of sabotage — which are many and complex — that can be and often are applied by the revolting workers.

Those that we have already quoted are more than sufficient to emphasise the efficiency and mark the characteristics of sabotage.

These worthy gentlemen would have been much less stupefied had they read what "Le Cri Postal," organ of the Postmen and Telegraphers' Union, had published in April, 1907.

> "You want to crush our organisation to prevent us from bettering our class, but what you will never be able to prevent is that some fine day the letters and telegrams from Lille take a little stroll around Patpignan.
>
> "What you cannot avoid is that the telephone wires be simultaneously tangled and the telegraphic instruments take strange and unexplainable fits. What you will never prevent is that ten thousand workers remain at their places, but with their arms crossed — what you cannot forbid is that ten thousand men all file in the same day, at the same hour, a petition for retirement, and stop working unanimously.
>
> "And — worse than all — what you absolutely cannot do, is to replace them with your soldiers."

Some years ago the bill posters of a Parisian corporation, having had their wages cut, retaliated by increasing the paste used for their work and by adding to it a two-cent tallow candle.

This work proceeded marvellously. The placards and bills were posted in as fine and careful a way as never before. Only after two hours, when the paste dried, they fell to the ground and the whole thing had to be done over again. The boss, having at last solved the puzzle, regretted his cowardly action. To list out the thousand of methods and ways of sabotage would be an endless rosary. The shoe workers have an infinite variety of tricks; so have the bakers. To the timber workers it cannot be difficult to use the axe so that the tree or log is split in all its length. To the painters also it must be easy to dilute or condense their colours as best they see fit. But the record of sabotage is held by the masons, who since 1906 have used it abundantly.

For instance, the case is not rare when, after a six-story building is complete, it is found out that the chimneys do not draw. They are

Chapter 1

Of all the words of a more or less esoteric taste which have been purposely denaturalized and twisted by the capitalist press in order to terrify and mystify a gullible public, "Direct Action" and "Sabotage" rank easily next to Anarchy, Nihilism, Free Love, Neo-Malthusianism, etc., in the hierarchy of infernal inventions.

To be sure, the capitalist class knows full well the exact meaning of these words and the doctrines and purposes behind them, but it is, of course, its most vital interest to throw suspicion on and raise popular contempt and hatred against them as soon as they begin to appear and before they are understood, for the purpose of creating an antagonistic environment to them, and thus check the growth of their propaganda.

American Capitalism having succeeded in making the word Anarchism synonymous with disorder, chaos, violence and murder in the popular mind — with the complicity of the cowardly silence of so-called revolutionists — it is now the turn of Syndicalism, Direct Action and Sabotage to be equally misrepresented, lied about and defamed.

This is of no surprise to us — but what actually astounds and appalls us is that the Socialist Party, itself so much maligned and calumniated up to a few years ago, should now come come out to the aid of Capitalism in this ignoble work of prevarication, to the extent of actually taking the initiative in vilifying and discrediting these new theories.

Thus we find that whilst in the laws of no State in the Union is Sabotage classed amongst felonies or misdemeanors, the Socialist Party, first in its National Convention at Indianapolis and next by referendum vote, finger-printed and bertillioned Sabotage amongst "crimes" and made it a capital offense against its canon laws, punishable by immediate expulsion from the rank and file.

Therefore, whilst you cannot be fined or sent to jail for advocating Sabotage, nor do you risk being excommunicated for heresy by the Catholic Church, you can and will be expelled from the Socialist

Party, which claims to be the political wing o the revolutionary labor movement.

This can have but two explanations. Either that the Socialist Party in its unbridled quest for votes and thirst for power wants to become respectable in the eyes of the bourgeoisie at at any price and risk, or that in utter ignorance of what it was judging and condemning it was induced to believe by a clique of unscrupulous politicians that Sabotage is the French translation of bomb throwing, assassination, incendiarsm and all around hell on earth.

We take the latter view and we are confirmed in our belief by the astounding fact that a committee of five has been selected by the Socialist Party to define Sabotage for the purpose of determining what it is . . . after having damned it on general principles.

The aim of this pamphlet being precisely this, we shall make bold to offer our own definition whilst we wait for the response of the Solons aforesaid.

What, then, is Sabotage? Sabotage is

1. Any conscious and willful act on the part of one or more workers intended to slacken and reduce the output of production in the industrial field, or to restrict trade and reduce the profits in the commercial field, in order to secure from their employers better conditions or to enforce those promised or maintain those already prevailing, when no other way of redress is open.
2. Any skillful operation on the machinery of production intended not to destroy it or permanently render it defective, but only to temporarily disable it and to put it out of running condition in order to make impossible the work of scabs and thus to secure the complete and real stoppage of work during a strike.

Whether you agree or not, Sabotage is this and nothing but this. It is not destructive. It has nothing to do with violence, neither to life nor to property. It is nothing more or less than the chloroforming of the organism of production, the "knock-out drops" to put to sleep and out of harm's way the ogres of steel and fire that watch and multiply the treasures of King Capital.

them in their march and possibly fall into the hands of the enemy. In such a case — destruction is legitimate and wise — whilst in another case it would be sheer folly. On the strength of the same argument no one can possibly blame the workers who resort to sabotage in order to gain a victory for themselves. In fine, we can say of sabotage what has been said of all tactics and all weapons: The end justifies the means.

It is just in obedience to this irresistible necessity that the carmen of Lyons some years ago poured cement into the tracks of the switches thus preventing the circulation of the tramways manned by scabs.

The same may be said of the railroad workers of Medoc who went on strike in July, 1908. Before quitting work they took care to cut the !telegraph wires between the various stations and when the company tried how best it could to reorganise the service it was found that from the pumps of water reserves the screws and bolts had been taken off and hidden somewhere.

A clever system of *sabotage* was adopted in Philadelphia by the workers of a great fur factory. Before stopping work the cutters were instructed by their union to alter the size of the patterns on which the clients' fur coats had to be made. Every cutter followed this advice and reduced by some one-third of an inch all the patterns he could lay his hands on. The strike was called and the boss, naturally, began to hire scabs, but strange enough, the strikers did not seem to be excited and left them alone.

Imagine the surprise and rage of the boss when he at last found out that not one single garment was of the right size and shape. After having spent a goodly pile of dollars, the furrier was compelled to give in to his former employees, who, upon resuming work readjusted and repaired their patterns as before.

No one has yet forgotten the formidable chaotic disorganisation provoked in the spring of 1909 by the postal telegraphers' strike in France. This strike astounded a number of bourgeois, voluntarily short-sighted men, who overlook all social symptoms, even the most pronounced.

railroad workers, etc., the government immediately steps in to cut its sinews and break it by having the military take the place of the rebellious workers, and the practice has reached such an extent that to thoroughly systematise it the government in the case of electricians has specialised a division of the signal corps to the running of the power houses and the handling of machinery moved by electricity — and the soldiers are always ready to "report for duty" at the first symptoms of a strike in the electrical industry.

It is consequently evident that if the strikers who are aware of the government intentions, should fail, before stopping work, to parry and foil the thrust of military intervention by making it impossible and ineffective — they would lose their fight at its very inception.

They would, indeed, be guilty of an unpardonable mistake, if having forseen the danger they had not remedied it on time. If they do, it happens then that they are immediately accused of vandalism and condemned for their lack of respect toward the machine and the tool. This criticism would be just if in the worker's mind there were a preconceived and systematic intention of deteriorating the machinery without any reason or provocation and without a definite aim, but this is not the case. If the workers disable the machines it is neither for a whim nor for dilettantism or evil mind but solely in obedience to an imperious necessity. It should not be forgotten that for many workers in the majority of strikes it is a question of life and death. If they do not paralyse the machines they surely go on to unavoidable defeat, to the wreck of all their hopes. On the other hand by applying sabotage the workers will surely call upon them the curses and insults of the bourgeoisie — but will also insure to themselves many great probabilities of success.

Taking into account the sum of the interests at play, it is easy to understand why the working class takes so lightly the anathemas of interested and polluted public opinion — and we find it but logical that the fear of being condemned by capitalists and their allies does not detain them from an ingenious and bold action which almost guarantees them victory.

The workers find themselves in a position about similar to that of a retreating army which, being pursued by the enemy, decides to destroy accoutrements, arms and provisions that would hamper

Of course, at least in respect to the first part of this definition, Sabotage is not a novelty. As Pouget says and proves, it is as old as human exploitation, and with very little effort we can trace it as far back in America as the day when the first patriotic and pious Puritan gentleman bought the first slave or mortgaged the body of the first redemptioner to the greater glory of his holy Bible and his holier pocketbook.

If so, why is it that only since the Lawrence Strike, Sabotage loomed up in such terrific Light? It is easily explained.

A certain simple thing which is more or less generally practiced and thought very plain and natural, as for instance, a negro picking less cotton when receiving less grub, becomes a monstrous thing, a crime and a blasphemy when it is openly advocated and advised.

It is simply because there is no danger in any art in itself when it is determined by natural instinctive impulse and is quite unconscious and unpremeditated — it only becomes dangerous when it becomes the translated practical expression of an idea even though, or rather because, this idea has originated from the act itself.

It is so of Sabotage as of a good many other things. Take, for instance, the question of divorce. To be divorced and marry again is quite a decent, legal and respectable thing to do in the eyes of the church, the state and the ' third power, which is public opinion.

Now, a rich man having grown tired of his wife (or vice versa, or both ways), he properly puts her away through the kind intervention of a solemn-faced, black-robed judge, and marries a chorus girl through the same kind help of a very venerable and holy bishop. Nobody is shocked — on the contrary, the papers are full of this grand affair and everybody is well pleased, except some old maids and the regular town gossips.

The rich man may stop here if he is properly mated, and may go further if he thinks he is not. He can repeat this wonderful performance as many times as he likes — there is no limit to it and it is done quite often.

But, if you should — say at the third or fourth repetition of these public solemnities, find out that they are all quite unnecessary and that the aforesaid rich man could and should more properly keep his bedroom affairs to himself, if you should venture that he could

as well dispense with judge and priest, you would be howled at that you are a filthy free lover, a defiler of the sanctIty of the home, and so on.

How do you explain that? It is because, the fact that a rich man (he may be a poor one at that) puts away three or four or ten wives is of little importance in itself, it is only when out of this plain everyday phenomenon you draw the theory of the freedom of the sexes that the bourgeois jumps up and screams, for though free love be and has always been a fact, it is only when it becomes an idea that it becomes a dynamic and disintegrating force of bourgeois society, in so far as it wrests from the political state one of its cardinal faculties

Again, it is a well-known and established fact that since Bible days, the practice of preventing generation has been more or less In general use. Over a hundred years ago an English clergyman, Malthus, came out with the astounding doctrine that humanity was reproducing itself too swiftly and in such alarming proportions as to impair the lives and welfare of the whole race, which some day would have to devour itself for lack of food. Immediately there was loud and jubilant praise from the bourgeois camp, where the new doctrine was heralded as a condemnation of Socialism in so far as it put the blame of poverty, not an the evil distribution of wealth, but on the excessive numbers of its consumers.

Malthus justified and even considered as a blessing, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, everything that would tend to check the growth of population, and the bourgeois cheered himself hoarse. Then, suddenly the neo-Malthusian came out. He noticed how the bourgeois families throughout the world have an average of two or three children at the most and proceeded to advise the working class to do the same. Malthus was right, said his successor, but, instead of slaughtering the living, let us — reduce the number of those that are to come.

The bourgeoisie had been doing that already for years in France, as in America. Statistics show that the lower classes were innocent of race suicide, yet as soon as the idea came out of the undeniable facts, a chorus of condemnation rose against it; its preachers were condemned as immoral and criminals, laws were made against them, and the subject was tabooed as a filthy and indecent one.

acted as a court martial. “To be sure of success,” explained Renault, “in case that all railroad workers do not quit their work at once — it is indispensable that a stratagem of which it is useless to give here the definition be instantaneously and simultaneously applied in all important centres as soon as the strike is declared.

> “For this it would be necessary that pickets of comrades determined to prevent at any cost the circulation of trains be posted in every important centre and locality. It would be well to choose those workers amongst the most skilled and experienced, such as could find the weak points offhand without committing acts of stupid destruction, who by their open eyed, cautious and intelligent action as we]l as energetic and efficacious skill, would by a single stroke disable and render useless for some days the material necessary to the regular performance of the service and the movement of the trains. It is necessary to do this seriously. It is well to reckon beforehand with the scabs and the military . . . ”

This tactic which consists in reinforcing with the strike of the machinery the strike of the arms would appear low and mean, but it is not so.

The class conscious toilers well know that they are but a minority and they fear that their comrades have not the grit and energy to resist to the end. Therefore, in order to check desertion and cut off the retreat to the mass, they burn the bridges behind them.

This result is obtained by taking away from the too submissive workers the instrument of their labour — that is to say by paralysing the machine which made their efforts fruitful and remunerative.

In this way treason is avoided and the deserters are prevented from treating with the enemy and resuming work before the due time.

Another point contends in favour of this tactic.

As Bousquet and Renault have remarked, the strikers have not only to reckon with the scabs, they must also mistrust the army. In fact, the habit of replacing the strikers with the soldiers is becoming more and more systematic. Thus, in a strike of bakers, electricians,

left in "good health" these means of production, have fatally left behind them the first reason of their failure.

"Now to go on strike leaving in a normal working state the machines and other instruments of labour simply means so much time lost for a successful struggle.

"Accordingly the bosses, who can always rely on the scabs, the army and the police, will continue to run the machines and half the strike will be lost.

"The most important part of a strike, therefore, precedes the strike itself and consists in reducing to a powerless condition the working instruments. It is the A B C of economic warfare.

"It is only then that the game between masters and workers is straight and fair, as it is clear that only then the complete cessation of work becomes real and produces the designed results, ie., the complete arrest of labour activity within the capitalist shop.

"Is a strike contemplated by the most indispensable workers — those of the alimentary trades? A quart of kerosene or other greasy and malodorous matter poured or smeared on the level of an oven and welcome the scabs and scabby soldiers who come to bake the bread. The bread will be uneatable because the stones will give the bread for at least a month the foul odour of the substance they have absorbed. Results: A useless oven.

"Is a strike coming in the iron, steel, copper or any other mineral industry?

"A little sand or emery powder in the gear of those machines which like fabulous monsters mark the exploitation of the workers, and they will become palsied and useless.

"The iron ogre will become as helpless as a nursling and with it the scab . . . "

A. Renault, a clerk in the Western Railroad, has touched on the same argument in his volume "Syndicalism in the Railroads," an argument which cost him his position at a trial in which the commission

We might go on with examples, but we must confine ourselves to our subject. The idea we wanted to convey is that a sin is absolvable only when it is confessed as such, but becomes a damnable one when an explanation is found for it in the same way as a simple act of general practice becomes a crime when a justification is found for it and it is advocated as a good thing.

The fact is that modern society rests only on appearances and illusions, and derives its raison d'etre not from the existence or nonexistence of certain things, but on the general accepted credence that these things do or do not exist. Truth becomes a menace to society and hence a crime, not when it is seen and felt by personal experience, though everybody see and feel it, but only when it is told and exposed, for then only it becomes subversive by being discussed and reasoned over.

This is especially true of the conditions of the working classes. Every working man is poor and miserable, but only when he hears his woes described from the speaker's platform or sees his tragedy re-enacted on the stage does he become conscious of it, and therefore dangerous to the digestion of his masters.

Hence, the necessity of agitators and "fanatics" and the frantic efforts of the master class to keep tightly the cover on the Pandora jar. That Sabotage has been practiced more or less generally. for centuries they unmistakingly know, but that it should be now told, explained, justified and perfected into a veritable weapon of attack and defense they cannot for one second countenance. For these gentlemen, there are no classes in America. There was no Socialism in America up to four years ago, when it yelled so loud that they had to jump up and bow to it.

Now there is no Syndicalism, and, of course, there never was and never shall be any Sabotage except in the vaporings of some frothy-mouthed foreign agitators.

It is the wisdom of the ostrich, say you. No, by no means — it is the wisdom of Argus who sees everything with his hundred eyes and knows that the only thing that can oppose the spreading of a truth is the spreading of a lie.

Chapter 5. The Various Methods of Sabotage

The various methods of sabotage. Carnegie and sabotage. The insufficiency of the strike. Intelligent paralysation versus stupid destruction. The end of scabbery. A question of life and death. The Carmen's sabotage. Tailors and furriers. Railroad men and telegraphers. Infinite varieties of sabotage.

Up to this point we have examined the various methods of *sabotage* adopted by the working class without a stoppage of work and without abandoning the shop and factory. But *sabotage* is not confined to this — it may become and is gradually becoming a powerful aid in case of strike. The multi-millionaire Carnegie, the iron king, has written that "to suppose that a man who is defending his wages and his necessities of life will sit peacefully while another is being put in his place is to suppose too much."

This is exactly what the syndicalists (industrial unionists) never cease to preach, repeat and proclaim.

But there is no deafer man than he who does not want to hear, and the capitalists belong to this category.

The same remark of millionaire Carnegie has been paraphrased by citizen Bousquet, secretary of the Paris Bakers' Union, in an article in "La Voix du Peuple."

"We may state" — writes Bousquet — "that the simple stoppage of work is not sufficient to realise the aims of a strike.

"It is necessary, indeed indispensable, to insure a good result of the conflict — that the tools, instruments, utensils, machines and other means of production of the shop, mill, mine, factory, oven, etc., also go on strike — or in other words, that they be put in a "non-working condition." The scabs often go to work and find these machines, tools, ovens, etc., in good condition, and this through the supreme mistake of the strikers who, having

In a great mass meeting held last July by these latter in Paris, their union published an official resolution in which "all the bank and exchange employees are called upon to break at last their professional silence and reveal to the public all that happens in those dens of thieves which are the financial houses."

At this point we must ask ourselves — what will be said of the "open mouthed" device by the punctilious moralists who condemn *sabotage* in the name of morality?

Against which of the two conflicting parties will they hurl their anathemas — the employers or the employees?

Against the employers — thieves, defaulters, burglars and poisoners who want to associate the workers in their crimes, or against the employees who, by refusing to aid and abet the dishonest and scoundrelly practices of their exploiters, set their own conscience free and put the consumer on his guard?

Chapter 2

This booklet is not written for capitalists nor for the upholders of the capitalist system, therefore it does not purpose to justify or excuse Sabotage before the capitalist mind and morals.

Its avowed aim is to explain and expound Sabotage to the working class, especially to that part of it which is revolutionary in aim not in method, and as this ever-growing fraction of the proletariat has a special mentality and hence a special morality of its own, this introduction purports to prove that Sabotage is fully in accordance with the same.

We shall endeavor to prove that it is not incompatible with proletarian ethics, — either as represented by the tenets of conservative unionism or as codified by political Socialism, as Sabotage, in our opinion, can equally stand the test of Mr. Gompers' Pentateuch and Mr. Berger's Papdects, if it only be given a fair trial by a jury of its peers and no ex post facto laws be made against it, as was done at the Indianapolis Convention of the Socialist Party.

The first bona fide admission we ask from its opponents is that Sabotage, whether a good or a bad thing, has an honest purpose — that is to say that whether it injure or not the capitalist or be just or unjust, wise or unwise, its sole aim is to benefit the working class. This cannot be denied. The only injury to the cause of the workers that has been laid at its doors is that it discredits their cause before the public mind and that it debases the moral value of those who practice it, by making them sneaks and liars. These charges we shall examine later — just now we want to be granted, in all fairness, the admission that we are prompted by an honest desire to benefit our class. The fact that it is upheld and advocated by the most fearless champions of the workers' cause throughout the world, such as Pouget, Yvetot, Herve, Labriola, DeAmbris, Mann, Haywood etc., all men who have proven by personal sacrifice their staunch and firm loyalty to there class, takes away from Sabotage all shadows of suspicion that it is the theory of disrupters and agents provocateurs. It then remains to prove that the means as such is

"ethically justifiable," and this Mr. Pouget does in a clear concise and masterful way. However, it may not be amiss to add a few remarks in relation to American conditions and the American labor movement.

Let us therefore consider Sabotage under its two aspects first as a personal relaxation of work when wages and conditions are not satisfactory, and next as a mischievous tampering with machinery to secure its complete immobilization during a strike. It must be said with especial emphasis that Sabotage is not and must not be made a systematic hampering of production, that it is not meant as a perpetual clogging of the workings of industry, but that it is a simple expedient of war, to be used only in time of actual warfare with sobriety and moderation, and to be laid by when the truce intervenes. Its own limitations will be self-evident after this book has been read, and need not be explained here.

The first form of Sabotage, which was formerly known as Go Cannie, as Mr. Pouget tells us, consists purely and simply in "going slow" and "taking it easy" when the bosses do the same in regard to wages.

Let us suppose that one hundred men have an agreement with the boss that they should work eight hours a day and get $4.00 in return for a certain amount of work. The American Federation of Labor is very particular — and wisely so — that the amount of work to be done during a day be clearly stipulated and agreed upon by the two contracting parties — the workers and their employers, this for the purpose of preventing any "speeding up."

Now, to exemplify, let us suppose that these one hundred workers are bricklayers, get fifty cents an hour, work eight hours and, as agreed, lay fourteen hundred bricks a day. Now, one good day the boss comes up and tells them he can't pay them $4.00 a day but they must be satisfied with $3.50. It is a slack season, there are plenty of idle men and moreover, the job is in the country where the workers cannot very well quit and return home. A strike, for some reason or another, is out of the question. Such things do happen. What are they to do? Yield to the boss sheepishly and supinely? But here comes the Syndicalist who tells them, "Boys, the boss reduced fifty cents on your pay — why not do the same and reduce two hundred bricks on your day's work? And if the boss notices it and remonstrates,

This line of thought, however, is not strictly peculiar to the bosses. Even the labour unions consider as an act of war and as *sabotage* all revelations prejudicial to the interests of the capitalists.

This ingenious way of driving back the hosts of human exploitation has been called with a special name: open-mouthed sabotage. The expression could not be happier or more significant.

How many are there, indeed, who have built up real fortunes, thanks to the system of being silent on the capitalist robberies!

Without the silence of the exploited that help them it would be very hard, if not impossible, for the exploiters to manage well their sordid business. If they succeeded, if the clients fell into their traps and snares, if their profits from a snow-ball have become an avalanche, they owe their thanks to the silence of their employees.

Well, now, these mutes of the commercial and industrial harems are getting tired of keeping their mouths shut. They want to speak, and what they have to say is of such a nature that it will create a void around their masters.

This kind of *sabotage*, which with its novel and mild methods, may nevertheless become as terrible to many capitalists as the rude paralysis of precious instruments of production, is about to have the greatest diffusion.

It is this kind of *sabotage* which often the masons resort to by revealing the flaws of the building they have finished — flaws (or frauds) ordered by the contractor to his exclusive advantage — walls lacking in thickness, bad or second-hand material, subtraction of pieces of ornament., etc.

"Open mouthed" also the workers of railway tracks and tunnels who will henceforward denounce the criminal defects of construction and support.

"Open mouthed" the drug clerks, butchers, delicatessen and grocery clerks and others who, in order to obtain better conditions and wages shall proclaim from the housetops the frauds and trickeries of the trade.

"Open mouthed" the bank and stock exchange clerks who will denounce the devious and sordid plans and operations of the barons of finance.

of professional integrity deserving commendation and encouragement. If so these worthy gentlemen had better be careful for with their encouragement they tread on slippery ground which may precipitate them into an abyss — they may thus unintentionally and unknowingly arrive at a logical condemnation of modern society.

Fraud, sophistication, lie, theft, fake and humbug are the warp and woof of capitalist society; to suppress them would be equal to the killing of society itself.

It is useless to nurse any illusions; the day when it would be tried to introduce into social relations, in all their strata, a strict honesty and a scrupulous good will, nothing would remain standing — neither industry nor commerce nor finance — absolutely nothing!

Now, it is evident that to launch safely his underhand manipulations the employer cannot act alone. He needs help, which in this case means accomplices. And he finds them in his workers and other employees. It follows logically that, wishing to associate the workers in these manoeuvres — but not in his benefits and profits — the boss, whatever the field of his activity, exacts from them a complete submission to his private interests and forbids them to pass any judgment on his operations or to "interfere with his business."

If any such operation is fraudulent, the workers must not be concerned — it is not their business. "Workers and employees in general are not responsible. So far as they are paid they have nothing to do but obey," remarks very explicitly the manager of the restaurant owners' employment bureau.

As a consequence of this subtle sophistry, the worker must renounce his personality, stifle his sentiments and act as dumb as a machine.

Every rebellion to the orders received, every violation of the professional secret, every revulsion at practices, to say the least, dishonest, to which he is compelled to submit, constitutes for him a felony against his boss.

Therefore, should he refuse to be blindly and passively subdued, should he dare to denounce the filthy practices they want him to be part and parcel of, he is considered and dealt with as a mutineer in open warfare against his employer and his scruples are termed *sabotage*.

well, lay the usual number of bricks, but see that the mortar does not stick so well, so that the top part of the wall will have to be made over in the morning; or else after laying the real number of bricks you are actually paid for, build up the rest of the plumb line or use broken bricks or recur to any of the many tricks of the trade. The important thing is not what you do, but simply that it be of no danger or detriment to the third parties and that the boss gets exactly his money's worth and not one whit more."

The same may be said of the other trades. Sweatshop girls when their wages ar reduced, instead of sewing one hundred pairs of pants, can sew, say, seventy; of, if they must return the same number, sew the other thirty imperfectly — with crooked seams or use bad thread or doctor the thread with cheap chemicals so that the seams rip a few hours after the sewing, or be not so careful about the oil on the machines and so on. But examines are not lacking and we shall not indulge in them. Is this truly and honestly criminal?

The American Federation of Labor has for its motto: "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work." Let us reverse the equation and we find this motto also means "An unfair day's work for an unfair day's wages." If it is not so, then we must believe that the motto should be more appropriately changed as to read "A fair day's work for any kind of wages whatever."

We would like to know what Mr. Gompers and some of his Socialist confreres would advise their adepts to do when they have their wages reduced, and have all means of redress precluded except such a retaliation as this, which, it must be remembered is not intended to be a more spiteful revenge, but a direct attempt to obtain redress. Would they advise them to keep on producing just the same amount as before, regardless of their changed conditions? If so, what becomes of the fairness of the former and the class struggle of the later? They would both become the preachers of passive non-resistance and abject resignation and take away from the workers not only their natural impulse of rebellion, which is the original germ of self-emancipation, but also the very dignity of their labor and manhood. Sabotage, in this case, is just the expression of this dignity and this manhood. It is a logical as a punch in the jaw in answer to a kick in the shins. If anything, it is more manly and more just

because it is done under provocation and it does not hit the boss below the belt, as it does not take away from him anything, robs him of nothing, and has no sinister reverberation in his famiilv as a cut in wages has in the family of the toiler. This form of Sabotage is too much like human nature to need any further comment.

This is not the case with the other kind of sabotage. Here we are confronting a real and deliberate trespassing into the bourgeois sanctum — a direct interference with the boss's own property. It is only under this latter form that Sabotage becomes essentially revolutionary; therefore, to justify itself, it must either create its own ethics (which will be the case when it is generally practiced), Or borrow it from the Socialist philosophy. Mr. Pouget extensively dwells on this subject, therefore I leave it to him to explain the importance of Sabotage during a strike. I only want to ethically justify it before the tribunal of respectable Socialists. Now, it is the avowed intentions of both Socialists and industrial Unionists alike to expropriate the bourgeoisie of all its property, to make it social property.

Now may we ask if this is right? Is this moral and just? Of course, if it be true that labor produces everything, it is both moral and just that it should own everything. But this is only an affirmation — it must be proven. We Industrial Unionists care nothing about proving it. We are going to take over the industries some day, for three very good reasons: Because we need them, because we want them, and because we have the power to get them. Whether we are "ethically justified" or not is not our concern. We will lose no time proving title to them beforehand ; but we may. if it is necessary, after the thing is done. hire a couple of lawyers and judges to fix up the deed and make the transfer perfectly legal and respectable. Also, if necessary, we ,will, have a couple of learned bishops to sprinkle holy water on it and make it sacred. Such things can always be fixed — anything that is powerful becomes in due course of time righteous, therefore we Industrial Unionists claim that the Social revolution is not a matter of necessity plus justice but simply necessity plus strength.

Such, however, is not the case with our respectable comrades, the pure and simple political Socialists. They claim, and are very loud in their protests, that the workers are really entitled by all sorts of

mysteries of the kitchens — whether popular or aristocratic — are never revealed.

And yet it would be so useful to the consumer to know what suspicious foods are manipulated in the resorts where they get their meals! It would be indeed quite instructive to the average man to know that the lobster stew he eats is made with the dining room remains of the crab bones of the previous day, accurately scraped out of their flesh which still adhere to them, beaten in brass mortars and finally coloured with a pink substance.

Likewise he surely would be glad to know that the filets de cheveau are but pieces of abnormally coloured beef, highly flavoured; that to cure and "rejuvenate" the ill-smelling and rotten tasting fowl they stick them with a red hot spit, that all the restaurant supplies (orks, plates, glasses, etc.), are dried with the napkins already used by the clients and so on.

The list would be long and nauseating should we enumerate all the "tricks of trade" of the rapacious and shameless business men who perched in the corners of their shops, not only do their very best to spoliate their clients but also often try to poison them altogether.

On the other hand it is not necessary to know the systems — it would be enough to know in which respectable establishments such crimes are perpetrated.

That is why it is to be hoped and desired in the interest of public health that the workers in that line of trade *sabot* the artificial and stolen reputations of their unscrupulous masters and thus warn and put us on guard against these shameless malefactors.

We must here rapidly observe that the cooks have also the means for another type of *sabotage* — the preparing of dishes in the most excellent way with all the possible and fastidious care and attentions and all the perfections suggested by culinary art and, in the popular eating houses, by being liberal and generous in making the portions.

From all this it clearly results that for the kitchen hands in particular and the food workers in general, *sabotage* identifies itself with the interests of the consumers.

Some will object, perhaps, that, for instance, the cook who reveals the unpleasant and unsanitary secrets of the kitchen does not commit an act of *sabotage* but just gives a plain and simple example

to constitute a serious danger to the ones that would eat it. Accordingly he notified the proprietor who on his side insisted that it be cooked and served just the same.

"The chef, disgusted by such cynical demeanour, refused to become an accomplice to the wanton poisoning of the customers, whereupon he was forthwith discharged for his conscientious scruples and all the restaurateurs of Paris informed of his dismissal. He was, in other words, blacklisted. So far the incident reveals only a shameless act of an individual boss as contrasted to an honourable one by an individual worker — but the consequences of that were so far and wide and revealed such a scandalous and dangerous solidarity amongst the restaurant owners as to compel us to denounce it.

"When the discharged chef presented himself again to the employment bureau kept by the Restaurant Men's Association, the manager of it bluntly told him that a cook must not be concerned if foodstuffs are wholesome or decayed, that a cook is not responsible and therefore, being paid, must strictly confine himself to obey orders and that finally, his refusal being unwarranted and peremptory, from that day on he must not rely any more on the bureau to get employment.

Either die of starvation — or become an accessory to poisoning — this is the dilemma imposed upon the workers by the Restaurant Men's Association. That, besides, means that the bosses' unions, far from decrying the sale of rotten meats, hide and defend such an infamous traffic and persecute with malignant hatred whoever tries to prevent the wholesale poisoning of his fellow men.

This episode, of course, is not unique, and in Paris as everywhere else the restaurant keepers who unscrupulously serve putrid food are more than one — if not the rule. On the other hand, the cooks that have the courage to follow the example of their Parisian colleague are mighty scarce. The reason is that by showing too much conscience they risk being discharged and blacklisted. The fear of unemployment is such as to paralyse many brains, shake many good resolutions and check and muzzle many revolts. This is why the

laws, natural, human and divine, to the mastership of the world and all that is in it, and in justice to them we must admit that they prove it beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Now, we say this: If the instruments of production rightfully belong to the workers, It means that they have been pilfered from them, and that the capitalist class detains them in an immoral way. It is legal for the bourgeoisie to keep them in accordance to its own laws, but surely it is not "ethically justifiable" from the point of view of our aforesaid comrades. If these instruments of production are ours, they are so as much now as they will be a hundred years hence. Also, being our property, we can do with it whatever we best please — we can run them for our own good, as we surely will; but, if so we choose, we can also smash them to pieces. It may be stupid but it is not dishonest. The fact that the burglars have them in their temporary possession does not in the least impeach our clear title of ownership. We are not strong enough to get them back, just now, but we cannot forego any chances of getting something out of them.

Suppose a band of brigands swoops down on a family and carries away all its belongings. Suppose amongst these belongings there is a powerful Gatling gun. Suppose the only man who can operate this gun is a member of the said family and that he is forced by the band to do so during the ensuing schedule. Has he not the right to break a spring or do something or other to the gun so as to make it useless? By all means — he has a double right to do so — first, because the gun is his whether the bandits have it or not; second, because he is not supposed to leave such a dangerous machine in the hands of the enemy when it can be used against himself and his own kin.

Now if the workers are the original owners of a factory which is fraudulently held by a gang of pirates, in their struggles to regain control of it they are truly and undoubtedly justified in spiking there whatever guns can be aimed at them.

If it is just and right to force the capitalist to grant us certain concessions by withdrawing our labor and remaining inactive, why is it not equally just to render equally inactive our own machines, made by our own selves, especially when they are operated not by the capitalists but by the traitors of our own ranks, the scabs?

If tomorrow we shall be fully justified to take away from the master class all of its industries, why shouldn't we, when it is a question of life and death to us to win or lose a strike, be entitled to mislay or hide for a short while a bolt, a wheel or any other small fraction of its machinery?

We admit that our attitude is indefensible before the capitalist code of ethics, but we fail to see how it can be consistently condemned by those who claim the capitalist system to be a system of exploitation, robbery and murder.

We can't possibly understand how it is possible that we are fully entitled to all we produce and then are not entitled to a part of it.

Against these tales — which were nothing but shameful lies — the Drug Clerks' Union rightly protested.

In reality, if a drug clerk had the intention of applying *sabotage* he would never think of poisoning the patients — a deed which after causing their death would also land the *sabotage*R in jail whilst it would leave totally undisturbed the boss druggist.

Instead of that, the drug clerk who would really *sabot* his boss would know how to go about it in a different way; he would for instance, waste the chemical ingredients in filling his prescriptions, or better still use the best, purest and therefore costliest drugs instead of the cheap adulterated ones generally in use.

In this latter case he would, moreover, free himself from the culpable complicity which a drug clerk is often compelled to submit to in taking a hand in the boss's own *sabotage* — the truly criminal one — which consists in selling drugs of the lowest quality, totally ineffective, or almost so, instead of the pure products prescribed by the physician.

It is therefore useless to insist in the demonstration that pharmaceutical *sabotage* rather than being harmful is indeed beneficial to the sick.

It is, in fact, with these results and intents — ie., favourable to the consumer — that *sabotage* is applied in many trades, especially by those concerned with alimentation and foodstuffs.

If there is anything to complain of it ought to be that *sabotage* has not yet become a daily practice of the working class in these latter industries.

It is indeed deplorable to notice how often the workers lend themselves to the most abominable tricks against their brothers and to the detriment of public health in general, without their realising the great responsibility that befalls them for actions which, though not within the criminal law, nevertheless do not cease to be crimes.

The following quotation from a manifesto the people of Paris issued by the Cooks' Union in 1905, goes further than any argument towards illuminating the reader on this subject:

"The head cook of a popular restaurant noticed one morning that the meat which had been brought in was so far gone as

The workers strongly insist on the specific character of *sabotage* which consists in hurting the boss, not the consumer, but they must fight hard against the lying attitude of the capitalist press which is vitally interested to distort the facts and present *sabotage* as a dangerous menace to the public.

Nobody has forgotten the commotion produced by the weird recitals of the daily papers about some bread which was supposed to have contained ground glass.

The Syndicalists actually sweated to declare that to put glass dust in the bread was simply a hateful, stupid and criminal act and that the bakers could not have even thought of such a dastardly deed. Nevertheless, and in spite of all their denials and denunciation of the cowardly lies, this calumny was insinuating itself in the public mind, arraying against bakers public opinion and a great number of people to whom the dictums of their paper are gospel truths.

As a matter of fact in all the various phases of the bakers strike *sabotage* was strictly confined to the deterioration of the shops, the sieves and the ovens. As to the bread, if there was baked any that was not eatable (either done too much or too little, unkneaded, saltless or yeastless but never with pulverised glass or any other foreign matter), it was not nor could be the customer to suffer through it, but the boss baker alone.

It were, indeed, necessary to believe the buyers a mass of hopeless fools to think that they would accept instead of bread an indigestible and nauseating mass. In case anyone had carelessly accepted such a loaf he would, of course, have immediately returned it and demanded an edible one in exchange.

It may therefore be assumed that the story of the ground glass was nothing but a fanciful illustration of the capitalist argument intended to discredit *sabotage* in general and, in that instance, the bakers' strike.

The same may be said of the bomb exploded in 1907 by a daily paper whose specialty is to misrepresent the labour movement. This paper printed that a drug clerk who had the *sabotage* mania had substituted strychnine and other violent poisons for the harmless drugs of a prescription.

Chapter 3

Having disposed of the moral objections to Sabotage, we must now face those of different type of critics, that is, of such eminent and world-renowned theorists of Syndicalism as Sorel, Leone, Michels and others.

It is claimed that Sabotage would injure the cause of the workers before the public and that it would degrade the moral value of those that practice it. As to the first objection we may answer that if by public opinion we mean the people at large, these are and always will be favorable to the cause of any class of workers. whatever their actions, simply because they are workers themselves. If, on the other hand, we mean by public opinion that part of the public which comes under the daily influence of the press, we are willing to say that little we care for it. The capitalist press will never champion the workers' cause; it will never tell the truth about them, no matter how nice and gentlemanly they may behave and, Sabotage or no Sabotage, it will continue persistently to lie about them. It is, indeed, to be expected that it will lie still more and more and distort and falsify facts ever and ever on a larger scale as fast as the workers become more revolutionary in their attitude, and the labor movement more conscious of its destined end, which is the overthrow of the capitalist system. The workers must get used to consider themselves absolutely isolated in their struggles (they were ever so in their real ones) and the sooner they cease to believe in the myth of the omnipotence of public opinion, the more will they rely on their own strength exclusively and the nearer will they be to their emancipation, which can be brought about only by themselves.

The other objection, that Sabotage is repugnant to the dignity of the workers and it makes them cheats and sneaks by making them fight in a devious and underhanded way is absolutely without foundation, as Pouget proves.

It were well, however, to add that Sabotage can be practiced only by the most intelligent and the most skillful workers who know thoroughly the technique of their trade, as Sabotage does not consist

in a clumsy and stupid destruction of the instruments of production, but in a delicate and highly skillful operation which puts the machine out of commission only for a temporary period. The worker that undertakes such a task must know thoroughly — the anatomy of the machine which he is going to vivisect and, by this fact alone, puts himself above suspicion.

Moreover, it is obvious that he must be prompted by a desire to help his brothers, that is by unselfish motives, and this added to the fact that he risks more than the others, develops a spirit of self-abnegation and individual daring which makes him quite the opposite of the sneaks our opponents love to describe.

The saboteur, to illustrate, is exactly like a spy in disguise in the camp of the enemy.

There is in the City Hall Square at New York a monument to Nathan Hale, a young American revolutionist who went to spy in the English camp, was found and executed. He is considered a great hero and held up as an example to school children.

On the 2nd of October, 1780, the American Revolutionists hung at Tappan on the Hudson, Major John Andre, a British spy who was captured under similar circumstances. Today, on the same spot, where he was captured there is a monument erected to him — not by the British — by the Americans, by his own capturers and executioners.

Now, why should glory in real warfare be considered a disgrace in the nobler and greater battle for bread and liberty? Suppose that during the Spanish-American War a regular of the United States Army, disguised as a Spanish sailor, had boarded the Spanish flagship, succeeded in getting into a signal tower and then proceeded to so change and derange the signals as to disorganize and confuse all the movements of the enemy's fleet so that it would result in a great victory for his country? Wouldn't you go wild with enthusiasm and pride?

Well, now, for argument's sake, why shouldn't you admire a striker who went as a scab, say, to work in the subway, and then by putting a red lantern in the wrong place (or rather in the right place), disarranges and demoralizes the whole system? If a single, humble red lantern can stop an express train and all the trains coming behind it, and thus tie up the whole traffic for hours, isn't the man who does

> cause loss of time and costly repairs to the boss. If you are a cabinetmaker nothing will be easier than to deteriorate a piece of furniture without your boss noticing it at first sight. A tailor does not have to think long how to spoil a suit or a piece of cloth, a store clerk or salesman with a skilful stain on clothes and other articles of wearing will provoke their sale as damaged and imperfect stain on clothes and other articles of wearing will cause breakage and upsetting of goods (the mistake was made no one knows by whom, and the boss loses the customers). A farm hand could once in a while make a mistake with his hoe or scythe or sow bad seeds in the fields, and so on."

As it appears from this quotation the applications of *sabotage* vary to the infinite. But, whichever they be, the workers who practice them must constantly keep in mind that one thing is strictly prohibited to them, ie., whatever could react to the disadvantage or detriment of the consumer.

Sabotage must be directed against the boss either by reducing the output or by deteriorating and making unusable the product or by disabling and paralysing the instruments of production — but the consumer, we repeat, must never suffer by this war waged exclusively against the exploiter. An example of the efficacy of *sabotage* is given by the methodical application of it by the Parisian barbers.

Used as they were to shampoo their clients at the epoch of their last conflicts they decided to extend the system to the signs of their bosses' shops. By this system which in Parisian slang is called badigeonnage, they obtained an earlier closing of the barber shops at night and a weekly day of rest by the general closing up of all shops in a certain specified day of the week.[1]

[1] We do not believe that the shampooing or damaging of signs constitutes sabotage — if it did even breaking the boss's gold watch or cutting his coat tails would be sabotage. As we understand it by Pouget's own definition sabotage consists only in slackening work or temporarily disabling the instruments of production and should be strictly confined to that. Couldn't the barbers take an hour for a hair cut instead of half an hour, or use expensive tonics and perfumes instead of cheap free bay rum and so forth? The workers have no use for *bauigeonnage* — they leave it to — the suffragettes. — Translator.

relaxing into a pernicious sloth — and as it requires a permanent, restless action, it naturally obtains the result of developing the worker's initiative, of training him to act by himself and of stirring his combativeness.

Of these and kindred qualities the worker is enormously in need, for the boss acts towards him with the same scruples as those of the invading armies operating in a hostile country. That is, sacking, pillaging and plundering the very most they can.

The billionaire Rockefeller has reproved this capitalistic capacity — though, naturally, he puts it shamefully in constant practice. "The trouble with some employers" — wrote the American Croesus — "is that they do not pay the right wages. Hence the tendency of the worker to diminish his labour."

This tendency to a reduction of labour noticed by Rockefeller (a reduction which he justifies with his rebuke to the employers), is nothing but *sabotage* under the simplest aspect under which it presents itself to the intellect of the average worker: a slacking off of work.

It may be called the instinctive and primordial form of *sabotage*.

It is just this that in 1908 at Bedford, Ind., U.S.A., was deliberated upon by some hundred workers who had been notified of a forthcoming reduction of wages.

Without saying a word these workers went to a neighbouring machine shop and had their shovels cut smaller — whereupon they returned to their work and answered to their bosses: "Small wages, small shovels. This form of *sabotage*, however, is only possible to the day workers. It is, in fact, too evident that piece workers have no interest whatever to reduce their output, for in such a case they would themselves be the first victims of their passive revolt.

The latter must then resort to other means and their attention must be directed to lower the quality, not the quantity, of their work.

In relation to this the "Bulletin de la Bourse du Travail de Montpellier," on the 1st of May, 1900, published an article which said in part:

> "If you are machinists it will be easy with two cents worth of emery dust or even with a little sand to clog your machine and

this as much of a benefactor to his striking brothers as the soldier mentioned above to his army? Surely this is "ethically justifiable" even before the Capitalist morality, if you only admit that there is a state of belligerency between the working class and the capitalist class.

Saboteurs are the eclaireurs, the scouts of the class struggle, they are the "sentinelles perdues" at the outposts, the spies in the enemy's own ranks. They can be executed if they are caught (and this is almost impossible), but they cannot be disgraced, for the enemy himself, if it be gallant and brave, must honor and respect bravery and daring.

Now that the bosses have succeeded in dealing an almost mortal blow to the boycott, now that picket duty is practically outlawed, free speech throttled, free assemblage prohibited and injunctions against labor are becoming epidemic; Sabotage, this dark, invincible, terrible Damocles' Sword that hangs over the head of the master class, will replace all the confiscated weapons and ammunition of the army of the toilers. And it will win, for it is the most redoubtable of all, except the general strike. In vain may the bosses get an injunction against the strikers' funds — Sabotage will get a more powerful one against their machinery. In vain may they invoke old laws and make new ones against it — they will never discover it, never track it to its lair, never run it to the ground, for no laws will ever make a crime of the "clumsiness and lack of skill" of a "scab" who bungles his work or "puts on the bum" a machine he "does not know how to run."

There can be no injunction against it. No policeman's club. No rifle diet. No prison bars. It cannot be starved into submission. It cannot be discharged. It cannot be blacklisted. It is present everywhere and everywhere invisible, like the airship that soars high above the clouds in the dead of night, beyond the reach of the cannon and the searchlight, and drops the deadliest bombs into the enemy's own encampment. Sabotage is the most formidable weapon of economic warfare, which will eventually open to the workers the great iron gate of capitalist exploitation and lead them out of the house of bondage into the free land of the future.

Arturo M. Giovannitti.

Essex Co. Jail, Lawrence, Mass.

August, 1912.

Chapter 4. To Pierce the Golden Cuirass

> To pierce the Golden Cuirass. The criticism of Rockefeller. Whom sabotage must be wielded against. To strike at the boss, never at the consumer. The sabotage of the parisian barbers. The sabotage of the food workers. The criminal pretences of some hotel owners. The open mouthed sabotage. Who shall be blamed: criminal employers or honest workers?

On the battlefield, which is called the labour market, it is important that the belligerents meet with equal weapons. The capitalist opposes a golden breastplate to the blows of the adversary who, knowing beforehand his offensive and defensive inferiority, tries to remedy it by having recourse to the many ruses of war.

The worker being powerless to attack his enemy in the front, tries to do so at the side, striking him in this most vital centre: the money bag.

There happens then to the masters what happens when a people, which, wishing to repel a foreign invasion and having not sufficient forces to meet its armies in open battle, adopts the tactics of guerillas and ambuscades — a humiliating fight for the great army corps, but so terrible and murderous that often the invaders refuse to recognise their opponents as in a state of belligerency.

This execration of the regular armies for the guerrillas does net surprise us, neither we are astonished at the horror capitalists express for *sabotage*.

In truth *sabotage* is to the social war what guerrillas are to national wars. It arises from the same feelings, answers to and meets the same necessities and bears the same identical consequences on the workers' mentality.

Every one knows how much a guerilla warfare develops individual courage, daring and determination — the same may be said of *sabotage*. It keeps the workers in training, preventing them from

The Jaures argument, moreover, arrives at the final denial of the class struggle, because it ceases to take into consideration the constant state of war existing between capital and labour.

Now, plain common sense suggests that, since the boss is the enemy of the worker, the latter by preparing an ambush for his adversary, does not commit a bad or disloyal act. It is a recognised means of warfare, just as admissible as open and face to face battle.

Therefore not one of the arguments borrowed from the bourgeois morality is competent to judge *sabotage*, just as none of these arguments has any weight and bearing on the judgment, acts, deeds, thoughts and aspirations of the working class.

If on all these points one wants to rightly reason, one must not recur to the capitalist code of ethics but inspire oneself to the worship of the producers which is daily being shaped in the heart of the working classes and which is destined to regenerate the social relations, in so far as it is the proletarian morality which will regulate the society of tomorrow.

The bourgeoisie, of course, has felt itself struck at heart by *sabotage* — that is, struck in its pocketbook. And yet — be it said without any offensive intention — the good old lady must resign herself and get used to living in the constant company of *sabotage*. Indeed it would be wise for her to make the best of what she cannot prevent or suppress. As she must familiarise herself with the thought of her end (at least as a ruling and owning class), so it were well for her to familiarise herself with *sabotage*, which has nowadays deep and indestructible roots. Harpooned to the sides of capitalistic society it shall tear and bleed it until the shark turns the final somersault.

It is already, and shall continually become more so — worse than a pestiferous epidemic — worse, indeed, than any terrible contagious disease. It shall become to the body social of capitalism more dangerous and incurable than cancer and syphilis are to the human body. Naturally all this is quite a bore for this scoundrelly society — but it is inevitable and fatal.

It does not require to be a great prophet to predict that the more we progress, the more we shall *sabot*.

Part 2: *Sabotage* By Emile Pouget

granting to Syndicalism all the possible means, there is one that it must interdict to itself and that is the one which might depreciate and humiliate in the worker his professional value — a value which is not only his precarious wealth of today, but also his title to his sovereignty of the world tomorrow."

The affirmations of Jaures, even if protected by the shield of Sorel, are all he wants them to be — see the metaphysics — except an exposition of economic reality.

Where in Christendom has Jaures met workers who with "their nature and their tendencies" break their necks to hand their masters all their physical and mental energy, in spite of the absurd, odious and shameful conditions which the latter impose and fasten upon them?

On the other hand how can the "technical value" and skill of these hypothetical workers be endangered when, having realised, on a certain day, that they are the victims of an inhuman exploitation, they strive to break away from it and consent no more to submit their muscles and their brains to an indefinite drudgery, to the total advantage of their masters? Why should they scatter this "technical value and skill which constitutes their wealth?" Why should they make of it a free present to the capitalist? Isn't it more logical, indeed, that the workers, instead of sacrificing themselves like lambs on the altar of capitalism, struggle and rebel and, valuing at the very highest possible price their "technical skill," let — all or in part — this "true wealth" of theirs on the very best terms obtainable?

To these questions Jaures has not made any answers, having not gone very deep into the question He has limited himself to declarations of a sentimental order inspired by the exploiters' morality and which are nothing less than the criticisms of the bourgeois economists reproaching the working class for their extravagant demands and their strikes and accusing them of putting the national industry in jeopardy.

The Jaures line of reasoning is indeed of the same brand, with this difference, that instead of harping on the patriotic chord, he tries to awaken and goad the pride, vanity and conceit of the over-excited and thoughtless workers.

of their masters. Whatever slackens the efforts of production and whatever attitude tends to reduce the exploiter's benefit is qualified as immoral.

On the contrary, all that may turn to the advantage of the boss is loudly glorified. Thus there are not sufficient eulogies for assiduity to the hardest and cheapest labours, for the simple scruples that make the honest worker; in a word for all the ideological and sentimental fetters that fasten the wage earner to the chariot of capitalism, more than an iron chain.

To finish, besides, their work of enslavement, they loudly appeal to all human vanities. All the qualities of the good slave are exalted and magnified and they even have invented a moral guerdon — the medal or diploma to labour — for the most cheerful drudgers who have distinguished themselves for the flexibility of their spine, their Christian spirit of resignation and their fealty to "the boss."

The working class is saturated with this scoundrelly morality.

From birth to death the proletarian is tainted with it. He sucks it — in the more or less adulterated milk of the nursing bottle, which too often replaces for him the mother's breast. Later the vices of the same morality are injected into him in careful doses, and the absorption continues in a thousand processes until, buried in the common grave, the proletarian sleeps at last his eternal sleep.

The poisoning derived from this morality is often so deep and resistant that men of sharp wits and keen and clear reasoning are contaminated.

This is the case with Deputy Jaures, who, to condemn *sabotage*, has been infected with these capitalist-made ethics. During a discussion on Syndicalism, in the French Parliament on May 11, 1907, he declared:

> "If it is a question of a systematic and methodical propaganda of *sabotage*, at the risk of being approved by the conservatives, I do not believe that it will go very far. *Sabotage* is repugnant to the nature and tendencies of the working class.
>
> "*Sabotage* is loathsome to the technical skill of the worker, which skill represents his real wealth. And this is why Sorel, the theorist and metaphysician of Syndicalism, declares that even

Chapter 1. Origin of Sabotage

> Origin of sabotage. Its early appearance. Balzac on sabotage. The english "go canny". Bad wages, bad work. New horizons. Panic amongst the bosses. An impressing declaration. An epoch-making discussion at the congress of the C.G.T. Triumphant entrance of sabotage in France.

Up to fifteen years ago the term *sabotage* as nothing but a slang word, not meaning "to make wooden shoes" as it may be imagined but, in a figurative way. *To work clumsily as if by sabot*[1] *blows.*

Since then the word was transformed into a new form of social warfare and at the Congress of Toulouse of the General Confederation of Labor in 1897 received at last its syndical baptism. The new term was not at first accepted by the working class with the warmest enthusiasm — some even saw it with mistrust, reproaching it not only for its humble origin but also its — immorality.

Nevertheless, despite all these prejudices which seemed almost hostilities, *sabotage* went steadily on its way around the world. It has now the full sympathy of the workers.

More still, it has secured its rights of citizenship in the Larousse[2] and there is no doubt that the Academy (unless it is itself "saboted" before arriving at the letter S of its dictionary) will have to bow to the word *sabotage* its most ceremonious curtsey and open to it the pages of its official sanctum.

However, it would be a mistake to believe that the working class waited to apply sabotage until this new weapon of economic action had been consecrated by the confederation congress.

Sabotage as a form of revolt is as old as human exploitation.

Since the day a man had the criminal ability to profit by another man's labour, since that very same day the exploited toiler has instinctively tried to give to his master less than was demanded from

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1 Sabot means a wooden shoe.

2 The standard dictionary of the French language. The word is not registered in any English dictionary, but it surely will be in the near future.

him. In this wise the worker was unconsciously doing *sabotage*, demonstrating in an indirect way the irrepressible antagonism that arrays Capital and Labor one against the other.

This unavoidable consequence of the conflict that divides society was brought to light three quarters of a century ago by Balzac in his "Maison Nucingen," apropos of the bloody riots of Lyons in 1831. He has given us a clear and incisive definition of *sabotage*.

> "Much has been said," writes Balzac, "of the Lyons revolt and of the Republic shot down in the streets but nobody has said the truth. The Republic had seized the movement just as a rebel seizes a gun. The commerce of Lyons is a commerce without courage, it does not manufacture an ounce of silk without its being demanded and promptly paid for. When the demand is low the worker starves — when he works he has barely enough to live on. The galley slaves are happier than he is.
>
> "After the July revolution, poverty had reached such a stage that the workers raised a flag with this motto: Bread or Death — a flag which the government should have seriously considered. Instead of that, Lyons wanted to build theatres to become a capital — hence a senseless squandering of money.
>
> "The republicans smelled through the increasing misery the coming revolt and organised the spinners who fought a double battle. Lyons had its three days, then order prevailed again and the beggar went back to his kennel.
>
> "The spinner who had up to then transformed into threads the silk that was weighed to him in cocoons, put fairness out of the door and began to oil his fingers. Of course, he gave back with fastidious scrupulosity the exact weight, but the silk was all stained with oil and the silk market was thus infested with defective merchandise which could have caused the ruin of Lyons and the loss of a goodly share of the French commerce.

Balzac had been careful to bring out that the spinners' sabotage was nothing but a reprisal of victims. By putting oil in the spindles the workers were getting even with the heartless manufacturers

Chapter 3. The Rich Man's Morals and the Poor Man's Vices

> The rich man's morals and the poor man's vices. The dictums of Jaures. The workers logic. Sentimental declarations. The bourgeois heart is his strong box. The more we progress the more we sabot. The last toppling down.

From the radical difference, the persistence of which we have noted, between the working class and the capitalist class, there is naturally derived a different morality.

Indeed, it would be very strange if everything were different between the toiler and the capitalist except their morals. How could one admit that the acts and attitude of an exploited workman should be judged and valued according to the criterion of his class enemy? It would be simply absurd.

The truth is that, as there exist two classes in society, so there exist two moralities, the bourgeois morality and the proletarian morality.

"The natural or zoological morality" — writes Max Nordau — "affirms that rest is the supreme merit and does not define labour as pleasant and glorious except that it is indispensable to material existence."

But the exploiters do not find any profit in this morality. Their interests, indeed, demand that the masses toil more than is necessary and produce more than they need. It is because the exploiters want to appropriate the surplus product.

Thus they have suppressed the natural morality and invented another one in its stead, developed by their philosophers, praised by their demagogues, sung by their poets — a morality whereby idleness figures as the source of all vices and labour as virtue.

It is needless to observe that this morality has been manufactured for the proletarian trade, for the rich who sustain it are very careful not to conform to it. Idleness is not a vice, except to the poor. And it is in the name of the dictates and mandates of this special morality that they must ceaselessly sweat, without any relaxation, in favour

Of course, it may — and does — happen that there are infiltrations of one into the other; by virtue of a sort of social capillarity some absconders pass from the world of labour to that of Capital, even forgetting and disowning their origin and often taking place amongst the most intractable defenders of their new adopted caste.

But these fluctuations do not render infirm the antagonism of the two classes; on one side as on the other, the interests at play are diametrically opposite and this opposition manifests itself in everything that constitutes the warp of human existence.

who had promised them bayonets to eat instead of bread and had so lavishly kept their promise.

Indeed, when isn't an act of sabotage the equivalent and consequence of a suffered wrong?

Isn't perhaps in the origin and causes of each act of sabotage revealed the capitalist exploitation which often reaches to cruelty?

And this reaction against exploitation, in whatever condition it manifests itself, isn't it even too an attitude or action of revolt whatever form it may take? And here we are brought back to our affirmation that sabotage is as old as human exploitation.

Neither must it be believed that sabotage is a product with a Parisian trade mark. It is, indeed, if anything, a theory of English importation and it has been practiced across the Channel for a long time under the name of "Go Cannie" — a Scotch expression which means literally "Go slow."

An example of the persuasive efficiency of the "Go Cannie" is given by the periodical, "The Social Museum":

> "In 1889 the Glasgow dockers went on strike asking an increase of two cents an hour.
>
> "The contractors and stevedores flatly refused and imported at great expense a considerable number of farm hands to take the place of the strikers, with the conclusion that the dockers had to give up the fight and return to work on the same conditions.
>
> "Just before resuming work their general secretary gathered them once again and said: 'Boys, you must go back today on the same scale of wages prevailing before.
>
> "The contractors have expressed and repeated all their satisfaction for the work done by the farmers who have scabbed on us during these last weeks. We have seen them at work and know full well what kind of satisfactory work was theirs, we saw indeed that they could not even keep their balance on the bridges and saw how they dropped in the sea half the cargo they loaded and unloaded. In one word, we have seen that two of them could not do as much work as one of us. Nevertheless, the bosses said they were satisfied with their labour,

therefore, we have one thing left yet; let us give them the same kind of labour. Work then just like the farm hands did, they often pushed their incapacity to the point of falling overboard, but it is not necessary for you to do this, of course."

These instructions were scrupulously followed, and the dockers applied the "Go Cannie" theory to the point. After a few days the contractors called the general secretary of the longshoremen and begged him to induce the dockers to work the same as before, declaring themselves ready to grant the two cents increase.

Passing from a practical to a theoretical example. It is interesting to quote a few pages from an English pamphlet published in 1895 for the purpose of popularising the "Go Cannie."

"If you want to buy a hat worth $2.00 you must pay $2.00. If you want to spend only $1.50 you must be satisfied with an inferior quality. A hat is a commodity. If you want to buy half a dozen of shirts at fifty cents each you must pay $3.00. If you want to spend only $2.50 you can only have five shirts.

"Now the bosses declare that labour and skill are nothing but commodities, like hats and shirts.

"Very well — we answer — we'll take you at your word. If labour and skill are commodities, their owners have a right to sell them like the hatter sells hats and the haberdasher sells shirts. These merchants give a certain value in exchange for an equivalent value. For the lower price you will have an article of either a lower quality or a smaller quantity. Give the worker a fair wage and he will furnish you his best labour at its highest skill.

"On the other hand, give the worker an insufficient wage and you forfeit your right to demand the best and the most of his labour, any more than you can demand a two dollar hat for one dollar."

The "Go Cannie" consists then in systematically applying the formula: "Bad wages, bad labour." Not only that. From this formula

to be sure, it is impossible to close a contract in the precise and fair sense of the term. A contract implies the equality of the contracting parties and their full freedom to act — indeed, the specific characteristics of a contract conflict in bringing together two parties who agree on and sign something to the real interest of both of them, either for the present or for the future. Now, when a worker offers his labour power to an employer, the two parties are far from being on the same footing of independence and equality.

The worker, obsessed by the urgency of securing his daily bread — if not already in the clutches of hunger — does not possess the serene freedom to act, which his employer enjoys. Moreover, the benefit which he derives from the letting out of his labour is only temporary, inasmuch as, whilst he secures an immediate gain, it is not difficult to realise, on the other hand, that the risk he exposes himself to, with the sort of work that is imposed on him, may endanger his health and his future.

Therefore, between the workers and their employers there cannot be any agreements deserving to be qualified as contracts.

What it has been agreed to call a working contract lacks the specific and bilateral character of a contract proper. Indeed, we confront a purely unilateral contract favourable to only one of the parties; in other words, it is a real lion and lamb contract in which the strong (the capitalist) dictates the conditions to which the weak (the worker) must of necessity submit.

From this state of facts it necessarily follows that in the labour market there are nothing but two belligerent armies in a state of permanent warfare. Consequently, all agreements and all business relations between the two must be precarious and short-lived, inasmuch as they are vitiated beforehand by the graduation of the greater or smaller resistance of the antagonists on which they rest.

And it is just for this that: between employers and workers there is never, nor ever will be made, a binding and lasting understanding, a contract in the true and loyal sense of the word.

Between them there are and can be only armistices which, by suspending the hostilities from time to time, introduce a momentary armed truce in the incessant warfare.

Capital and labour are two worlds that violently clash together!

But it is not so. The workers know what conditions are made for them by the present social system — and if they submit to them. it surely does not happen with their pleasure and consent. They know that they possess a certain labour power and if they consent to let it to an employer in a certain, determined quantity or for a determined time, they strive that the said quantity or time be in direct proportion to the wages they receive.

Even amongst the most unconscious workers, even amongst those that never put in doubt the right of the employers to exploit them, there arises the notion of resistance to the voracity of the capitalist.

The exploiters have naturally found out the workers' tendency to economise their labour power — and this explains why some of them have resorted to emulation and the premium system as a stimulus to a larger amount of work.

The master masons especially — and at Paris above all — have adopted a practice which, since 1906, has become quite obsolete; since the masons united in powerful syndicates. This scheme consisted in placing in each stone yard and building a worker secretly paid much better than his comrades. He would hustle more than any one else and it was necessary to follow him or risk being antagonised, called a laggard, or discharged as incapable.

This behaviour demonstrates that the masters treat their workers worse than their machines.

Indeed, the latter are bought on a guarantee of a certain specified production in a specified running time, and owners do not pretend to demand a larger output; whilst, when they engage workers, they demand from them, as we have said, the maximum of their productive capacity — both in strength and skill. This discordance, which is the basis of relations between workers and masters, throws a light on the fundamental opposition of interests between the two parties — the struggle of the class which owns the instruments of production against the class which, deprived of capital, possesses no wealth outside of its labour power.

And on the economic field, as soon as exploited and exploiters come face to face, we see the ineradicable antagonism that drives them to the two opposite poles and consequently renders always unstable and short-lived their agreements. Between these two parties,

there are derived, as a logical consequence, various manifestations of the proletarian will in conflict with the capitalist.

This tactic, which is today widely diffused in England, where it has been advocated and practiced by the labour organisations, could not delay long to cross the Channel and establish itself in France — as it cannot delay to cross the Alps and expand from France to Italy. Accordingly, shortly after 1889 we find its first manifestation in France.

The National Railwaymen's Union was at the time engaged in a campaign against the Merlin Trarieux Railway bill which aimed at depriving the railway workers of their right to unite.

The question of answering with the general strike to the passing of the bill was being discussed. Guerard, secretary of the Railwaymen's Union, delivered a categorical and precise speech. He affirmed that the Railwaymen would not stop at any means to defend their syndical liberty and made allusion to an ingenious and cheap method of combat.

> "With two cents worth of a certain ingredient, utilised in a peculiar way" — he declared — "it will be easy for the Railwaymen to put the locomotives in such a condition as to make it impossible to run them."

This clear and blunt affirmation, which was opening new and unforeseen fields of struggle, raised a great roar and a deep commotion in the ranks of the employers and the government, which were already perceiving, not without terror, the consequences of a general strike of the railway workers.

If, however, with the declaration of Guerard, the question of Sabotage was openly confronted, it would not be exact to assume that it had been practiced in France before then.

To prove this it suffices to recall the typical example of a "trick" which has remained famous in telegraphic centres. Towards 1881, the operators of the central office, dissatisfied with the wage scale for night overtime, sent up a petition to the minister of Post and Telegraphs 70 of that time, M. Cochery, asking for ten francs instead of five which they were then paid for work ranging from six p. m.

to seven a. m. They vainly waited a few days for an answer from the administration, and having been informed that it would never come, a sullen agitation and anger began to circulate amongst them.

A strike being impossible, they resorted to a trick.

One fine morning Paris awoke to find out that all telegraphic connections were cut off. (Telephones had not yet been installed.) This continued for four or five days.

The higher personnel of the administration, with engineers and numerous squads of foremen and mechanics invaded the central office to inspect minutely every apparatus, battery wire, etc., from the front door to the cellar, but, strange enough, they could not find the cause of the trouble.

Five days after this memorable and wonderful "accident," a notice from the administration informed the operators that from that day on the night service would be paid ten francs instead of five.

They had not asked for more. "The next day all the lines were again buzzing as by magic. The authors of the miraculous trick were never found out by the administration which, if it guessed the motive, was never able to guess the means employed."[3]

The die was now cast.

"Sabotage," which up to that time had been applied unconsciously and instinctively by the workers, with the popular name which has remained attached to it begins in 1895 to receive its baptism, its theoretical consecration and to take its place amongst the other means of social warfare, recognised, approved, advocated and practiced by the labour unions.

In 1897 the Confederation Congress was held at Toulouse. The Prefect of the Seine had refused to the delegates of the Municipal Workers' Union the leave they were asking in order to attend the Congress. The federated unions of the Seine justly protested, qualifying this denial as an open attack on the right to organise.

The impeachment of the Prefect was called for during a session of the Congress and a vote of censure against him was immediately and unanimously taken. One of the delegates (who was none other

[3] Le Travailleur des P.P.T., Sept., 1896.

Chapter 2. The Labour Market

The labour market. Capitalistic tricks and pretensions. The demand for labour power. Belligerents in permanent conflict. The clash of two worlds. Effects of social "capillarity."

From what we have already related in a condensed form we have been able to see that *sabotage*, even in its English expression of "Go Cannie," is derived from the capitalist conception of human labour, which it considers as a merchandise or a commodity.

All bourgeois economists are agreed in upholding this theory and they unanimously declare that there exists a labour market just as there are markets for meat, grains, fish, etc. This granted, it is but logical that the capitalists act towards the "flesh for toil" in the same way as they would act in buying any other merchandise or raw material — that is, strive to obtain it at the very lowest price possible. There is, assuming as true the premises, nothing more normal.

We therefore find ourselves confronting the law of supply and demand.

The capitalists, however — and this is little understood — expect to receive, not an amount of labour proportioned to the wages they pay, but, on the contrary a much greater amount, quite independent of the wage level — in fact, the very maximum the worker can supply. In other words, the bosses expect to buy, not a given amount of labour, commensurate to the wages they pay; but the intrinsic labour power, the whole strength of the worker — indeed, it is the whole worker himself — body and blood, vigour and intelligence — that the employers exact.

Only, when they expound this pretension, they forget that labour power is an integral part of a reasoning being, endowed with a will and the capacity to resist and react.

Of course, everything would be nice and smooth for the capitalist world if the workers were as unconscious as are the steel and iron machines whose servants they are; and, if, like the machines, they had in the place of their heart and brains, a boiler or a dynamo.

This clean cut vote closed the gestatory period of the theoretical infiltration of *sabotage*. Since then *sabotage*, unquestionably accepted, recognised and advocated, was no more invoked in the labour congresses and took a definite place in the number of means of war devised and practiced by the toilers against Capitalism.

than Emile Pouget), remarked that the Prefect would not care a fig for the censure and protest of the workers and added:

> "Instead of protesting, it were much better to resort to action. Instead of bending our heads to the orders and injunctions of the ruling classes, it would be much more effective to retaliate. Why not answer a slap with a kick?" And Emile Pouget added that his remarks were derived from a tactic of combat which the Congress would be called to pass on in a short while. He cited on this score the emotion and fright with which the capitalist world had been stricken when Comrade Guerard had declared that the ridiculous sum of two cents, intelligently spent, would have been sufficient to enable a railway man to stop and put out of running condition a whole train propelled by powerful engines, and concluded with this proposition:
>
> "The Congress, considering as superfluous any blame to the Government, which merely exercises its natural functions, invites the municipal workers to produce one hundred thousand francs of damage to the service in order to reward the Prefect for his veto."

This declaration of Pouget exploded like a bomb. At first there was a great stupefaction amongst the delegates themselves, who did not immediately grasp the purposely fearless and challenging meaning of the proposition, then many protested. A pure and simple resolution buried the proposition.

But what did it matter? Its aim had been reached; the attention of the Congress had been called to this subject, discussion was opened and reflection sharpened.

Thus the report that the committee on Boycott and *sabotage* submitted some days later to the Assembly was received with the greatest and most helpful sympathy.

In the said report, after having defined and explained *sabotage*, the Committee added: "Up to now the workers have confirmed their revolutionary attitude, but most of the time they have remained on purely theoretical ground. They have worked for the diffusion of the idea of emancipation and elaborated a plan of future society

from which human exploitation is eliminated. But why, along with this educational and unquestionably necessary propaganda, was nothing done or tried to resist the counter attacks of the capitalists, so as to render less hard to the workers the greedy demands of their employers? Our meetings always adjourn with the cry of 'Long live the Social Revolution', a cry that is very far from materialising in any way whatever. It is indeed to be deplored that our congresses, while they always reaffirm their revolutionary standing, have not yet elaborated any practical revolutionary means and methods out of the orbit of words, and entered the field of action. Of things revolutionary, so far, we have as yet found and applied only the strike — and it is the strike alone that we continually resort to. Now this committee believes that there are other means besides the strike whereby we can checkmate the capitalists."

One of these means is the boycott — only the committee argued that it was insufficient against the manufacturer. It was necessary, therefore, to find something else. And here sabotage appears.

We quote from the same report that "this tactic comes from England, where it has rendered a great service in the struggle of the English workers against their masters."

And here the committee, after having quoted from the pamphlet for the popularisation of the "Go Cannie," which we have referred to above, continued:

"It is left to define under what aspects we can recommend *sabotage* to the French workers and how they can ultimately put it in practice. We all know that the employing manufacturers in order to increase our slavery always select those moments in which it is most difficult for us to resist their compulsion. Being unable to strike under conditions of extreme misery and disorganisation the workers must often bow their heads and submit. With sabotage, instead, they are no longer at the mercy of their bosses — they are no more a heap of nerveless flesh to be trampled upon with impunity. They have found a means whereby they can affirm their own virility and prove to their oppressors that even the toilers are men.

> "On the other hand sabotage is not as new as it would appear at first sight.

Of this internecine struggle, the discussion and vote on sabotage were one of the first embryonic manifestations.

The debate was short. After several speakers all in favour of sabotage, a voice was raised to condemn it. It was the chairman of the Congress himself. He declared that if he "did not have the honour of presiding he would have opposed sabotage, which he considered more harmful than useful to the workers and repugnant to the dignity of many of them." To justly value this condemnation it is sufficient to note that some weeks later it did not offend the "dignity" of this immaculate moralist to accept, thanks to the good office of Minister Millerand, a fat governmental sinecure.[4]

The chairman of the Committee on Sabotage was an adversary. He expressed himself in these terms:

> "I must make a statement about sabotage. It will be frank and clean cut. I admire those who have the courage to sabot an exploiter. I must, indeed, add that I have often laughed at the merry tales that are told about sabotage. But, I, for my part, could not dare do what our friends have often done.
>
> "The conclusion is that if I have not the courage to carry out a certain thing, it would be cowardice to incite others to do it. And I confess that in the act of deteriorating or disabling a tool or other things confided to my care, it is not the fear of God that paralyses my courage, but the fear of the policeman. Therefore, abandon to you the destinies of *sabotage*.

The Congress, however, gave *sabotage* a different reception than had been advised. A vote was taken, which gave the following result:

> Favourable to Sabotage: 117
>
> Contrary: 76
>
> Blank ballots: 2

[4] We refer to Mr. Treich, then secretary of the Bourse du Travail (Central Union) of Limoges and a fiery Guesdist, since appointed a Receiver of the Register (County Clerk) at Bordeaux.

"The Committee wishes to emphasise that sabotage is not a new tactic. The capitalists practice it any time they find that it pays.

"It is sufficient to mention the private and public contractors, who never keep their agreement to furnish first class material. Besides, are not the reductions of wages that the bosses from time to time impose on their employees a sabotage on the stomachs of the workers?

"We have already demonstrated how the worker instinctively answers to the heartless capitalist by reducing production, that is, rendering a work proportionate to the scarcity of wages.

"It is well that the workers realise that sabotage, in order to become a powerful weapon, must be practiced with method and intelligence.

"It is often sufficient to merely threaten it to obtain useful results.

"This Congress cannot enter into particulars as to its application. These particulars must issue from the temperament and initiative of each one of you and are subordinate to the various industries. We can only lay down the principle and wish that sabotage enter the arsenal of proletarian warfare against capitalism alongside of the strike; and that the attitude of the social movement assume an increasing tendency towards individual and collective direct action and realise a greater consciousness of its own personality."

For a third and last time sabotage met the battle fire of a Congress — in 1900 at the Confederation Convention at Paris.

It was then an agitated and troubled period. Under the influence of Millerand, Minister of Commerce, a deviation had taken place which had its origin in the allurement of political power. Many militants had been lured by the corrupting fascination of ministerialism and several labour organisations had been swerved towards a policy of "social peace" which, had it gained the upper hand, would have proved fatal to the syndicalist movement. The open antagonism of the revolutionary syndicalists was daily becoming more pronounced.

"Since the world began the workers have applied it individually, in spite of a lack of method. By sheer instinct they have always slackened their output, when the employer augmented his requirements. Without even being conscious of it, every worker more or less realises the watchword of sabotage: 'For bad wages, bad work.' It can be said that in many industries that the substitution of piece work for day work is principally due to sabotage. If this tactic has already brought practical results, what will it not bring the day when it shall have become an organised menace?

"Nor must it be assumed that the bosses, by substituting piece work for day work, have insured themselves against sabotage. This tactic is by no means limited to work by the day — it can, in fact, be equally applied to piece work. Only in this case, the line of action is different.

"To reduce the output would, of course, mean to reduce the wages — therefore, sabotage must be applied to the quality rather than the quantity of products.

"In this way the worker not only does not return to the employer a labour effort greater than the wages he gets, but will also strike at his trade (customers), which is the only thing that allows the employer to indefinitely enlarge his capital — the basis of exploitation of the working class.

"By this method the exploiter will be forced to capitulate and either grant the demand of the workers or surrender the instruments of production into the hands of their sole legitimate owners. Two instances of piece work we are generally confronted with: the case in which work is done at home with tools supplied by the worker himself, and the other when work is performed in the employer's shop where the tools and machines belong to the boss himself.

"In the latter case, to sabotage on the goods can be added sabotage on the instruments of production.

"And herein is explained the tremendous emotion that shook the capitalist class at the first announcement of sabotage.

"It is necessary for the capitalists to know that the worker will not respect the machine until it has become his friend that will reduce his physical labour instead of being, as it is today, the enemy that steals his bread and shortens his life."

As a conclusion to this report the committee proposed to the congress the following resolution:

"Whenever an open conflict breaks out between employers and workers, whether determined by the exigencies of the former or the demands of the latter, in case the strike be recognised as insufficient and inadequate, the workers are advised and recommended to apply boycott and sabotage — both simultaneously — regulating themselves according to the aforesaid considerations."

The reading of this report was received with the applause of the Convention. More than an approval, it met with veritable enthusiasm. All the delegates were conquered — not a single discordant voice was raised to criticise or make a single objection, or observation whatever.

The delegate of the Federation of Printing Trades was not amongst the less enthusiastic. He approved unreservedly the proposed tactics and made it plain in precise terms, of which we have but this cold record in the minutes of the Congress:

"All means are good in order to win. I may add that there are quite a number of them whereby we can reach our goal — easy to apply, provided it is done with care and ability. I mean to say with these words that there are things that must be done but not spoken of. You understand me.

"I know that if I were more explicit I would; be asked whether I have the right to do this or that thing — but if we continue to do only what we are allowed to do, we will never come to anything.

"Once a revolutionary method is adopted it is necessary to have courage. And when the head has gone through, the whole body must also be pulled through."

The warmest applause underscored the speech of the delegate of the Printing Trades, and after several commending remarks by various speakers, the following motion was introduced and carried unanimously:

"The Syndicate of Commercial Employees invites the Congress to vote by acclamation the conclusions of the committee's report on sabotage and to put them in practice on the first occasion that presents itself."

The christening of *sabotage* could not have been more propitious. And it was not a momentary success or a fire of straw, in consequence of a passing enthusiasm, for the unanimous sympathy with which sabotage was received, was never again denied to it.

In the succeeding congress of Rennes in 1898, these tactics were, in fact, again unanimously endorsed.

Amongst the various speakers that, in the course of the debate, sustained sabotage, we cite the mechanic Lanche, today a deputy from Paris. He expressed the happy satisfaction of the Mechanics' Union of the Seine which he represented at the resolutions passed at the Toulouse Congress in favour of boycott and *sabotage*.

The delegate of the Cooks' Federation made quite a big hit when he humorously related the following case of sabotage:

"The cooks of a great Parisian cafe, having some unsettled grievances with their employers, remained the whole day at their places before the red hot stoves — but in the rush hours when clients were swarming the dining rooms, nothing was found in the pots but stones that had been boiling for hours, together with the restaurant clock."

We believe it opportune to quote the following passages from the report that closed the discussion and which was unanimously adopted: