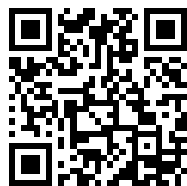


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# The Co-operative Commonwealth

—AND—

## Why Workmen are Unemployed?

NEW YORK LABOR NEWS COMPANY,

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## THE CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH.

Adapted for THE NEW YORK PEOPLE from K. Kautsky.

BY

DANIEL DE LEON.

### I.

## Social Reform and Revolution.

Private ownership in the instruments of production, once the means of insuring to the producer the ownership of his product, has to-day become the means of expropriating the farmer, the artisan, the small trader, and of placing the non-producers—capitalists and landlords—in possession of the products of labor. Only by converting into collective ownership the instruments of production—the land, mines, raw materials, tools, machines, and the means of communication and transportation—all of which are to-day held as capitalist private property, and by converting the production of commodities into socialist production, carried on for and by society, only by these means can production on a large scale and the ever increasing productivity of social labor, cease to be a source of misery and oppression for the exploited classes, and become one of well-being and harmonious development for all.

The conversion of the machinery of production, together with the means of communication and transportation, from private into public property is the Revolution—a revolution, that is irresistible and inevitable.

The productive forces that have developed in the lap of capitalist society have become irreconcilable with the very system of property upon which it is built. The endeavor to uphold this system of property is tantamount to rendering impossible all further social development, to condemn society to a standstill

and to stagnation, a stagnation, however, that is accompanied with the most painful convulsions.

Every further perfection in the powers of production increases the contradiction that exists between these and the present system of property. All attempts to remove this contradiction, or even to soften it down, without interfering with property, have proved vain, and must continue so to prove themselves as often as attempted.

For the last hundred years thinkers and statesmen among the possessing classes have been cutting and trying to prevent the threatened downfall of the system of private property in the instruments of production—i. e. to prevent the REVOLUTION. SOCIAL REFORM is the name they give to their perpetual tinkering with the industrial mechanism for the purpose of removing this or that ill effect of private property in the instruments of production, at least of softening its edges, without, however, ever touching private property itself. During the last hundred years, manifold “cures” have been huckstered and even tried; it is now hardly possible to imagine any new recipe in this line. All the so-called “newest” panaceas of our social quacks which are to heal the old social ailments quickly, without pain and without expense, are, upon closer inspection, discovered to be but rehashes of old nostrums, all of which have been tried before in other places, and found worthless.

Let not the position of the Socialist be misunderstood. He pronounces these social reforms inoperative in so far as they pretend to remove the growing contradictions, which the course of economic development brings out into ever stronger light, between the powers of production and the existing system of property, at the same time that they strive to uphold and to confirm the latter. But the Socialist does not thereby mean that the SOCIAL REVOLUTION, i. e., the abolition of private property in the instruments of production, will be accomplished of itself; that the irresistible, inevitable course of evolution will do the work without assistance from man; nor yet that all social reforms are worthless, and that nothing is left to those, who suffer from the contradictions between the modern powers of production and the system of property, but idly to cross their arms and patiently to wait for better days.

When the Socialist speaks of the irresistibility and inevitability of the social evolution, he of course starts from the belief that men are men, and not puppets; that they are beings endowed with certain necessities and impulses; with certain physical and mental powers, which they will seek to put to their best uses. Patiently to yield to what may seem unavoidable, is not to allow the social evolution to take its course, but to bring it to a standstill.

When the Socialist declares the abolition of private property in the instruments of production to be unavoidable, he does not mean that some fine morning, without their helping themselves, the exploited classes will find the ravens feeding them. The Socialist considers the breakdown of the present social system to be unavoidable because he knows that the economic evolution inevitably brings on those conditions that will compel the exploited classes to rise against this system of private ownership; that this system multiplies the number and the strength of the exploited, and diminishes the number and the strength of the exploiting classes, both of whom are still adhering to it; and that it will finally lead to such unbearable conditions for the masses of the population that they

will have no alternative but, either to go down in silence, or to overthrow that system of property.

Such a revolution may assume manifold forms according to the circumstances under which it is effected. It by no means must necessarily be accompanied with violence and bloodshed. There are instances in the history of mankind when the ruling classes were either so exceptionally clear sighted, or so particularly weak and cowardly, that they submitted to the inevitable and voluntarily abdicated. Neither is it necessary that the social revolution be decided at one blow; such probably never was the case. Revolutions prepare themselves by years and decades of economic and political struggles; they are accomplished under constant ups and downs, sustained by the conflicting classes and parties; not infrequently are they interrupted by long periods of reaction.

Nevertheless, however manifold the forms may be which a revolution may assume, never yet was any revolution accomplished without vigorous action on the part of those who suffered most under the existing conditions.

When, furthermore, the Socialist declares those social reforms, that stop short of the overthrow of the present system of property, to be unable to abolish the contradictions which the present economic development has produced, he by no means implies that all struggles on the part of the exploited against their present sufferings are useless within the framework of the existing social order; that they should patiently accommodate themselves to all ill-treatments and forms of exploitation, which the capitalist system may decree to them; or that, so long as they are at all exploited, it matters little how. What he does mean is, that the exploited classes should not overrate the social reforms, and should not imagine that through them the existing conditions can be rendered satisfactory to them. The exploited classes should carefully examine all proposed social reforms that are offered to them. Nine-tenths of the proposed reforms are not only useless but positively injurious to the exploited classes. Most dangerous of all are those schemes, which, aiming at the salvation of the threatened social order, shut their eyes to the economic development of the last century. The workingmen, the exploited classes generally, who take the field in favor of such schemes waste their energies in a senseless endeavor to revive the dead past.

Many are the ways in which the economic development may be affected; it may be hastened and it may be retarded; its edge may be dulled, or it may be sharpened; only one thing is impossible—to stop its course, much less to turn it back. Experience teaches that all attempts in this direction are not only profitless, but increase the very sufferings which they were intended to remove, while, on the other hand, those measures, that are really calculated more or less to relieve some existing ill, have themselves the tendency rather to accelerate the economic development.

When, for instance, in the early stages of capitalism, the wage-workers destroyed the machine, opposed woman labor, and so on, their efforts were and could not be otherwise than profitless; they arrayed themselves against a development that nothing could resist. Since then they have hit upon better methods whereby to shield themselves as much as possible against the injurious effects of capitalist exploitation; they have established their trade unions, and they have started their independent political parties, each of which supplements the other, and with the assistance of which they have, in all civilized countries met, with more or less



success. But each of these successes, be it the raising of wages, the shortening of hours, the prohibition of child labor, the establishment of sanitary regulations, etc., gives a new impulse to the economic development: together, they have either caused the capitalist to replace dearer labor with machinery, or they have forced up his pay-roll, and thereby have rendered the competitive struggle harder for the small capitalist, shortened his economic existence, and hastened the concentration of capital.

Accordingly, however justifiable, or even necessary, it may be that the workmen establish labor organizations for the purpose of improving their condition, by lowering the hours of work, and other equally wholesome measures, it were a profound error to imagine that such reforms could delay the social revolution; and equally mistaken is the notion that one cannot admit the usefulness of certain social reforms without admitting that it is possible to preserve society upon its present basis. On the contrary, such reforms may be supported from the revolutionary standpoint because, as it has been shown, they stimulate the course of events, and because, so far from removing the suicidal tendencies of the capitalist system, they help them along.

The turning of the people into proletarians, the concentration of capital in the hands of a few, who rule the whole economic life of capitalist nations, NONE OF THESE TRYING AND SHOCKING EFFECTS OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM OF PRODUCTION CAN BE CHECKED BY ANY REFORM WHATSOEVER, THAT IS BASED UPON THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF PROPERTY, HOWEVER FAR REACHING SUCH REFORM MAY BE.

There is no political party, however fossilized and anxious it may be to preserve things as they are, but has its misgivings with regard to this fact. Each of them still advertises its special plan of reform as the means whereby to prevent the crash; but there is not one of them that still entertains complete faith in its own panacea.

Dodging will not help them. The corner stone of the present system of production—PRIVATE PROPERTY IN THE INSTRUMENTS OF PRODUCTION—becomes every day more irreconcilable with the very nature of the means of production. The magnitude that these instruments of production have reached, the social character that their functions have assumed, mark them for common, social property, without which, instead of being a blessing they become a curse to mankind. The downfall of private property in them is now only a question of time; it is sure to come; the only question still open is as to the time and the manner in which the revolution will be accomplished.

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## II.

### Private Property and Common Property.

Indeed, there can be no longer any question as to whether and how private property is to be preserved in the instruments of production; the only question is what SHALL, or rather MUST, take its place; it is not a question of making an invention, but of dealing with an actual fact. We have as little choice in the matter of the system of property that should be instituted, as we have in the matter of preserving the existing one, or throwing it overboard.

The same economic development that propounds the question: "What shall be put in the place of the system of private ownership in the means of production?" brings along the conditions that answer the question. The new system of property lies latent in the old. To become acquainted with the former we must turn, not to our personal leanings and wishes, but to the facts that surround us.

Whoever understands the conditions that are requisite for the present system of production knows what system of property those conditions will demand when the existing system of property ceases to be possible. Private property in the instruments of production has its roots in small production. Individual production makes individual ownership necessary. Large production on the contrary denotes CO-OPERATIVE, SOCIAL PRODUCTION. In large production each individual does not work alone, but a large number of workers, the whole commonwealth, work together to produce a whole. Accordingly, the modern instruments of production are extensive and gigantic. With them it is wholly impossible that every single worker should own his own instruments of production. Once the present stage is reached by large production, it admits of but two systems of ownership:

First, private ownership by the individual in the instruments of production used by co-operative labor; that means the existing system of capitalist production, with its train of misery and exploitation as the portion of the workers, idleness and excessive abundance as the portion of the capitalist; and

Second, ownership by the workers in the common instruments of production; that means a co-operative system of production, and the extinction of the exploitation of the workers, who become masters of their own products, and who themselves appropriate the surplus of which, under our system, they are deprived by the capitalist.

TO SUBSTITUTE COMMON IN THE PLACE OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP IN THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION, THIS IT IS THAT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS URGING UPON US WITH EVER INCREASING FORCE.

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### III.

## Socialist Production.

The abolition of the present system of production means the substitution of production for SALE by production for USE.

Production for use may be of two forms:

First, INDIVIDUAL production for the satisfaction of individual wants; and, Second, SOCIAL, or CO-OPERATIVE, production for the satisfaction of the wants of a commonwealth.

The first form of production has never been very general. Man always has been a social being, as far as we can trace him back; the individual has always

but is a modern nation for what in  
itself? If not, then the world must  
become one nation.

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been thrown upon co-operation with others in order to satisfy some of his principal wants; as a result, others had to work for him, and he, in turn, had to work for others; individual production for self consumption has always played a subordinate role; to-day it hardly deserves mention.

Until the present system of production, i. e., production for sale, was developed, co-operative production for common use was the leading form; it may be regarded as old as production itself. If any one system of production could be considered more agreeable than any other to the nature of man, then co-operative production must be pronounced the natural one. In all probability, for every thousand years that production for sale numbers, co-operative production for use numbers tens of thousands. The character, extent and power of every co-operative society have changed along with the instruments and methods of production which it adopted. Nevertheless, whether such a commonwealth was a horde, or a tribe, or any other form of community, they all had certain essential features in common. Each satisfied its own wants, at least the most vital ones, with the product of its own labor; the instruments of production were the property of the community; its members worked together as free and equal individuals according to some plan devised by, and under the guidance of, some administrative power elected by and responsible to themselves; the product of such co-operative labor was the property of the community, and was applied either to the satisfaction of common wants, be these for production or consumption, or was distributed among the individuals or groups which composed the community.

The well-being of such self-supporting communities or societies depended upon natural and personal conditions. The more fertile the territory which they occupied, the more diligent, inventive and vigorous their members, the greater also was the general well-being. Drouths, freshets, invasions by more powerful enemies, might afflict or even destroy them, but there was one visitation they were free from, THE FLUCTUATIONS OF THE MARKET; with this they were either wholly unacquainted, or knew of it only in connection with articles of luxury.

Such co-operative production for use is nothing less than communistic, or, as it is called to-day, socialist production; production for sale can be overcome only by such a system; socialist production is the only system of production possible when production for sale has become impossible.

This fact does not, however, imply that mankind is about to revive the dead past, or to restore the old forms of community property, or communal production. Those forms corresponded to certain means of production; they were and continue to be inapplicable to more highly developed instruments of production; it was for that reason that they disappeared almost everywhere in the course of the economic development at the approach of the system of production for sale; and wherever they did resist the latter, their effect was to interfere with the healthy development of productive powers. As reactionary and hopeless as were the efforts to resist the system of production for sale by the old communal system, it would be to-day to endeavor to overthrow the present by the revival of the old communal system.

That system of socialist production, which, owing to the impending bankruptcy of our present system of production for sale, i. e., capitalist production, has become inevitable, will, and necessarily must, have certain leading features

in common with the older systems of communal production, in so far, namely, as both are systems of co-operative production for use. In the same way, the capitalist system of production bears some resemblance to the system of small and individual production, which forms the transition period between it and communal production: both produce for sale. Now then, the same as the capitalist system of production is a higher development notwithstanding it shares with small production the feature of being PRODUCTION FOR SALE, that form of social production that has now become necessary is different from and superior to the former ones of PRODUCTION FOR USE.

The oncoming system of socialist production will not be the sequel to ancient communism, it will be the sequel to the capitalist system of production, which itself develops the elements that are requisite for the organization of its successor: it brings forth the elements and the social organisms that are destined to be the corner stone of the new system of production.

Socialist production requires, in the first place, the transformation of the separate capitalist establishments into social institutions—a transformation that is being prepared by the circumstance that the personality of the capitalist is steadily becoming more and more superfluous in the present mechanism of production; in the second place, it requires that all the establishments, requisite for the satisfaction of the wants of the commonwealth be united into one large concern—a process that the present economic development is paving the way for by the steady concentration of capitalist concerns in the hands of a few.

What shall be the size of such a self-sufficing commonwealth? Seeing that the Co-operative Commonwealth is not the product of an arbitrary figment of the brain, but a necessary product of economic development, neither can the size of such a commonwealth be an arbitrary one; it must conform to the stage of social development in which it is applied; the higher the development, that has been reached, the greater the division of labor, that has been perfected, the more complicated intercourse has become between the producers—all the larger, in consequence, will be the size of the commonwealth.

It is now nearly two hundred years since a well meaning Englishman, John Bellers, submitted to the English Parliament, a plan to remove the misery, which already then, young as it was, the capitalist system of production was spreading through the land. He proposed the establishment of communities that should produce everything they needed, industrial as well as agricultural products. According to his plan, each community needed only from 200 to 300 workmen. At that time handicraft was still the leading form of production; the capitalist system was then in the manufacturing stage; as yet there was no thought of the capitalist mill with its modern system of machinery.

A hundred years later the same idea was taken up anew, but considerably improved and perfected, by other socialist thinkers, such as Owen and Fourier. By that time, the present factory system of mills and machinery had already begun; handicrafts were disappearing almost everywhere; society had reached a higher stage. Accordingly, the communities, which the socialists proposed at the beginning of our own century for the purpose of removing the ills of the capitalist system of production, were ten times larger than those proposed by Bellers.

However wonderful the economic conditions were in the days of Owen and Fourier when compared with those of Bellers, a generation later they have in

turn become trivial. The machine is restlessly revolutionizing social life; it has expanded the capitalist undertakings to such an extent that some of them already embrace whole nations in their operations; it has brought the several undertakings of a country into greater dependence upon one another, so that they now virtually constitute one industry; and it tends to turn the whole economic life of capitalist nations into a single economic mechanism. Furthermore, the division and subdivision of labor is carried on ever further; ever more do the several industries apply themselves to the production of special articles only, and, what is more, to their production for the whole world; and ever larger becomes the size of these establishments some of which count their workmen by the thousands.

Under such circumstances, a community, able to satisfy its wants, and embracing all industries requisite thereto, must have dimensions very different from those of the socialist colonies that were planned at the commencement of our century. Among the social organizations in existence to-day, there is but one that has the requisite dimensions, that can be used as the requisite field, for the establishment and development of the Socialist or Co-operative Commonwealth, and that is: the NATION.

Indeed, so prodigious is the development that production has reached in some industries, and so intimate have become the connections between the several capitalist nations that one might almost question the absolute sufficiency of a single nation as the basis of the Co-operative Commonwealth.

Nevertheless, the present expansion of international intercourse is the result, not so much of the existing conditions of production as of the existing condition of exploitation. The greater the swing which the capitalist system of production obtains in a country, and the intenser the accompanying exploitation of the working class, the larger also, as a rule, is the surplus of the products that cannot be consumed in the country itself, and that, consequently, is sent abroad, in search of foreign purchasers. When the population of the country have not themselves the means with which to buy the staples they produce, the capitalists go with their products in search of foreign customers whether or not the population of their own country stand in need of them. The capitalists are after purchasers, not after consumers. This explains the horrible phenomenon that Ireland and India export large quantities of wheat during a famine; more recently, during the fearful famine in Russia, the exportation of wheat by the Russian capitalists could be checked only by an imperial order. When exploitation shall have ceased, and production for use shall have taken the place of production for sale, foreign exportations and importations will fall off greatly.

The existing intercourse between one nation and another will of course not wholly disappear. The division of labor has been carried on so far; the market which certain giant industries require for their product has become so extensive; so many are the wants—coffee, for instance—that have been cultivated through the development of international commerce, and these have to such an extent grown into necessities, that it seems impossible any socialist commonwealth, even though bounded by the confines of a nation, would be able to satisfy all its wants with its own products. Some sort of exchange of products between one nation and another is sure to continue. Such, however, would not endanger the economic independence and safety of the several nations so long as they do produce all that is ACTUALLY NECESSARY, and exchange with one another SUPERFLUITIES

**EXCLUSIVELY.** To-day, it is sufficient for a socialist commonwealth to be co-extensive with the nation in order to produce all that it requires for its own preservation.

This dimension would by no means be a cast-iron one. The modern nation is but a product and a tool of the capitalist system of production; it grows with that system; it grows, not only in power, but also in extent according as the requirements of the capitalist system dictate. The domestic market is the safest for the capitalist class of every country. It is the easiest to maintain and best to exploit. The experience of the Hawaiian sugar planters, who once enjoyed, but subsequently lost, our market for their staple; the subsequent Hawaiian "Revolution," i. e., the attempt of Claus Spreckels and his Hawaiian Commercial Company to annex themselves to the United States, and thus regain our market—are the most recent and most striking illustrations of this fact. In proportion as the capitalist system develops, so also grows the pressure on the part of the capitalist class in every nation for an extension of its political boundaries. The statesman who maintained that modern wars are no longer DYNASTIC but manifestations of NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS was not far from the truth, provided always by "national aspirations" is understood the aspirations of the capitalist class. Nothing so much injures the vital interests of the capitalists of any nation as a reduction of their territory. The capitalist class of France would have long ago pardoned Germany the five milliards which she demanded as a money indemnity for the war of 1870; but the French capitalists can never pardon the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine; all their "patriotic" twaddle notwithstanding, their pocket is the nerve that aches.

All modern nations feel the necessity of extending their boundaries; in this respect the capitalists of the United States are best off; their territorial extension goes by leaps and bounds, nor can it be checked. The capitalists of England at one time enjoyed this privilege above those of all other nations, but their wings have been recently considerably clipped. Russia also enjoyed at one time great advantages in this respect, but the limits of her aggrandizement seem to have been reached; she is now bounded on all sides by nations who resist her progress, seeing that they have the same interests as herself in extending their boundaries. Worst off are the nations of continental Europe in this respect; they, as well as all others, require territorial extension, but they are so closely hemmed in by one another that none can grow except at the expense of some other; in order to make up for this disadvantage the States of continental Europe have set their caps toward the acquisition of colonies; but this policy affords only slight relief to the capitalist requirement for territorial extension; this situation is the most powerful cause of the militarism that prevails there, and which has turned Europe into a military camp. There are but two ways out of this intolerable state of things; either a gigantic war that shall destroy some of the existing European States; or the union of them all in a federation.

This evident endeavor of modern nations to keep pace in their territorial extension with the economic development, is in itself a preparatory measure to furnish the oncoming Co-operative Commonwealth with the territory requisite for its establishment.

The modern State, i. e., Nation, is the only social organization in existence sufficiently broad to contain a socialist commonwealth.

## IV.

# The Economic Significance of the State.

The modern State not only offers the only social organism equal, in point of size, to the requirements of the socialist commonwealth, it, furthermore, constitutes the only natural basis for the same.

All communities have ever had economic functions to fulfill. This must, self-evidently, have been the case with the original communist societies which we encounter at the threshold of history. In proportion as individual small production, private ownership in the instruments of production, and production for sale underwent their successive development, a number of social functions remained extant, the fulfillment of which either exceeded the power of the individual industries, or were from the start recognized as too important to be handed over to the arbitrary conduct of individuals. Along with the care for the young, the poor, the old and infirm—i. e., schools, hospitals and poor-houses—, the community reserved the functions of promoting and regulating commerce—i. e., building highways, coining money, superintending markets—, and the management of certain general and important matters appertaining to production—i. e., water courses, etc. In mediaeval society, likewise with us here during the colonial days, and even during the early decades of our independence, these several functions devolved upon the townships and sometimes upon religious corporations. The mediaeval State cared not a copper about such functions.

Matters changed as that State grew into the modern State, i. e., a State of office holders and soldiers, and became the tool of the capitalist class, which then took control of the situation. The same as all previous forms of States, the modern State is the tool of class rule. It could not, however, fulfill its mission and satisfy the needs of the capitalist class without either dissolving, or depriving of their independence, and taking upon itself the functions of, those economic organizations which it found in existence, and which lay at the foundation of the pre-capitalist social system. Even in such places where the modern State tolerated the continuance of mediaeval organizations, these fell into decay and became less and less able to fulfill their functions. These functions became, however, broader and broader with the development of the capitalist system; they grew and continued to grow with such rapidity that the State was gradually compelled to assume even those functions which it cares least troubling itself about. For instance, the necessity of taking upon itself the whole system of charitable and educational institutions has become so pressing upon the State, that it has in most cases conformed itself to this necessity. From the start it assumed the function of coining money; since then, however, it has been compelled to extend its jurisdiction in other directions as well, notably that of building highways.

There was a time when the capitalist class, full of itself, imagined it could free itself wholly from the restraint of the State; the capitalist declared the State should only watch over his safety at home and abroad, keep the proletarians and foreign competitors in check, but keep its hands off the whole economic life. The capitalist class had good reasons for this wish. However great the power of

the capitalists, the power of the State had not always shown itself as subservient as they wished; even there where, as in the United States, the capitalist class had virtually no competitor with whom to dispute the overlordship, and where, accordingly, the power of the State showed itself friendly, the office holders often became disagreeable friends to deal with.

The hostility of the capitalist class to the interference of the State in the economic life of a country came to the surface first in England during the early stirrings of the socialist labor movement; that hostile tendency received in England the name of "Manchester School." The doctrines of that school were the first intellectual weapons with which the capitalist class took the field against the socialist labor movement. It is, therefore, no wonder that the opinion took hold of many a socialist workman, that a SUPPORTER OF THE MANCHESTER SCHOOL and a CAPITALIST, on the one hand, and on the other, SOCIALISM and THE INTERFERENCE OF THE STATE IN THE ECONOMIC AFFAIRS OF A COUNTRY, were one and the same thing; no wonder that such workmen believed that to overthrow the Manchester School was to overthrow capitalism itself. It is just the reverse. The Manchester School was never anything more than a theory which the capitalist class played against the workingman, occasionally, against the Government also, whenever it suited its purposes, but from the logical consequences of which it has carefully guarded. To-day, the "Manchester School" no longer influences the capitalist class abroad; the only traces we see of it here is in a few Bourbon capitalist journals, at least thirty years behind the times. The reason of its decline was the increasing force with which the economic and political development urged the necessity of the extension of the functions of the State.

These functions grow from day to day. Not only do those which the State assumed from the start become ever larger, but new ones are born of the capitalist system itself, of which former generations had no conceptions and which affect intimately the whole economic system. Whereas, formerly, statesmen were essentially diplomats and jurists, to-day, they must be economists. Treaties and privileges, ancient researches and matters of precedents are of little use in the solution of modern political problems; economic principles have become the leading arguments. Open any issue of the "Congressional Record," what are the subjects that strike the eye with greatest frequency, if not exclusively? They are: Finance, Taxation, Railroads, Labor, Commerce, etc.

Nor is this all. The economic development forces the State, partly in self-defence, partly for the sake of fulfilling its functions in a better way, partly also for the purpose of increasing its revenues, to take into its own hands more and more functions or industries.

During the Middle Ages, the rulers derived their main income from their property in land; later, during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their treasuries derived large accessions from the plundering of church and other estates. On the other hand, the need of money frequently compelled the rulers to sell their property to the capitalists. In most European countries, even now, when the capitalist system is in full force, traces of this former condition of things can be found in the domains of the crown and in State mines. Furthermore, the development of the military system added arsenals and wharves; the development of commerce added post offices, railroads and telegraphs; finally



the increasing demand for money on the part of the State has given birth, in European countries, to all manner of State monopolies.

Nor is a republican form of government exempt from these features. In monarchies, the remnants of feudalism establish from the start interests in government that are hostile to the capitalist class; in republics these hostile interests are placed there by the contradictions of which the capitalist system itself is guilty. In a republic, there is no feudal head or class to be supported; but in lieu of them there is, bred of capitalism itself, an increasing pauper class, which acting, consciously or unconsciously, in concert with the slums, forces the State to increase its revenues in order to assist that large portion of our population to a living. The pretexts under which revenue is raised to this end are numerous: The most important ones are appropriations for "improvements," in not a few instances, of rivers and places that have no existence, and in most cases, of places where there is no need of such; appropriations for millions of pensions for imaginary "heroes"; appropriations for the erection of costly buildings, etc., etc., all of which have but one purpose in view, the satisfaction of a clamor that is beginning to sound very much like that of the Roman mobs in the declining days of Rome, when the populace was held quiet with bread and circus shows.

While the economic functions and the economic power of the State are thus steadily increased, in our own Republic as well as in European monarchies, the whole economic mechanism becomes more and more complicated, more and more sensitive, and the separate capitalist undertakings become proportionally more interdependent upon one another. Along with all this, grows the dependence of the capitalist class upon the greatest of all their establishments—the STATE or GOVERNMENT. This increased dependence and interrelation increases also the disturbances and disorders that afflict the economic mechanism, in relief of all of which, the largest of existing economic powers, the State or Government, is with increasing frequency appealed to by the capitalist class. Accordingly, in modern society the State is called upon more and more to step in and take a hand in the regulation and management of the economic mechanism; and ever stronger are the means placed at its disposal and employed by it in the fulfillment of this function. The economic omnipotence of the State, which appeared to the "Manchester School" as a Socialist Utopia, has developed under the very nose of that school into an inevitable result of the capitalist system of production itself, and without which the capitalist system could not maintain itself.

## V.

### State Socialism & Democratic Socialism.

The economic activity of the modern State is the natural starting point of that development that leads up to the Socialist or Co-operative Commonwealth.

It does not, however, follow, that every nationalization of an economic function or of an industry is a step towards the Socialist Commonwealth, and that

the latter could be the result of a general nationalization of all industries without having to change the character of the State.

The theory that this could be the case is that of the STATE SOCIALISTS. It arises from a misunderstanding of the State itself. The same as all previous systems of Government, the modern State is pre-eminently an implement intended to guard the interests of the ruling class. This feature is in no wise changed by its assumption of functions of general utility, and affecting the interests, not of the ruling class alone, but of the whole body politic. The modern State will assume these functions quite often, simply because otherwise the interests of the ruling class would be endangered, but under no circumstances has it assumed, or could it ever, assume these functions in such manner as to endanger the overlordship of the capitalist class. Of this fact a remarkable illustration has been recently furnished by the official declarations of the People's Party—a party called into being by the property holding class of small Western farmers, whom large capitalist production is submerging. The platform adopted at Omaha is very explicit on all the points that concern the economic interests of that class; the only demands, that are not self-evidently and inherently reactionary, are those that call for the national ownership of the means of communication and transportation; but, that these demands are made in the interest, not of the working class, the proletariat, but in the interest of the possessing class, appears from two facts: first, the conspicuous absence from the platform itself of all provision to improve the condition of the workers in those industries—such as higher earnings and shorter hours; and, second, the insertion of some recommendations looking in that direction, together with many other trivial ones, AFTER the platform and UNDER the following very significant introductory clause: "Whereas other questions have been presented for our consideration, we hereby submit the following NOT as a part of the platform of the People's party." And, furthermore, still more recently, a Boston Nationalist Club, consisting mainly of middle class people, issues a petition, likewise for the national ownership of the means of communication, transportation, etc., but wholly omits all provisions looking to the improvement of the conditions of the workers therein. In the one case as in the other, the capitalist functions which the State is asked to assume, are instinctively, if not purposely, asked to be assumed in a manner that would not endanger the overlordship of the capitalist class.

When the modern State nationalizes certain industries it does not do so for the purpose of restricting capitalist exploitation, but for the sole purpose of protecting the capitalist system and establishing it upon a firmer basis; or for the purpose of itself taking a hand in the exploitation of labor, increasing its own revenues, and thereby reducing the contributions for its own support which it would otherwise have to impose upon the capitalist class. As an exploiter of labor the State is superior to any private capitalist: besides the economic power of the capitalists, which it would thereby acquire, it could also bring to bear upon the exploited classes the political power which it already wields.

The State has never carried on the idea of nationalizing the industries further than the interests of the ruling classes demanded; nor will it ever go further than that. So long as the property-holding classes are also the ruling ones, the nationalization of industries and capitalist functions will never be carried so far

*after all then, socialism a  
class affair, by a class made  
up of the greatest number?*

— 14 —

as to injure the capitalists and landlords, or to restrict their opportunities for exploiting the proletariat.

THE STATE WILL NOT CEASE TO BE A CAPITALIST INSTITUTION UNTIL THE PROLETARIAT, THE WORKING CLASS, HAS BECOME THE RULING CLASS; NOT UNTIL THEN WILL IT BE POSSIBLE TO TURN IT INTO A SOCIALIST COMMONWEALTH.

From the recognition of this fact is born the task which the Socialist Labor parties of all countries have set to themselves, to wit: TO CALL UPON THE PROLETARIAT, THE WORKING CLASS OF ALL LANDS, TO CONQUER THE POLITICAL POWER, TO THE END THAT, WITH ITS AID, THEY MAY CONVERT THE NATION INTO A CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH, POSSESSED OF ALL THE MEANS REQUISITE FOR ITS SUSTENANCE.

Socialists are frequently twitted with not having any fixed aims; that they understand only to criticize; and that they know not what to put in the place of that which they would overthrow. Nevertheless, the fact remains that none of the existing parties in the United States, or in any other country, in which the Socialists have taken the field, has so well marked and clear an aim as the Socialist Labor Party. It may indeed be questioned whether any other political party has any aim at all. They all hold to the existing order; their platforms contain nothing but plasters and salves with which they promise and hope to make the impossible possible, and the unbearable bearable.

The Socialist Labor Party on the contrary does not build upon hopes and promises, but upon the unalterable dictates of the economic development. Whoever understands this development must accept the aims of the Party. Whoever declares these aims to be false should show in what respect the teachings of Socialist political economy are false; he should show that the theory of the development from small to large production is false; that production is carried on to-day in the United States the same as it was carried on a hundred years ago; he must show that things are to-day as they have always been. Only he who could prove these postulates is justified in the belief that things will continue as they are. But whoever is not featherbrained enough to believe that the social conditions which we experience to-day are the same that have been always experienced, neither could he conclude that the present conditions will continue forever. What other than the Socialist Labor Party will tell him what WILL and must take the place of the present order?

All other political parties live only in the present, and from hand to mouth; the Socialist Labor Party is the only one that has a tangible aim before it, and which steers its present course by the light of that great aim. All other parties neither will nor can realize this aim; only by marching over their prostrate bodies can the Socialist Labor Party reach the desired end. Because they neither can nor will see, because they stubbornly persist in wool-gathering and stargazing, they declare off-hand that Socialists know not what they want except to destroy whatever is.

## VI. The "Plan" of the Co-operative Commonwealth.

It were an endless task to attempt to meet all the objections, misconceptions and misstatements with which the capitalist class strives to combat Socialism. It is profitless to attempt to enlighten malice and stupidity. Socialists could wear themselves to the bone in such an undertaking, and yet fresh floods of misrepresentation would come pouring in.

There is, however, one objection that should be met; it is important enough to merit thorough treatment; especially as by doing so the aims of Socialism appear all the more clearly.

The apostles of capitalism declare the Socialist Commonwealth cannot be considered practicable, and cannot be the object of the endeavors of intelligent people until the plan is presented to the world in a perfected form, and has been tested and found feasible. They claim that no sensible man would start to build a house before he has perfected his plan, and before experts have approved it; that, least of all, would he undertake to pull down before he knew what else to put in its place. Socialists are, accordingly, told that they must come out with their "scheme"; unless they do so it is a sign that they themselves have not much confidence in it.

This objection sounds very plausible; so plausible indeed that even among Socialists themselves many are of the opinion that the exposition of such a plan is a necessity. Indeed, such a course was a prerequisite to all further agitation so long as the laws that underlie the evolution of society were unknown, and so long as the belief prevailed that social institutions are reared as obedient to private whims as houses. The belief that such is the case is even now so general that one often hears the expression "social edifice," used, not as a figure of speech, but as a concrete idea.

Sociology, social evolution is a modern science. Formerly, the economic development proceeded so slowly that it was barely noticeable. In certain epochs of development mankind often remained centuries, and even thousands of years, at one and the same stage. There are neighborhoods in Russia where the agricultural implements still in use are hard to distinguish from those that we meet at the very threshold of history. Hence it happened that the system of production in vogue at a certain time, seemed an unalterable arrangement to the people of that age; their fathers and grandfathers had produced like them, and the conclusion was that their children and grandchildren would do likewise. Man naturally considered the social institutions into which he was born to be permanent and ordained of God, and that it was a sacrilege to attempt innovations. Great as the changes might be which were wrought by wars and internal class struggles, these seemed to affect the surface only; such convulsions did, as a matter of course, affect the foundation also, but they were hardly noticeable to the generations of the time.

History is, to-day, still, essentially nothing but a more or less faithful chronicle of events recorded by such spectators; hence, history remains essentially superficial, and although he who takes a bird's eye view of the thousands of years of antiquity can perceive clearly a social evolution, yet the average historian takes no notice of it.

Not until we reach the age of capitalist production does the social evolution proceed at such a rapid pace that men became conscious thereof and turned their thoughts to it. Of course, they first looked for the causes of this development upon the surface, before probing deeper down. But he who sticks to the surface can see only those forces that determine the immediate course of progress and these are not the conditions under which production is carried on, but the change of ideas among men.

As the capitalist system of production stepped upon the scene it created among the persons who depended upon it—capitalists, proletarians, etc.—new wants, wholly different from those of the people connected with the previous feudal system of production. To these different wants corresponded also different perceptions of right and wrong, of necessity and luxury, of usefulness and harmfulness. In proportion as the capitalist system of production grew, and the classes that shared it became more marked, the perceptions which corresponded to this system of production became clearer, asserted themselves in the Government, and were felt in political and social life, until finally the new classes that had been formed took possession of the State and shaped it agreeably to their wants.

The philosophers who first endeavored to investigate the causes of social development thought they found these in the IDEAS OF MEN; to a certain degree they recognized that these ideas sprang from material wants; but the fact still remained a secret to them that these wants changed from age to age and that these changes were the result of changes in the economic conditions, i. e., in the system of production. They started with the belief that the wants of man—"human nature"—were unchangeable. Hence they could see but one "true," "natural," "just" social system, because only one could correspond with the "true nature of man." All other social forms were pronounced by them the result of mental aberrations, which could have been possible only because mankind did not realize sooner what they wanted, because their judgment was befogged, either, as some imagined on account of the natural stupidity of man, or as others maintained, on account of the willful machinations of priests and kings. Looked upon from such a standpoint, the development of society was the result of a development of thought. The cleverer men are, the quicker they are to discover the social forms that suit human nature, the juster also and the better did society become.

This is the theory of our so-called liberal thinkers. Wherever their influence is felt this view prevails. As a matter of course the first Socialists, who appeared at the commencement of this century, were likewise affected by this theory. They also imagined that the institutions of the capitalist State, which they found extant, had sprung from the brain of the philosophers of the previous century. Arriving on the stage of history, a full century later, it was clear to these Socialists that the capitalist social system was by no means the perfect thing which the philosophers of the 18th century expected. Accordingly, this system

was still not the true one; the philosophers of the 18th century must have made a mistake somewhere; the early Socialists addressed themselves to the task of finding the mistake, and, in their turn of discovering the true social system that should suit human nature better. They realized that it was necessary to elaborate their plan more carefully than any of their illustrious predecessors had done lest some untoward influence should nullify their work also. This method of procedure was, moreover, dictated by the circumstance that the early Socialists, who appeared at the beginning of the century, did not stand as did their predecessors, the philosophers of the 18th century, face to face with a social system whose downfall was at hand, nor did they have, as their predecessors had, the encouragement of a mighty class, whose interests demanded the overthrow of the then social order. They could not in those early days represent the social order for which they strove as INEVITABLE, but only as DESIRABLE. It was a necessity of their situation to try and present their social ideal in as clear and tangible a form as possible, to the end that the mouths of people should water after it, and none should entertain a doubt either as to its practicability or its pleasantness.

The adversaries of Socialism have not yet got beyond the point of looking upon society from the standpoint occupied by social science a hundred years ago; the only sort of Socialists they know and can understand is, accordingly, that of those early and Utopian Socialists who started from the same premises as they themselves. The adversaries of Socialism look upon the socialist commonwealth just as they would upon a capitalist enterprise, say, a stock corporation, which is to be "started," and they refuse to take stock before it is shown to their satisfaction the concern is practicable and will yield large dividends. Such a conception might have had its justification at the beginning of our century; to-day, the socialist commonwealth no longer needs the "endorsement" of these gentlemen in order to be realized.

The capitalist social system has run its course; its dissolution is now only a question of time; the irresistible economic development leads with the certainty of doom to the shipwreck of the capitalist system of production. No longer is the building of a new social order in the place of the existing one simply DESIRABLE, it has become INEVITABLE.

Ever larger and more powerful grows to-day the mass of the propertiless workers for whom the existing system is unbearable, who have nothing to lose with its downfall, but everything to gain, and who are bound—unless they be willing to go down with the society of which they have become the most important part—to call into being a social order that shall correspond with their interests.

These are not phantasias; they are facts that Socialists have DEMONSTRATED with the actual occurrences that are daily taking place. These occurrences are more eloquent and convincing than the most captivating and carefully prepared pictures of the oncoming social order could be. The best that such pictures can do is to show that the socialist commonwealth is not impossible; but these pictures are bound to be defective; they can never cover all the details of social life; they will always leave some loophole through which the adversary will insinuate some objection. That, however, which is shown to be INEVITABLE, is thereby not only shown to be POSSIBLE but also the ONLY THING POSSIBLE. If,

indeed, the socialist commonwealth were an impossibility then mankind would be cut off from all further and possible economic development. In that case modern society would fall to pieces the same as did the Roman Empire nearly two thousand years ago, and finally relapse into barbarism.

AS THINGS STAND TO-DAY CAPITALIST CIVILIZATION CANNOT CONTINUE; WE MUST EITHER MOVE ONWARD TO SOCIALISM OR FALL BACK INTO BARBARISM.

In view of this situation, it is wholly unnecessary to endeavor to move the enemies of Socialism by some captivating picture with the view of obtaining their endorsement. He, to whom the striking, tangible occurrences of the modern system of production do not announce loudly enough the necessity for the socialist commonwealth, will be still deaf to the praises that may be sung of a social system that is not yet in existence, and which he can neither apprehend nor comprehend.

Moreover, the construction of a plan upon which the future social order shall be built has become, in our days, not only purposeless, but wholly irreconcilable with the modern standpoint of science. In the course of the last century, not only did a great revolution take place in the economic world, but likewise in the heads of men. The comprehension of the causes of the social development has become quite general. Already in the forties Marx and Engels showed—and from that time on every step in social science has proved it—that, in the last analysis, the history of mankind is determined, not by the ideas of man, but by the economic development which progresses irresistibly, obedient to certain underlying laws, and not according to the wishes or the whims of the people. This economic development is in steady motion; it brings about new forms of production, which require new forms of society; it starts new wants among men which compel them to reflect over their social conditions and to devise means whereby to adjust society to the new system under which production is carried on. Because, be it always remembered, this process of adjustment does not go on of itself; it needs the aid of the human brain. Without thought, without ideas, there is no progress. But these ideas, which thought generates, are only the assistants of social development; the first impulse does not proceed from them, as was formerly believed and as many still think; the first impulse comes from the economic conditions.

Accordingly, it is not the thinkers and philosophers who determine the trend of social progress; that is determined by the economic development. What the thinkers can do is to DISCOVER, to RECOGNIZE, the trend, and they can do that all the better, the clearer their understanding is of the conditions that preceded, but they can never themselves pre-determine the course of the social evolution at their own will.

But even the discovery and recognition of the trend of social progress has its limits. The domain of social life is most complicated; even the clearest intellect finds it impossible to probe it from all sides and to measure all the forces therein at work with sufficient accuracy to enable him to foretell accurately what social forms will result from the joint action of all these forces.

A new social form does not come into existence through the conception of a plan by certain specially gifted heads who thereupon convince people by degrees of its utility, and who, when they have acquired the requisite power, undertake at their ease the construction of the social edifice according to this plan.

All social forms have hitherto been the result of long and fluctuating struggles between the exploited and the exploiting classes, between the sinking and reactionary classes on the one hand, and the progressive and revolutionary ones, on the other. In the course of these struggles one set of these several classes is found merged in all manner of combinations to battle with the other set of classes that opposes them. The camp of the exploited at times contains both revolutionary and reactionary elements; the camp of the revolutionists contains at times both exploiters and exploited. Within one and the same class itself different factions are frequently formed according to the intellect, the temperament and the station of both individuals and whole sections. And finally, the power wielded by any single class has never been permanent; it rose or fell according as its understanding of the surrounding conditions, the compactness and the size of its organizations, and its importance in the mechanism of production increased or diminished.

In the course of the fluctuating struggles between these classes, the older social forms, which had become untenable, crumbled down and were pushed aside by new ones. The new social order that took the place of the old one was not always straightways the best possible. In order to have been so, the revolutionary classes at each such epoch would have had to be in possession of the sole political power and of the most perfect understanding of their social condition. Wherever, and as long as this was not the case mistakes were unavoidable; not infrequently a new social order proved itself partially, if not wholly, just as untenable as the one it had overthrown. Nevertheless, the stronger the pressure of the economic development made itself felt, the clearer also became the social institutions which it required, and proportionally greater became the power of the revolutionary classes to carry out what was necessary. In such cases, the institutions of the revolutionary classes that may have conflicted with the then economic development, soon dropped off, while on the contrary, those other institutions which were in keeping with the economic conditions, soon struck root and could no longer be upset by the surviving upholders of the older system.

It is in this way that hitherto all new social orders have arisen; so-called revolutionary times differ from others only in this, that events take place at a more rapid pace and with a more vigorous pulse.

The genesis of social institutions is, accordingly, a very different one from that of a house. Previously perfected plans are not applicable to the former. In view of this fact, to sketch plans of the oncoming social state is about as rational an occupation as to write in advance the history of the next war.

The course of events is, however, by no means independent of the individual. Every one who works in society affects it to a greater or a lesser extent. A few individuals, especially prominent through their capacity or social condition, may exercise great influence upon the whole nation; either they may promote, by many a decade the development of society, by enlightening the people, organizing the revolutionary forces and causing them to act with vigor and precision; or, they may lame and hold back the social development for many years by turning their powers in the opposite direction. The former tend, by the promotion of the social evolution, to diminish the sufferings and sacrifices that it demands; the others, on the contrary, tend to increase these sufferings and sacrifices by hampering the course of events. But neither of these can, whether



he be the most blood-thirsty tyrant or the wisest and most benevolent philosopher, determine at will the direction that the social evolution shall take, or prophesy accurately the new forms that it will adopt.

Few things are, therefore, more childish than to demand of the socialist that he draw a picture of the commonwealth which he labors for. This demand, which is made of no other than the Socialist Labor Party, however promiscuous of future well-being all other political parties may be, is so childish that it would not deserve much attention were it not for the circumstance that, childish though it be, it is the one objection against Socialism which its adversaries raise with soberest mien. The other objections which they raise are, if anything, still more childish, but, in making them, the adversaries of Socialism are not half so serious.

Never yet in the history of mankind has it happened that a revolutionary party was able to foresee, let alone determine, what the forms would be of the new social order which it strove to usher in. The cause of progress had gained, not a little, but quite a good deal, if it could as much as ascertain and recognize the tendencies that led to such a new social order, to the end that its political activity could be a conscious and not merely an instinctive one. No more can be demanded of the Socialist Labor Party. At the same time NEVER YET WAS THERE A POLITICAL PARTY THAT HAS LOOKED SO DEEPLY INTO THE SOCIAL TENDENCIES OF ITS TIMES, AND HAS SO THOROUGHLY UNDERSTOOD THEM AS THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY.

The Socialist Labor Party does not so much deserve credit for this, as to be envied for its good luck. It owes its superiority to the circumstance that it stands upon the shoulders of capitalist political economy, and that this was the first that ever undertook a scientific investigation of the social mechanism and its conditions, a thing that in its turn is to be ascribed to the circumstance that the revolutionary classes, which overthrew the feudal system of production, were themselves equipped with a much clearer understanding of their social mission, and that they suffered much less from self-deceptions than any revolutionary class that had preceded them. But the thinkers in the ranks of the Socialist Movement have carried on the investigations of the social mechanism much further, they have gone much deeper into the question than any capitalist economist has done. "CAPITAL", Karl Marx' great work has become the lodestar of modern economic science. As far above the works of Quesnay, Adam Smith and Ricardo as stands the work of Karl Marx, just so far stand the socialists of to-day above the revolutionary classes that appeared at the close of the last and the beginning of this century in point of clearness of vision and consciousness of the goal at which they aim. When the Socialists decline to exhibit a prospectus of the future State for the kind inspection of the honored public, they give no ground for the satire of capitalist economists and penny-a-liners. The Socialist Labor Party has a clearer insight into the future than had the pathfinders of the present social order; and its political, historical and economic literature points out much more clearly, than did that of the capitalist revolutionists of a hundred years ago, the outlines and leading features of the oncoming social order.

We have shown how a thinker may be able to discover the tendencies of the economic development of his own days, but that it is impossible for him to foresee the social forms in which that development will ultimately find express

ion. A glance over existing conditions will prove the correctness of this view. The tendencies of the capitalist system of production are the same in all countries where it prevails; and yet how different are their political and social forms! They are in England wholly different from those that obtain in France; in France wholly different from those that exist in Germany; and in all of these they are different again from those we have here in the United States. The historical tendencies of the Labor Movement, which has been brought on by the existing system of production are everywhere identical, and yet we see that the forms under which this movement manifests itself are different in each country. Furthermore, the tendencies of the capitalist system of production are to-day well known; nevertheless, no one would venture to foretell what forms it will take ten, twenty or thirty years hence—provided, of course, it has not been overthrown before then; and yet there are simpletons to be found who will require from the Socialists a detailed description of the social forms that will be in vogue at a time beyond that of the existing ones.

It does not, however, follow from the refusal of the Socialists to draw up a plan of future society and of the stepping stones thereto, that they consider useless or even harmful all thought about the Socialist or Co-operative Commonwealth. That were to wash out the baby with the bath. Useless and harmful is only the making of positive propositions for the preparation and organization of the Co-operative Commonwealth. Propositions for the shaping of social conditions can be made only where the field is fully under control and well understood. For this reason Socialists can make no positive propositions for the existing social order. Propositions that go beyond that cannot deal with facts but must proceed from suppositions; they are, accordingly, phantasies and dreams that at best fall flat; in case their inventor is vigorous and intellectually gifted he might to such an extent affect the public mind as to cause serious obstruction and waste of time.

We should not, however, confuse with these vagaries, which are to be fought at all points, those inquiries that are directed to ascertain the tendencies that the economic development would or might take as soon as it is transferred from the capitalist to the socialist basis. In such cases the question is not one of trivial recipes, but of scientific consideration of facts. Inquiries of this sort are by no means useless; the clearer we are enabled to see into the future, the better will we adapt our tactics in the present. The most noted socialist thinkers have undertaken such inquiries. The works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels are replete with the results of such inquiries. August Bebel has given to the world his work on "Woman under Socialism," which is of this same character. Similar inquiries, it is not unlikely, every thinking Socialist has prosecuted in the privacy of his own closet; every one who has placed before himself a great goal realizes the need of clearness upon the conditions under which he will verify his ideal. According to the clearness that each has upon the economic question, according to his condition in life, his temperament his imagination, his acquaintance with the communistic societies that have been started, so will also his private forecast be affected. But, while differences of opinion may arise from this source, they in no wise disturb the compactness and unity of the Socialist Labor Party. However different may be the view that each may take of our final goal the only thing of importance is that all keep their eyes in the same direction.

## VII.

# The "Abolition" of the Family.

One of the most widespread prejudices entertained against Socialism is that it proposes to abolish the family.

No Socialist entertains the remotest idea of "abolishing" the family, whether by law or otherwise. Only the grossest misrepresentation can fasten upon them such a purpose; moreover it takes a fool to imagine that any form of family can either be created or abolished by decree.

The modern form of the family is nowise repulsive to the socialist system of production; the institution of the socialist order does not, consequently, need the abolition of the family for its introduction.

That which dissolves any existing form of family is the economic development itself. Under the present or capitalist system of production the family is torn asunder; husband, wife and children are forced from one another in the search for bread; our irrational system of production raises SHE-TOWNS in one section of the country, as in New England, and HE-VILLAGES in other sections, as in Pennsylvania and the mining regions of the far West; it nurses prostitution and adultery; and it dismantles the very citadel of the modern conception of the family, from the highest to the lowest rungs of society.

The socialist system is not calculated to check the economic development; it will, on the contrary, give it new impulse. This development will continue as before, to withdraw from the circle of household duties and turn into special industries one household occupation after another; that this cannot fail to have in the future, as it had in the past, its effect upon the sphere of woman is self evident; woman may cease to be a worker in the individual household and may take her place as a worker in the large productive industries. But this transition will not then be to her what it is to-day: a transition from household drudgery into wage-slavery, with the wage-slavery super-added to the household drudgery; it would not, as it does to-day, hurl her from the protection of her home into the exposed and helpless condition of the proletariat. By working in common with man in the large productive industries of society, she becomes his equal, and will be able to receive her equal share with him of the social product; she will then be his free companion, emancipated not only from slavery to man, but also from slavery to capital. Free mistress of herself, the equal of man, she will put a speedy end to all manner of prostitution, legalized as well as unlegalized, and then for the first time in the world's history will she be able to establish, as an actual, not a fictitious fact, the oneness of husband and wife.

These are no Utopian vagaries, but scientific conclusions from established facts. Whoever would deny the former, must first overthrow the latter. Seeing that the "ladies" and "gentlemen" who shut their eyes to this development have never been able to shake the scientific facts upon which these conclusions are planted, there is nothing left to them but to affect to be shocked, and to en-

deavor to place their "morality" in as favorable a light as possible by means of falsehoods and misrepresentations. But these methods will not stead them. They will not be able to delay the social evolution by one minute.

This much stands fast: whatever alteration the family form, handed down to us, may undergo, it will not be the act of Socialism or of the socialist system of production, but of the economic development that has been going on under our own eyes for the last century. Socialist society cannot hold this development back; what it will do is to remove from the economic development all the painful and degrading features that are its inevitable accompaniments under the capitalist system of production. While, on the one hand, under the capitalist system of production the economic development is steadily snapping, one after another, the family bonds, and destroying connubial life, to the degradation of all concerned, under the socialist system of production, on the other, whatever existing family form may drop off it can only be replaced by a higher.

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## VIII.

### "Confiscation" of Property.

The enemies of Socialism, who, to hear them talk, one would imagine know better than the Socialists themselves what these are after, and who assume to forecast the Co-operative Commonwealth with greater accuracy than Socialists do, also declare that Socialism can never come into power except through a wholesale confiscation of property, including the furniture and the small savings of the industrious poor. Next to the charge of contemplating the "abolition" of the family, this one of "confiscation" is a favorite one with the mouth-pieces of capitalism.

Confiscation is not at all essential to socialist society. The socialist programme is silent upon the subject. It does not mention it, not because it is afraid of frightening people away, but because that is not a subject upon which anything can be said with certainty. The only thing that can be stated with certainty is that the tendency of the economic development renders imperative the social or national ownership and operation of the instruments of large production. In what way this transfer from private and individual into collective ownership will be effected; whether this inevitable transfer will take the form of confiscation or otherwise; whether it will be a peaceable or a forcible one—these are questions as impossible to answer to-day with certainty as it was impossible to answer similar questions with certainty forty years ago upon the subject of the abolition of chattel slavery; or as impossible as it was to answer similar questions with certainty a hundred and twenty-five years ago upon the subject of restraining the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain from reducing the American colonists to the condition of its East Indian ryots. Neither can past experience give much aid in this doubt. The transition may be effected, as was that from feudalism to capitalism, in as many different ways as there are

different countries. The manner of the transition depends wholly upon the special and surrounding circumstances under which it is effected, as, for instance, upon the power and the enlightenment of the classes that are concerned, all of which are matters that can with difficulty be foretold; furthermore, the "unexpected" may happen, and this is an element that has played the most prominent role in the history of mankind.

It goes without saying that Socialists wish that this unavoidable transition could, be effected with no, or as little, friction as possible, in a peaceful way and with the consent of the whole people. Unfortunately, however, history will take its own course regardless of the wishes of both Socialists and their adversaries.

Nevertheless, this much may be said with certainty: even though the course of events should force the transition from capitalist to socialist production via the road of confiscation, the economic development that has preceded us would render necessary the confiscation of only a PART of existing property. The economic development demands social ownership in the IMPLEMENTS OF LABOR only; it does not concern itself with, nor does it touch, that part of property, that is devoted to PERSONAL AND PRIVATE USES. Let us take one illustration, furnished by capitalism itself. What are savings banks? They are the means whereby the private property of non-capitalist classes is rendered accessible to the capitalists; the deposits of every single depositor are, taken separately, too insignificant to be applied to a capitalist industry; not until many deposits have been gathered together are they in a condition to fulfill the function of "capital"; in the same measure in which capitalist undertakings shall pass from private into social concerns, the opportunities will be lessened for would-be patrons of savings banks to receive interest upon their deposits; these will cease to be capital and to become purely non-interest-drawing funds. That, assuredly, is not confiscation.

The confiscation of such property is, moreover, not only economically unnecessary but politically improbable. These small deposits proceed mainly from the pockets of the exploited classes, from those classes to whose efforts mainly the introduction of Socialism will be due. Only he who considers these classes to be utterly senseless can believe they would begin by first robbing themselves of their hard earned savings in order to regain possession of their instruments of production.

But moreover, not only does socialist production not require as a condition precedent the confiscation of non-productive wealth, it does not even require the social ownership of all instruments of production.

That which renders the socialist system necessary is LARGE PRODUCTION. Production in common requires common ownership of the means of production. For the same reason that private ownership in the implements of labor is repugnant to the system of production in common that is carried on in large production, so likewise, would common ownership in the instruments of labor be repugnant where production can, and must necessarily be carried on by separate individuals. Production in such cases requires the private ownership by the worker in his tools. There are industries that are still carried on upon this small and individual system, and which tend to be absorbed by larger ones. The transformation of these into social industries, in other words, the transformation

of the instruments requisite to them into social property, would be a matter of policy, to be determined in each case by its special circumstances. With regard to these industries, it were senseless to make any sweeping declaration except that, speaking generally, the nationalization of such instruments of production would be purposeless: the aim of Socialism is to place in the hands of the producer the requisite implements of labor. To turn into social property the implements of any such small industry would amount to nothing else than to withdraw them from their present owner and forthwith to give them back to him. 22c

It follows that the Co-operative Commonwealth does not absolutely require the turning into social property of the instruments of production used in the handicraft trades that still exist and even in some branches of agriculture. (The transition from the present to the socialist system would, not only take nothing away from such handicraftsmen and farmers, but give them positive advantages. Seeing that the tendency of socialist society is to substitute production for sale with production for use,) it must be its endeavor to transform all social dues—taxes, interest that may accrue from mortgages upon property that has been nationalized, etc., in so far as these may not have been wholly abolished—from money payments into payments in kind. Such a change is equivalent to the raising of a tremendous burden from the shoulders of the small farmer. In many ways the small farming class strains for this identical end. The recent subtreasury plan of the Farmers' Alliance movement is an instance in point. But all these endeavors on their part are bound to be abortive so long as the system of production for sale continues in force. Only the socialist commonwealth can bring on that ideal of so many small farmers—payment in kind—and thereby remove one of the main causes of their ruin.)

In point of fact the confiscators and expropriators are the capitalists; they it is who confiscate the property of all the toiling classes—wage-workers, small producers, working farmers, etc., etc. Socialist society will put an end to confiscation.

It must, however, be admitted that Socialism neither proposes to, nor can, stop the course of economic evolution. On the contrary, Socialism is to-day the only means by which to promote the evolution. The same as in modern society, so under the socialist system, large production will develop ever more, and absorb ever more small branches of industry. In this respect, however, the same holds good as in the case of the family and of wedlock. With regard to the one as to the other, the direction of the evolution remains the same, with this difference, however, that Socialism removes all the shocking and painful manifestations that under the present system are the accompaniments of the social evolution; under Socialism only the good features of progress will be seen.

To-day, the transformation of the small farmer and small producer from workers in the field of small, into workers in the field of large, production means their transformation from propertyholders into proletarians. In socialist society, however, the small producer whose industry is absorbed by large production can only profit by the change; he becomes a sharer in the advantages of improved methods; his condition is decidedly better; the change he then undergoes can nowise be compared with that which he undergoes to-day; instead of being turned from a propertyholder into a proletarian, he is turned from a small into a large proprietor.

Small production is hopelessly doomed to disappear; only the socialist system can make it possible for those who are still struggling in the meshes of small production to become participants in the advantages of large production without sinking into the class of the proletariat. The inevitable downfall of the small producer, industrial and agricultural, can be an improvement to them, instead of a source of increased troubles, only under the socialist system. Under Socialism competition, that now grinds down and expropriates those who fall behind, will no longer be the mainspring of the economic development; it will be the power of attraction which the more highly developed forms of production will exercise upon the less developed ones.

A development of this sort is not only painless, but it proceeds much more rapidly than under the spur of competition. To-day, when the introduction of new and higher forms of production is impossible without ruining and expropriating the owners of industries carried on under inferior forms, and without inflicting suffering and privation upon large masses of workers, who have become thereby superfluous, every economic progress encounters a dogged resistance. We see on all sides instances of the tenacity with which producers cling to-day to antiquated forms of production, and of their desperate efforts to preserve them. Never yet was any system of production known so revolutionary as the present one; never until now did any revolutionize so completely, within the space of one hundred years, all human activities; and yet how many are not the remnants of antiquated forms of production that still preserve their existence.

Just as soon as the fear disappears of being flung into the class of the proletariat if an independent industry is abandoned; just as soon as the prejudices existing to-day against large production disappear by reason of the advantages which the social ownership of large production would bestow upon all, just as soon as every body has the opportunity of sharing these advantages, only fools will endeavor to preserve old and ineffective forms of production.

That which capitalist large production has failed to accomplish in a hundred years, socialist large production will accomplish in no time, i. e., the absorption of all industries that are still carried on with inferior methods; and this end will be reached, not through ruin, misery and expropriation, but by the natural power of attraction exercised by superior methods.

In such remote nooks and corners, where farming is carried on mainly for self consumption, such a system may continue for sometime after the introduction of socialist society; but it would not be long before the advantages to be derived from socialist large production would be felt even in such places.

With regard to agriculture, especially, the transition from small to large production will be greatly hastened and made easy by the steadily progressing disappearance of the contrast between city and country, and by the tendency of locating industries in convenient places.

## IX. Division of Products Under Socialism.

There is still a point, the most important of all, that should be touched upon. The question most frequently put to a Socialist by capitalists is: How will Socialists divide the wealth they produce; is each to have an equal share; or how?

"Division," that is a thing that sticks in the very marrow of the philistines, like a veritable leprosy. Their whole conception of Socialism begins and ends with that word. Indeed, even among the most cultured, the idea is quite prevalent that the object of Socialism is to divide the whole wealth of the nation among the people.

That this view still prevails, despite all protest and proofs on the part of the Socialists is to be ascribed, not only to the malice of the enemies of Socialism, but also, and perhaps to a greater extent, to their inability to understand the social conditions that have been brought on by the development of large production. Their horizon is still, to a great extent, bounded by the conceptions that apply only to the system of small production. Indeed, judging from the standpoint of small production, the only form of Socialism possible is division. From the start of production for sale in antiquity it has happened innumerable times, as often as a few families had heaped great wealth and had reduced artisans and farmers to dependence, that these plotted for the expulsion of the rich and the division of their property. They succeeded in this for the first time during the French Revolution, notwithstanding, or perhaps, just by reason of, its emphatic assertion of the rights of private property. Peasants, artisans and the class that was about to develop into capitalists divided among themselves the church estates. DIVISION IS THE SOCIALISM OF SMALL PRODUCTION; IT IS THE SOCIALISM OF THE "CONSERVATIVE" BANKS OF SOCIETY; IT IS NOT THE SOCIALISM OF THE PROLETARIAT.

It needs time, but the feat will yet be accomplished of ramming into the heads of the so-called luminaries of our social system that Socialists do not propose to DIVIDE; that, on the contrary, their object is to CONCENTRATE in the hands of society the instruments of production that are now scattered in the hands of many owners.

But this does not yet dispose of the question of division. If the means of production belong to society, to it must belong, as a matter of course, the function of disposing of the products that are brought forth with the aid of these instruments. In what way will society distribute these among its members? Shall it be upon the principle of equality or according to the labor performed by each? And in the latter case, is every kind of labor to receive the same reward, whether it be agreeable or not, hard or easy, skilled or unskilled?

To many, the answer to this question seems to be the central point of Socialism. Not only does it greatly pre-occupy the foes of Socialism, but even the early Socialists devoted the greatest amount of attention to it. From Fourier



who to be?

to Weitling, and from Weitling to Bellamy there runs a steady stream of the most diversified answers, many of which reveal a wonderful degree of acumen. There is no lack of positive propositions; many of them are as plain as they are practicable. Nevertheless, the question is not of the importance that is generally ascribed to it.

Time was when the distribution of products was looked upon as wholly independent from production itself; seeing, moreover, that the contradictions and ills of the capitalist system of production manifest themselves first in its peculiar method of distributing its products, it was quite natural that both the exploited classes and their friends should have located the root of the evil in the "unjust" distribution of products. Of course these people proceeded, obedient to the views that were prevalent at the beginning of this century, upon the supposition that the existing system of distribution was the result of the ideas of their days, i. e., of the popular understanding of right and wrong. In order to remove this unjust system of distribution, all that was needed was to invent a juster one, and to convince the world of its advantages. The just system of distribution could, of course, be none other than just the reverse of the existing one. Among these people, some reasoned thus: "To-day there reigns the crassest INEQUALITY; the principle upon which distribution should be based must be one of EQUALITY." Others followed another line of thought; they said: "To-day the idler rolls in wealth while the laborer starves, consequently let the principle be 'To each according to his deeds.'" Yet a third set raised objections to both principles, and they set up a third formula: "To each according to his needs." The early Socialists spent much time upon this subject. For the same reasons that they did so, to wit, their imperfect comprehension of the social mechanism, not a few ideologists right here in the United States have tangled themselves in the meshes of a profitless discussion upon this comparatively unimportant subject.

Modern Socialism, basing itself upon economic science takes the stand that the distribution of products in a community is determined, not by the prevailing conceptions of right and wrong, but by the prevailing system of production. The share of the landlord, the capitalist and the wage-worker in the total product of society is determined by the role which land, capital and labor-power play to-day in the modern system of production. Sure enough, in the Co-operative Commonwealth, the distribution of products will not be left to the mercy of blind laws, which can never be well understood by those concerned. The same as to-day, in the interior of a large industrial establishment, production and the payment of wages are matters that are carefully considered and well regulated, so likewise in a socialist commonwealth, which is nothing more than a single gigantic industrial concern, the same principle must prevail. The rules according to which the distribution of products is to be carried out will be established by the parties concerned. Nevertheless, it will not depend upon their whim what those rules shall be; these will not be adapted arbitrarily to this or that principle, however sonorous it may sound; they will be determined by the actual condition of society, above all, by the condition of production itself.

For instance, the degree of the productivity of labor at any given time exercises a great influence upon the manner in which distribution is effected. Without any excessive strain on the imagination, we can conceive a time when science will have raised industry to such a high level of productivity that every-

thing wanted by man is produced in great abundance. In such case, the formula "To each according to his needs" would be applied as a matter of course and without difficulty. On the other hand, not even the profoundest conviction of the justice of this formula would be able to put it into practice if the productivity of labor remained so low that the proceeds of the most excessive degree of labor could produce only a bare necessity. Again, the formula "To each according to his deeds" will always be found inapplicable. If it has any sense at all, it pre-supposes a distribution of the total product of the commonwealth among its members. This notion, the same as that about a general division and the military form of Socialism, spring from the modes of thought that are peculiar to the modern system of private property. To distribute the products at stated intervals would be equivalent to the gradual re-introduction of private property in the means of production.

The very essence of socialist production limits the possible distribution of products to only a portion of these. All those products which are requisite to the enlargement of production can not, as a matter of course, be the subject of distribution; and the same holds good with regard to all such products that are intended for common use, i. e., to the establishment, preservation or enlargement of public institutions.

Already in modern society the number and size of such institutions increases steadily; it is upon this domain especially that large production crowds down small production within the circle of household duties. It goes without saying that so far from being checked, this development will be greatly stimulated in a socialist commonwealth.

The quantity of products that can be absorbed by private consumption and, accordingly, be turned into private property, must inevitably be a much slighter portion of the total product in a socialist than in modern society, where almost all products are merchandise and private property. In socialist, differently from capitalist society, it is not the bulk of the products, but only the residue that needs distribution.

But even this residue socialist society will not be able to dispose of at will; there too, the requirements of production will determine the course to be pursued. Seeing that production is undergoing steady changes, so likewise will the forms and methods of distribution be subject to manifold changes in the socialist commonwealth.

It is a Utopian idea to imagine that a special system of distribution is to be manufactured, and that it will stand for all time. On this field, as little as on any other, is socialist society likely to move by leaps and bounds, or start all over anew; it is bound to go on from the point at which capitalist society ceases. The distribution of goods in a socialist commonwealth might possibly continue for some time under forms that are essentially improved developments of the existing form of wage payment. At any rate this is the point from which it is bound to start. Just as the forms of wage labor differ to-day, not only from time to time, but also in various branches of industry, and in various sections of the country, so likewise, may it happen that in a socialist commonwealth the distribution of products may be carried on under a variety of forms corresponding to the various needs of the population and the historical antecedents of the industry. The conception of the Co-operative Commonwealth as a rigid, out-

and-dried, uniform institution held by hard and fast rules is mistaken; it is, on the contrary, that system that, not only opposes least resistance to, but aids immeasurably the course of evolution in all its manifold branches.

Next to the thought of "division", that of "equal shares" troubles the foes of Socialism most. "Socialism," they declare, "proposes, that every one shall have an equal share of the total product; the industrious is to have no more than the lazy; hard and disagreeable labor is to receive no higher reward than that that is light and agreeable; the hod-carrier who has nothing to do but to reach out the material is to be on a par with the architect himself; under such circumstances, every one will work as little as possible; no one will perform the hard and disagreeable tasks; knowledge having ceased to be appreciated will cease to be cultivated; and the final result will be the relapse of society into barbarism; consequently Socialism is impracticable."

The idiocy of this reasoning is too glaring to need exposure. This much may be said: should socialist society ever decide to decree the equality of incomes, and should the effect of such a measure actually threaten to be the dire one prophesied, then, and in that case, the natural result would be, not that socialist production, but the principle of equality of incomes, would be thrown overboard.

The foes of Socialism would be justified to conclude from the equality of incomes that Socialism is impracticable if they could prove:

(1) That this equality would be, under all circumstances, irreconcilable with the progress of production. This they never have been and never will be able to prove, seeing that the activity of the individual in production does not depend solely upon his remuneration, but upon a great variety of circumstances—his sense of duty, his ambition, his dignity, his pride, etc., etc.—none of which can be the subject of positive prophecy, but only of conjecture, a conjecture, however, which under improved social conditions, so far from making in favor, can only make against the opinion expressed by the adversaries of Socialism; and

(2) That the equality of incomes is so essential to a socialist society that the latter cannot be conceived without the former. To prove this the foes of Socialism will find equally impossible. A glance over the various forms of communist production which have still survived the shock of time, from the primitive communism practised by our aboriginal Indians, down to the latest communistic societies that have sprung up in various parts of the land, will reveal how manifold are the forms of distribution that are applicable to a community of property in the instruments of production. All forms of modern wage payment—fixed salaries, time wages, piece wages, bonuses—all of them are reconcilable with the spirit of a socialist commonwealth; and there is not one of them that may not play quite a role in socialist society, according as the wants and the customs of its members, together with the requirements of production, may demand.

It does not, however, follow from this that the principle of the equality of incomes—a principle that is not necessarily identical with their uniformity—will cut no figure whatever in socialist society; whenever that principle shall assert itself, it will not spring up as the aim of a movement for leveling things generally, forcibly and straightway, but as the result of a natural development and social tendency.

In the capitalist system of production there is seen simultaneously both a

tendency to increase, and one to diminish the differences between incomes; one tendency would aggravate, the other would reduce inequalities.

By dissolving the middle classes of society and swelling evermore the size of individual fortunes the capitalist system broadens and deepens perceptibly the chasm that exists between the masses of the population and those who are at its head; the latter tower ever higher above the former and become less and less approachable to them. Hand in hand with this tendency is noticed another, which, operating within the circle of the masses themselves, steadily equalizes their respective incomes; it flings the small producers, farmers and industrialists, into the class of the proletariat, or at least, pushes their incomes down to the proletarian level, and wipes out existing differences between the proletarians themselves. The machine tends steadily to the removal of all the differences which originally took root among the proletariat; to-day, the differences in wages among the various layers of labor fluctuate incessantly and come nearer and nearer to a point of uniformity; at the same time the incomes of the educated proletariat are irresistibly tending downwards. The equalization of incomes among the masses—that thing at which the adversaries of Socialism affect to be shocked, and which they brand with moral indignation as the malignant purpose of Socialism—is going on under their own eyes, and is the result of their own precious system.

As a matter of course, all those tendencies that sharpen inequalities, and that proceed from the private ownership in the means of production, would come to an end, while the tendency to wipe out inequalities of incomes would find stronger expression under the Socialist system. But here again, the observations made upon the dissolution of existing family forms and upon the downfall of small production hold good with equal force: the tendency of the economic development remains in socialist, to a certain extent the same as in capitalist society, but it finds expression in a very different way. To-day, the equalization of incomes among the masses of the population proceeds by the depression of the higher incomes to the level of the lower ones; in a socialist commonwealth it must inevitably proceed by the raising of the lower to the standard of the higher.

The adversaries of Socialism seek to frighten the small producers with the claim that an equalization of incomes can mean for them nothing else than the lowering of their conditions, because, say they, the incomes of the wealthy classes are not large enough, if divided among the poor, to preserve the present average income of the middle classes; that, consequently, if there is to be equality of incomes the middle classes will have to give up part of their incomes, and would by so much be the losers under Socialism.

Whatever truth there may be in this claim, lies in that; the most miserable, above all, the slums, are to-day so numerous and their indigence is so great that the distribution among them of the immense incomes of the rich might not suffice to bring their condition quite up to the standard of the middle class. Whether this argument could be advanced as a special reason for the preservation of our glorious social system may well be doubted; some may be of the opinion that any improvement that might be accomplished through such a division would be a positive gain.

There is, however, no question about "division"; the only question is upon the change of the method of production. The transformation of the capitalist into the socialist system of production, must inevitably result in a rapid increase

of the quantity of wealth produced yearly. It must never be lost sight of that the capitalist system of production for sale hinders to-day the economic development, hinders the full expansion of the productive forces that lie latent in society. Not only is it not able to absorb the small industries in the measure in which the technical development makes possible and requires; it has become even impossible to it to employ all the labor forces that are available. The capitalist system of production squanders these forces in that it steadily drives an increasing quantity thereof into the ranks of the unemployed, the slums, parasites and the unproductive middle men.

Such a state of things is simply impossible in a socialist commonwealth; it could not fail to find productive labor for all its available labor forces; it would increase perceptibly, nay, it would double the number of productive workers; in the measure in which it did this it would multiply the total wealth produced yearly. This increase in production would be enough in itself to raise the incomes of all workers, and not only those of the poorest ones.

Furthermore, socialist production would greatly promote the absorption of small and its substitution by large production, and thereby also increase greatly the productivity of labor; it would then be possible not only to raise the incomes of the workers but also to lower the hours of work.

In view of this the claim is puerile that Socialism means the equality of pauperism. That is not the equality towards which Socialism tends; it is the equality into which the modern system of production drives mankind. Socialist production must inevitably improve the conditions of ALL WORKING CLASSES—those of the small producer and small working farmer included. According to the economic conditions under which the change from capitalism to Socialism may be effected, will the improved general well-being of the community be greater or less; but whatever those conditions may be, the progress will be marked; and from that point on every further economic development will, instead of LOWERING, as it does to-day, RAISE the general well-being of the commonwealth.

This turn in the direction of the course generally taken by incomes is, in the eyes of Socialists, of much more importance to the well-being of society than the absolute increase of incomes. The thoughtful man lives more in the future than in the present; what the future threatens or promises to him preoccupies him more than the enjoyment of the present. Not what IS but what WILL BE, not EXISTING CONDITIONS, but tendencies determine the happiness or the unhappiness both of individuals and of whole states.

Thus we become acquainted with another element of superiority in socialist over capitalist society. It affords, not only an IMPROVED CONDITION OF WELL-BEING but also the CERTAINTY OF LIVELIHOOD—a certainty not afforded to-day by the largest fortune. If the improvement of well-being can be appreciated, mainly, if not only, by the classes that hitherto have been exploited, the certainty of a livelihood is a boon to the exploiters themselves, to those whose well-being needs no improvement even where such might be possible. Uncertainty hovers over both the rich and the poor, and possibly it is more trying than want itself; it causes even those to taste the bitterness of want who are not yet subject to it; it is a specter that haunts the most luxurious homes.

All observers who have become acquainted with communistic societies, whether these were situated in India, France or America, have all been strack with the

appearance of calmness, confidence and equanimity peculiar to their members. Independent of the oscillations of the market, and in possession of their own instruments of production, they are self sufficient; they regulate their labor according to their needs and they know in advance just what they have to expect. And yet the security against want enjoyed by these primitive or more recent colonies far from being perfect; their control over nature is slight, the communities themselves are small. Mishaps brought on by cattle diseases, failures of crops, freshets, etc., are not infrequent, and when they occur smite the whole body. Upon how much firmer a basis does not the Co-operative Commonwealth stand with boundaries co-extensive with those of the nation and with all the conquests of science at its command!

## X.

### Socialism and Freedom.

That a socialist commonwealth would afford its members comfort and security has been admitted even by the foes of Socialism; "but," say they, "these advantages are bought at too dear a price; they are paid for with a total loss of freedom; the bird in a cage may also have sufficient daily food; it also is secure against hunger, the inclemencies of the weather and enemies; but it has lost its freedom and for that reason it is a pitiful being, that peeps through gilded bars into a world of dangers and want, and fain would struggle for its own existence". They maintain that Socialism destroys economic freedom and the freedom of labor; that it introduces a despotism in comparison to which the most unrestricted political absolutism would be freedom, because this would control only one side of man, whereas Socialism would control all the phases of human activity.

So great is the fear of this slavery that even some Socialists are seized with it, and they become so-called "philosophical" anarchists. These gentlemen have as great a horror for the Communism that there is in Socialism as they have for the system of production for sale; and the odd measure they take to escape both is to demand both; they want to have Communism and production for sale together. Theoretically, this is absurd; in practice, the thing amounts to nothing else than the exploded co-operative establishments which addle-pated capitalist philanthropists have again and again advocated, again and again started, and again and again failed in.

The charge is correct that socialist production is irreconcilable with the full freedom of labor, that is to say, with the freedom of the laborer to work when, where and how he wills. But so is this freedom of the worker irreconcilable with all planful, co-operative work, whatever the form which it may assume, whether the form be capitalistic or socialistic. Freedom of labor is possible only in small production, and even there only up to a certain point. Even where the small producer is freed from all social restrictions, he still remains

dependent upon natural and social influences: the farmer depends upon the weather, the small industrialist depends upon the markets. "Freedom of Labor" is the ideal, the most revolutionary ideal, which the class of the small producer, unable to look beyond the horizon of small production, is capable of. This ideal had its good reasons a hundred years ago; to-day it has no economic bottom to stand on, and can only haunt the heads of such people as are unable to perceive the industrial revolution that has since then taken place. The downfall of the "Freedom of Labor" is necessarily connected with the downfall of small production. It is not the Socialists, but the resistless progress of large production, who destroy that. Oddly enough, the very ones on whose lips is found most frequently the declaration that "labor must be free" are the capitalists, i. e., those who have contributed most to the overthrow of that freedom.

"Freedom of labor" has come to an end, not only in the mills, but in all other places where the individual worker is only a link in a long chain of workers; it does not exist either for the manual worker or for the "brain worker," employed in any industry; the hospital doctor, the school teacher, the railroad employe, the newspaper writer, and so on interminably—none of these enjoys "Freedom of Labor"; they are all bound to certain rules; they must all be at their posts at a certain hour.

For all this, the workingman does enjoy freedom in one respect under the capitalist system. If the work does not suit him in one factory, he is free to seek work in another; he can change his employer; in a socialist commonwealth, where all the means of production are in a single hand, there is but one employer; to change him were impossible.

In this respect the wage-worker has to-day, what, superficially considered, may seem an advantage over the workingman in a socialist commonwealth; but this advantage cannot be given the name of "Freedom of Labor". However frequently a workingman may change his place of work to-day, he will find in each place, substantially the same arrangements which hold the individual workers to certain rules and regulations, all of which are a technical necessity.

The freedom, with the loss of which the workingman is threatened in a socialist commonwealth, is, accordingly, not the "Freedom of Labor" but the freedom to change his master. Under the present system, this freedom, where it still exists, is of no slight importance; it is a protection to the workingman. But even this freedom is gradually destroyed by the progress of capitalism; the increasing number of the unemployed reduces ever more and more the number of jobs that are free, and throws upon the labor market more applicants than there are places. The idle workingman is, as a rule, happy if he can at all secure work. And furthermore, the increased concentration of the means of production in a few hands has the steady tendency of placing over the workingman the identical employer or set of employers, whichever way he may turn. Inquiry therefore shows that what is decried as the wicked and tyrannical tendencies of Socialism are but the natural tendencies of the economic development which manifest themselves even in modern society.

It is not through Socialism, but through the economic development that freedom in the choice and opportunity of work is removed as much as freedom during work itself. Socialism does not mean to, neither could it, if it would check this development; but in this as in so many other respects Socialism can

obviate the evils that accompany the development. It cannot remove the dependence of the workingmen upon the mechanism of production in which they are one of the wheels; but it substitutes for the super-added dependence of the workingmen upon a capitalist, with interests hostile to themselves, their dependence upon a society of which they are themselves members, a society of equal comrades, all of whom have the same interests.

It can be easily understood how and why dapper lawyers, authors and the like may consider such a dependence unbearable; but such a dependence is not unbearable to the modern proletarian, as a glance upon the trades union movement will show. The trade organizations of labor furnish a picture of the so-called "tyranny" of the socialist system of which the foes of Socialism have so much to say. In the organizations of labor the rules under which each member is to work are laid down accurately and enforced strictly; yet no sane member of any such organization has ever complained that these rules were an unbearable restriction upon his personal liberty. Those who have found it incumbent upon them to defend the "Freedom of Labor" against this shocking "terrorism," and who have done so, often with force of arms and with bloodshed, were, be it noted, never the workingmen, but their EXPLOITERS. Poor "Freedom," what has it come to that it has to-day no defenders other than our modern slaveholders!

The lack of freedom in work does, however, not only lose its oppressive character, it also becomes the foundation of the highest freedom yet possible to mankind. This seems a contradiction, but the contradiction is only in appearance.

Down to the day when large production stepped up, the labor employed in the production of the necessities of life took up the full time of those engaged in it; it required the fullest exercise of both body and mind; this was true not only with the fisherman and the hunter, it was also true with regard to the farmer, the mechanic and the merchant. The existence of the human being engaged in production was consumed wholly by his occupation. It was labor that steeled his sinews and nerves, that quickened his brain and made it anxious to acquire knowledge. But the further the division and subdivision of labor was carried, the more one-sided did it make the producers. Mind and body ceased to exercise themselves in a variety of directions and to develop all their powers. Wholly taken up by the fractional labor of the moment, the producers lost their capacity to comprehend their whole surroundings. A harmonious, well-rounded development of physical and mental powers, a deep concern in the questions relating to nature and society, a philosophical bent of mind, i. e., the search after the highest truths for their own sakes—none of these could be found under such circumstances, except among those classes who remained free from the necessity of toil. Until the commencement of the era of machinery this was possible only by throwing upon others the burden of labor, by exploiting them. The most ideologic, the most philosophic race that history has yet recorded, the only society of thinkers and artists, devoted to science and art for their own sakes was the Athenian aristocracy, the slaveholding landlords of Athens.

Among them all labor, whether slave or free, was degrading; and justly so. It was no presumption on the part of Socrates when he said, "Traders and mechanics lack culture; they have no leisure, and without leisure no good education is possible. They only learn what their occupation requires of them



knowledge itself has no attraction for them. They take up arithmetic only for the sake of trade, not for the purpose of acquiring the knowledge of numbers. It is not given to them to see higher. The merchant and mechanic say: 'The pleasure derived from honor and from knowledge is of no value when compared with money making.' However able smiths, carpenters and shoemakers may be in their own trade, most of them are animated only with the souls of slaves; they know not the beautiful, the good or the just."

The economic development has progressed greatly since those days; the division and sub-division of labor has reached a point undreamt of then; and the increment taken by the system of production for sale has driven both the former exploiters and cultured people into the class of producers. Not unlike the mechanics and the farmers, the rich also, are wholly taken up with their business. They do not now assemble in gymnasiums and academies, but in stock exchanges and markets; the speculations in which they are absorbed do not concern the questions of truth and justice, but the prices of wool, whiskey trust stock, corporation bonds and dividends on coupons. These are the speculative thoughts that consume their mental activities. After these "labors" they have neither strength nor taste for any but the most grovelling amusements.

On the other hand, as far as the cultured classes are concerned, their education has become a merchandise. They too, have neither time nor stimulus to indulge in disinterested researches after truth, or to strive after an ideal. Each one buries himself in his specialty, and considers every minute lost that is spent in learning something that cannot be reduced to dollars and cents. Hence the movement, that is becoming quite general, and in which the *New York Sun* has taken conspicuous lead, to abolish public colleges, or to remove the study of Greek and Latin from existing ones. Whatever the pedagogic grounds may be upon which this movement seeks to place itself, the real reason for it is the vulgar and vulgarizing desire to have the youth taught only such things as are "useful," i. e., such things as can be converted into money.

Even among scientific men and artists, the instinct after a harmonious development in all directions is perceptibly losing ground. On all sides specialists are springing up. Science and art are degraded to the level of a trade. What Socrates once said of the mechanics, now holds good of these. Philosophy is on the decline—that is to say, within the classes that are here considered.

In the meantime a new sort of labor has sprung up—MACHINE LABOR; and a new class—the PROLETARIAT.

The machine robs labor of all intellectual activity. The workingman at a machine needs no longer to think; all he has to do is silently to obey the machine. The machine dictates to him what he has to do; he has become an appendage to it. What is said of the machine holds good also, although to a slighter extent, of handicraft: the division and subdivision of labor in the production of a single article, that was once brought forth by a single man, among innumerable workingmen, establishes the same conditions and paves the way for the introduction of machinery.

The first result of the monotony and absence of intellectual activity in the work of the proletarian is to dull his mind.

The second result is that he is driven to revolt against excessive hours of work. To him labor is not identical with life; life commences only when his

labor is at an end. To those workmen, to whom labor and life were identical, freedom of labor meant freedom of life. The workingman, however, who can be said to live, i. e., enjoy life, only when he does not work, can enjoy freedom of life only by being free from labor. As a matter of course, the efforts of this class of workers can not be directed towards freeing themselves from all work. Labor is the condition precedent for life. But their efforts will necessarily be directed towards reducing their hours of work far enough to leave them time to live.

This is one of the principal sources of the struggle on the part of the modern proletariat to shorten the hours of work; a struggle which would have had no meaning to the mechanics and the farmers of former social systems. The struggle of the proletariat for shorter hours is not aimed at economic advantages, small or large, such as arise in wages or the reduction of the number of the unemployed; the struggle for shorter hours is a STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

A third result is that machine labor is deprived of mental activity. The intellectual powers of the proletariat are not exhausted by their labor as are the intellectual powers of those workers who are not lashed to the machine; with the proletarian the intellectual powers lie fallow or are suspended during work. For this reason the craving of the proletarian to exercise his mind outside of his hours of work is strong. One of the most remarkable phenomena in modern society is the thirst for knowledge displayed by the proletariat. While all other classes kill their leisure time with the most unintellectual pastimes, the proletarian displays a passion for intellectual culture. Only he who has had opportunity to move among the proletariat can have any adequate conception of the ambition of its members to learn and enlighten themselves. But even he who stands far away may have some inkling thereof if he compares the papers, magazines, books and pamphlets that circulate among the workmen with those that are current in higher circles.

But above all, this thirst for knowledge is entirely unselfish with the workman. The worker at a machine will not be able to raise his income through the knowledge he may acquire. In seeking truth he does so for its own sake, not for the sake of material profit. Accordingly, he does not limit himself to any one domain of knowledge; he tries to embrace the whole; he seeks to understand the whole of society and the whole world. The hardest problems attract him most; carried on by this instinct he often loses himself in the clouds.

It is not the possession of knowledge, but the desire to acquire it that constitutes the philosopher. It is among the despised and ignorant class of the modern proletariat that the philosophical spirit of the most brilliant members of the Athenian aristocracy is revived. But the free development of this spirit is not possible in modern society. The proletariat is without means to instruct itself; it is deprived of opportunities for systematic study; it is exposed to all the dangers and inconveniences of planless self-instruction; above all it lacks sufficient leisure. Science and art remain to the proletariat a promised land, which it looks upon from a distance, which it struggles to possess, but which it cannot yet enter.

Only the triumph of Socialism can render accessible to the proletariat all the sources of culture; only the triumph of Socialism can make possible the reduction of the necessary hours of work to such a point that the workingman can enjoy

leisure enough to acquire all the knowledge that he desires. The capitalist system of production awakens the desire for knowledge in the breast of the proletariat; only the socialist system of production can satisfy it.

It is not the "Freedom of Labor" but the freedom from labor, such as machinery will make possible in a socialist commonwealth, that will bestow upon mankind freedom of life, freedom to engage in science and art, freedom to delight in the noblest pursuits.

That happy, harmonious culture, which has only once appeared in the history of mankind, and was then the privilege of a small body of select aristocrats, will become the common property of all civilized nations. What slaves were to the ancient Athenians, machinery will be to civilized man in a socialist society. Man will then feel and respond to all the elevating influences that flow from freedom from excessive toil for their own sustenance, without being at the same time poisoned by the evil effects which chattel slavery exercised upon the Athenian aristocrats, and finally unnerved them. And the same as the modern aids to science and art are far superior to those of thousands of years ago; and the same as the modern domain of civilization exceeds prodigiously the small territory of ancient Greece, so will socialist society, the Co-operative Commonwealth, i. e., the most brilliant community, that history has yet brought forth, excel all others in moral greatness and material well-being.

Happy he whose lot it is to contribute his efforts in the struggle for this beautiful ideal!

# WHY WORKMEN ARE UNEMPLOYED?

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## An Answer To A Burning Question.

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By ALEXANDER JONAS, New York.

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### HOW DOES IT COME?

A few years ago we had very hard times throughout the whole country; we call it a crisis, a business crisis; many, very many hundred thousands of workmen and working women in all branches of industry were out of employment and wandered from house to house, from city to city, and from one state to the other.

They would readily have accepted any kind of work, but there was none to be had; they could not find any. Factories were closed, or running only half time; business houses had nothing to do; there were but few buyers; on the farms there was some harvest work to do, but being without money, the unemployed could not in many cases reach the work offered at a distance. Besides, such employment was only temporary, and after a few weeks the former misery returned.

Naturally there were millions of workmen still in employment. But how were they paid? With the lowest wages possible; not enough to live on; too much to starve upon. The few dollars saved up were speedily spent. Many who had joined a building association with a view to getting a home of their own, could not keep up their payment. The home, built with their hard earnings (and loans at high rates of interest), for the sake of which they had silently accepted so many reductions in wages (for they could not move as easily as before they became property owners), the little homes had to be sacrificed. As the times were hard and no one wanted to invest in property unless it could be bought for a song, they were compelled to accept less for their homes than it cost to build it. And thus they lost all.

### Misery Intensified.

Some of the few valuables which grace a workman's home, found their way to the pawn shop, and the pall of darkest poverty fell upon the family. Exhausted from useless search for work, the father fails to return home. The few last cents are spent for drink in the vain hope of drowning sorrow in liquor, and another drunkard's name is added to the roll of the miserable. The family disperses. The father becomes a regular tramp; he wanders aimlessly into the world; becomes unfit for work, even if it were now obtainable, the wife and children suffer from day to day for the necessaries of life. The boys became street gamins, and the girls,—the girls did not choose to starve, and became what they could not avoid.

Laws were now passed against "tramps," hundreds of thousands of whom filled the streets of our cities. They were treated like brutes, and hunted down like wild beasts. Legislatures vied with each other in their endeavors to excel in enacting the most strenuous and cruel laws. One monster in human form proposed to lock up the tramps in flooded prison chambers, and compel them to work the pumps or drown. In this way it was hoped to accustom them to work again.

### **The Innocent Must Suffer.**

Oh, it was a reign of terror! Think of the misery: tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of industrious honest human beings all eager to work—to work for the lowest wages, and unable to find work. They became beggars; became so-called criminals—without any fault of theirs. Were they to blame for the scarcity of employment? Was it their fault that even in "good times" their wages were so small, that if they wanted to live like human beings, little could be saved. And that little saved up fund is speedily used up, when the father of a family is without work for weeks and months at a time.

A beautiful world; benign human institutions those, under which such shocking conditions are possible.

### **A Famine, Amidst Abundance.**

But the most astonishing circumstance was that, as the great business depression began, there was such a superabundance of all the good things of the earth on hand, that it became a puzzle what should be done with them.

If there had been no flour with which to bake bread, no clothing or shoes, no furniture or utensils on hand; if the butcher had had no cattle or sheep to kill; if there had been no chickens, doves and turkeys on the farms; no cigars or beer, linen or cloth, no carpets or articles of industry; if there had not existed enough rooms and dwellings to afford shelter for all the weary heads of mankind—then the great calamity could easily have been explained. Then one could have said: yes, it is very natural that the people waste away and hunger, for they have no homes, nor shoes, and their clothes are patches of rags because there has been no work done; the people are thriftless and lazy, and there is no wonder about their poverty.

But exactly the reverse had been the case. Long before the crash broke in, labor had been powerfully active for 10 to 14 hours per day; even overtime had been worked, and when there was a sudden cessation, all warehouses and storage rooms were stuffed full of goods from floors to rafters; in the elevators of the country there was an abundance of grain, and the farmers were puzzled to know what to do with all their fruit crop, their fowls, milk and eggs.

### **The Enigma.**

Many sought to find a solution to the great riddle, and tried to ascertain the reason why hundreds of thousands of people should suffer amidst plenty and abundance. And some really found a solution and showed how such occurrences could be permanently prevented. But we shall relate later what they discovered and what they proposed; first let us show how the story further develops itself.

Most of the workmen were perfectly dumb-founded and had not the faintest idea of how it all came about. They had organized trades unions, that is, societies of craftsmen in which the members mutually assisted each morally and financially. When the boss tried to reduce their wages, all stood together and resisted. They endeavored to reduce their working hours and keep up wages. They often succeeded; indeed the labor

unions were splendid institutions as long as times were good. But now, when the shops and factories shut down, and general idleness resulted, they became perfectly helpless. They tried in vain to keep up wages. There were so many hundreds of thousands of unemployed, that no demand could be enforced. Everybody wanted to secure a living, and many were compelled to accept the very lowest wages. Those unions which had strong treasuries, materially assisted their members as long as the funds lasted; but such assistance had to finally cease, for where so many thousands are in need, the largest defence fund is soon swallowed up.

### **Better Times.**

These conditions lasted for several years, and then a gradual improvement was noticeable. In the meantime large numbers of people had become completely impoverished; not only workmen, but also small traders and business men; many families had been separated and were completely broken up. The stored up goods were partially ruined: another portion had depreciated in value, but was after all mostly consumed.

Gradually orders began to flow in to manufacturers, and employment was given to labor. Money again began to circulate among the people, and they again became consumers. New buildings were again constructed. Many thousand small manufacturers, business men and farmers had been hopelessly ruined and had to be content to find a place among the wage earners. But instead of the many thousand small business enterprises, we now see large manufacturing corporations, big jobbers and large buyers, and bonanza farmers. Business is done on a larger scale, and with increased capital. Naturally large numbers of people became more dependent, as the number of big bosses increased. But times improved; work again became abundant, machinery spurred and whirred, the engines again drew larger freight trains and a golden era of prosperity seemed again to have dawned. The workmen reorganized their trades unions, and kept on voting the same old party tickets, just as though nothing had happened.

The hundreds of thousands who had been bankrupted were forgotten; the grave warnings of the wise, whose insight led them to realize that prosperity could not be permanent, unless better precautions should be made to prevent future crashes—all these warnings were unheeded.

### **The Crash Repeated.**

Calamity strides like a Colossus. After a few years industry is again interrupted. First wages are reduced and strikes ensue. Orders being slack, the bosses are not inconvenienced, and persist in wage reductions; at the same time improved machinery is introduced and workmen are displaced; all at once, without any apparent cause, the crash overtakes us in a more acute form than before; misery is again rampant and triumphant, and shocking poverty engulfs the land.

And thus we witness for the third time during the short space of 20 years the frightful apparition of famine, of family separation, the wrecking of millions—and over all the land the path of the gaunt spectre is strewn with the debris of a million fortunes.

### **Why and Wherefore?**

Why this endless repetition of universal misery? Shall this continue forever, and is there no remedy? These are the questions which every thoughtful man must seriously entertain and honestly endeavor to solve. Some contend that our financial conditions are at fault. Our government has coined too much silver which is actually worth less than its fictitious face value. For example: a silver dollar contains 70 cents worth, or less, of silver, and the people of Europe, especially, who do business with us and buy

our goods, have lost confidence in us. They will not accept our silver, but demand payment in gold, and hence our gold leaves the country, and flows abroad. Because of this—many imagine—our own business men also lose confidence, lock up their factories, and discharge their workmen. But this is all nonsense.

It is certainly true that a majority of our Congressmen, being but ordinary politicians, understand very little about how the affairs of the nation ought to be conducted. As many of them are wealthy men, or are intimately connected with the wealthy classes; some even being in the service of wealthy corporations, it is but natural that they should enact laws favorable to the rich, but detrimental to the workmen, and all poor people who live from hand to mouth.

### **The Silver Question.**

And so they came to enact that foolish Sherman bill, whereby the government is compelled to buy great quantities of silver from western mine owners, stamp it at the national mints, and thus provide in fiat, what the silver dollar lacks in value of the commercial rate of bullion. The politicians did this solely for the purpose of increasing the price of silver, thereby enriching the silver mine owners.

And yet there are a lot of people, especially farmers, and some wage earners, who imagine that it is good for our country if it is full of cheap money. But exactly the opposite is the case. Let us assume that, in times when money is good and worth its face value, the workman receives \$10 per week. For this he can buy goods to the actual value of \$10. But when a depreciated currency, or a cheap silver dollar is put into circulation and \$10 are worth only the value of \$7, his wages are actually reduced \$3 per week. It is possible that at the start the difference may not be suspected. But as coinage is increased, the business world loses confidence in it. In order to equalize the purchasing power of his wages he ought to get \$13 per week instead of \$10. But every workman will readily see that in hard times and during periods of business depressions it is impossible to raise wages. Therefore a wage earner acts contrary to his interest when he goes in for free silver coinage.

On the contrary it is his interest and duty to do all in his power as a citizen and a voter, to secure the circulation of honest money only, so that every dollar coined by the government shall be recognized and accepted over the wide world as a reliable dollar.

### **The Cause Not Yet Discovered.**

But the silver coinage question cannot lie at the bottom of the great poverty and crisis, for as long as the employer can obtain orders, he will continue to manufacture goods and employ labor, exacting higher prices on sales, proportioned to the depreciated value of money taken in payment. And that long also the jobbers, workmen and railroads will be kept busy. And the farmer, too, can dispose of his products, as long as millions of wage earners are employed and have money to spend. The Sherman act will be repealed, and our gold is being returned from Europe in installments of several millions weekly and yet no improvement in the economic condition of the people is noticeable.

But there are people who say: No, the silver question is not the cause of poverty; but it is the question of free trade and protection.

Up to the present time, the largest part of the goods bought from Europe have been subject to a toll, or tariff. We have a so-called protective tariff. Now free trade is to be resorted to, that is, that all goods which we buy from Europe, shall come in free, without paying toll, or tariff. The uncertainty which prevails as to the

policy to be adopted by the present dominant political party, it is alleged depresses business.

But this is not entirely correct. For, in the first place, nothing effecting tariff changes has yet been done, and everybody knows that it will be a long time before any changes are likely to be made. Besides, business was exceptionally good immediately after the November elections of 1892 which showed the verdict of the American people to be in the direction of tariff reform or alleged free trade.

The best proof that neither free trade nor tariff is the real cause of the present crisis, is the fact that the same wide-spread poverty and sudden crash startled the country in 1873 and 1884 when there was no messing with the silver question, and free trade and tariff were at least a less prominent political issue. A still further proof is the fact that similar sudden crashes visit Europe every few years, and, as with us, continue to repeat themselves. And that, too, in countries having worthless as well as stable currency; in free trade as well as high tariff countries; in countries ruled by kings and queens, as well as in republics such as Switzerland, France and the United States.

Many people mistake the occasion of a crash for the real cause thereof. Failures at the Stock Exchange, financial muddles and such like factors may lead to, but are not the causes of, business depression.

As with an individual, who through physical exhaustion and a dissolute life has become enervated. His whole constitution has become enfeebled, and his blood perhaps corrupted. But he may continue to prolong existence for quite a while. Accidentally he catches cold; and suddenly the symptoms of a fatal disease become manifest, and he is thrown off his feet. One might claim that the cold was the cause of his illness, but in reality the cold was only an occasion, and incident, which precipitated a disease, all the conditions of which had previously existed.

Precisely so it is with our extended poverty and sudden panic; the silver question, failures at the Exchange, the free trade bugaboo, all of which may have added their straws to the overburdened camel's load, but none of which singly caused it to break down on the highway. The cause of the breakdown was the weight of the previous load. So with our crisis; the real cause lies deeper.

### **The Real Cause.**

As is generally known, modern production differs from all previous primitive efforts. Before the introduction of machinery, when there were no railroads, no steam power or electricity, everything was produced by the slowest, crudest and most laborious processes of hand labor. The boots needed were ordered of the shoemaker; ready made goods in a modern sense did not then exist. To the master of the cabinetmakers' guild was given an order for chairs, tables, etc., and these were made to order, or selected from the usual small stock which a few journeymen and apprentices had made under the overseeing eye of the master. The farmer carried his few sacks of grain to the mill, and it was generally well known what was needed in the small village settlements. Goods were made for existing demand, and little was made which was not required for immediate consumption. People lived frugally, for their instruments of production were few and of the crudest construction, and the output was small. In the country similar conditions prevailed. The farmer sold or traded his small stock of grain, fruit, milk and eggs, for other necessities, apparel or furniture, and surplus



margins on both sides remained small, so that vast storage rooms were unnecessary, and were unknown.

The journeyman in time became a master; the merchant's assistant eventually opened a store of his own; the farmer's hired man, after many years of saving bought a few furlongs of land which he proudly called his own. Life was a struggle with indigence, and the few requirements were limited to necessities. But real hard times, as now understood, during which thousands are without food, were limited to times of war, or when rulers and nobles ate up the substance of the people, or when crops successively failed.

But that in the midst of peace, without oppression of any kind, and in free countries, overwhelmed by superabundant crops, and with unsurpassed stores of all the good things on earth, humanity should be suddenly plunged in deepest misery—all this is a distinctively modern occurrence, and has no historic parallel prior to the age of invention, the development of the factory system, and the introduction and extensive application of labor saving machinery.

### The New Era.

Certainly much has been changed since then. Commerce and trade, manufacture and agriculture—all, all have been gigantically augmented, and magnificently enlarged and developed. The remnants of primitive, crude production are not worth mention. Modern production is *en gros*. Not with a few journeymen and apprentices does the guild master toil in an inferiorly equipped workshop; but hundreds, thousands, ten thousands of workers are all employed by one boss or one company or corporation; they finish, with the aid of improved machinery, steam powder and electrical appliances immeasurable stores of merchandise so that one would be forced to the conclusion that the people suffered from a superabundance, rather than from a scarcity of food, goods, or wares.

But serious disadvantages now become apparent. Formerly the workman produced almost exclusively custom work as ordered by people who needed said articles personally, and the merchant was fairly well conversant with the needs and the requirements of his custom trade. Surplus stock rarely existed; rather a scarcity of goods was the rule. To-day, matters are quite reversed. The New York and Philadelphia manufacturer sells his goods in the markets of the world; i. e., ships them as readily and impartially to Berlin, in Germany, or St. Petersburg, in Russia, as to San Francisco, in California.

He is compelled to seek customers everywhere, for his machinery and factory deteriorate from inactivity. Though machinery is idle, and factories are closed down, interest, insurance, tax, clerical and guard service etc., are not decreased, and expenses outrun income. He desires to retain his skilled and preferred workmen, in order to maintain the standard excellence of product. He is therefore compelled to continue production as long as it is at all possible. But all of his competitors are in the same predicament; all are bent on distancing, surpassing, outbidding, underselling and overtoppling each other. The big fish eat up the little ones.

This commercial trade rivalry and industrial strife is not confined to domestic manufacturers, but the struggle is international, and nations for apart vie with each and all others. The manufacturers of England prefer that their goods find exclusive sale in South America, in various European countries, in Australia, and even among the wild tribes of darkest Africa. In close competition and hot pursuit we find the manufacturers of the United States, Germany, France, etc.; and England finds herself close pressed to maintain her industrial pre-eminence. In order to gain trade and increase customers, manufacturers resort to every possible resource. New machinery is invented and

applied in order to reduce cost of production; wages of workmen are reduced, in order to manufacture cheaper. Goods are adulterated, and quality is sacrificed.

Manufacturers no longer sell, like the old time craftsman, direct to the consumer, but to large jobbers and distributors, who transport wares to all parts of the country, and supply smaller dealers, traders and shopkeepers. In order to retain or hold the trade of these large buyers, every conceivable concession is made by rival manufacturers. They sell goods on long credit; i. e. let them have manufactured articles on tick, so that they need not make settlement for 3, 6 or 9 months. After one manufacturer has given a business firm quarterly credit, there comes another who offers 6 months' credit, simply to unload goods. Jobbers know how to play their game; they require small means, little capital, and order and sell goods largely on credit, that is, on debts. Business is done, not with capital, but on liabilities.

### **The Collapse-**

This free-for-all hippodrome endures for a while. It is a great tournament, in which each endeavors to unhorse his combatant. Every manufacturer is the antagonist, opponent and rival of all others; each seeks to surpass or conquer all others in the gauzily disguised industrial battle.

Immense masses of goods are produced for which there is not the least demand. Manufacturers must keep on turning out goods to keep machinery and works in action; the business man places orders in anticipation of new orders, and in this way pays his old debts by contracting new ones.

Finally all trade becomes blockaded; business stagnates; industry languishes; orders slow up, for stocks are abnormally large. Workmen are suspended, laid off, discharged. With payment of wages also suspended, they buy little, and pay for less. Business becomes duller.

Artificial incidents are added to real causes; rumor lends her lying tongue and mouths threats of impending war; a few bank failures add increased fear to the general distrust; financial conditions become shaky, cranks rally round the silver dollar, and lo! suddenly we are startled by a spectral confrontation of an immense

### **Crash!**

As the stores are stuffed full of all kinds of goods for which there is no demand, there is a scarcity of orders at the business houses. For this reason manufacturers are compelled to shut down their works, or produce only half time. Business men cannot pay their old debts, for they cannot contract new ones. Banks refuse to loan money, some of them even burst, because they have loaned out too much. Railroads and ships have nothing to do. Hundreds of thousands and millions of workmen are unemployed. Had they received good wages when employed, matters would not have been so bad, for they would have been enabled to have saved up something. Or better still, they could have purchased more goods right along, and thus have kept stocks reduced, which now cannot be disposed of, and the crash could not have been so severe.

What is the real cause, therefore, of the crisis, the cause of so many workmen being unemployed?

It is not the gold and silver question; not free trade or tariff, etc., but solely and exclusively the fact that,

primarily in our present senseless and planless system of production: in trade and commerce, there are created, in a stated period, more goods than can possibly be consumed, and therefrom results stagnation, and the crash overtakes us.

Men call this *overproduction*, (to produce *over* and *above* actual demand.)

And secondly, it results from the fact that the great majority of the people, namely the wage earners, do not receive the full value of their product, but that a part of it is retained to enrich the bosses, while the workmen receive low wages and are therefore not able to buy the abundant goods which they actually need.

Men call this *underconsumption* (To consume, i. e. *use under*, or *less* than what is produced and stocked up.)

This all explains why these crashes, (or crises, as they are called,) make their appearance in all countries of the earth in precisely the same manner, and then again gradually disappear, regardless of forms of government, for in both points, namely (a) in the senseless manner of the production of goods, and (b) because the workmen receive less wages than they earn, and is necessary to buy back the goods they produce—in these two points the same system prevails in every industrial country of the world.

### Is There a Remedy?

Is there no remedy for the workmen, so as to prevent the ever recurring misery? That the workmen suffer most, almost solely from such conditions, few sensible men will deny.

A permanent remedy can only be expected, when the evil is plucked up by the roots, and the whole ruinous system of overproduction and underconsumption is annihilated and replaced by a more sensible system.

As long as every country has hundreds of thousands of bosses who engage in suicidal and self destructive competition, so long also will they keep on manufacturing goods regardless of actual demand, and so long will business be conducted on tick, and so long the whole swindle system which inevitably leads to bankruptcy, will endure. And so long also, the workmen will never receive the full value of their products, for the bosses must have profits, and very naturally can only "make money" in proportion as they skin labor, and pay them less wages than they should have in order, to buy back the goods they produce.

If now the socialized methods of production were adopted, which would make all workmen equal sharers in all manufacturing and business branches, and would conduct all business transactions without bosses for the exclusive benefit and use of all participant producers, an overproduction of goods would be a simple impossibility, for Competition, as understood to-day, would cease to exist;

Production would be regulated by natural and necessary demand;

The demands of the world's markets would be definitely known, for all orders instead of being, as now, divided among a hundred thousand petty bosses, would reach central offices established by labor, where knowledge and experience would be mutually exchanged for the common good of all, not secretly guarded and hidden for private gain.

Then all producers, i. e., every individual who worked directly for the common weal as well as indirectly for himself, would actually receive all he produces. For there would be no more parasitic bosses who must make profits; and all participants in the collectively conducted factories, industries, mines, farms etc. would receive, fully and completely, all that had been produced under the most favorable conditions.

Toward such a condition of affairs we are inevitably tending; for the small business men and manufacturers are constantly being crushed out in the competitive struggle,

and unless there is a complete transformation, there will eventually remain only a few enormously wealthy individuals, and millions of indigent, pauperized workmen.

But this unavoidable effectual transformation will not take place instantaneously, and will not occur in a year or two from now.

The question therefore which presses for solution is, how can

## Immediate Relief

be provided for the hundreds of thousands of unemployed.

The attempt to provide immediate relief can be made in two directions; direct charitable relief to alleviate present distress; or, work for the unemployed. The latter method, if possible and practical, would be the most effective. Money and the distribution of food—though always better than nothing,—are but as a drop of water upon a hot stone; regardless of the fact that the most intelligent and deserving workman would rather pawn his last coat, than humiliate himself by the acceptance of beggar soup.

But where find, and how provide work for the unemployed?

Manufacturers and business men are powerless, for their trade is stagnated.

The powerful hand of the state or municipality alone can provide ample relief.

The nation and the community even as constituted to-day, are amply competent to provide powerful ways and means for immediate relief, if *they were only honestly willing*, that is, if the public officials, who represent the nation and municipality, were possessed of "good will toward all men" and women who toil.

Public works of various kinds, which accrue to the benefit of the Commonwealth, would afford work to hundreds of thousands of unemployed.

Why is this not done? Why have our officials, who have been humbly approached and politely requested by labor leaders to provide such public work for the unemployed, made evasive answers, coupled with the lamest possible excuses?

Very naturally

## They Have No Respect For Labor!

And why should they have? When men are to be elected to make or enforce the laws of the people, candidates from all phases of our population are selected—but *none from the ranks of labor!* The workmen themselves cast their votes for candidates whom they know will enact and execute laws beneficial to the bosses, manufacturers and capitalists, but to the detriment of labor.

Of the 356 so-called representatives of the people in Washington, 207 are attorneys at law, or some sort of "legal lights," 14 are manufacturers; 21 are merchants; 8 are bankers; 3 are railway magnates; the remainder are farmers, cattle kings or ranchers, doctors, etc.

There is among them all *not one labor representative!*

• And so it is everywhere, in all states of the Union, in all city councils—everywhere where there is anything to officially discuss, to do or undo, *labor is not in it.*

How, under these circumstances, can wage earners expect that anything will ever be done for them, even in times of their direst necessity? What do lawyers know about the requirements of labor, even if they were honestly concerned about their welfare? And the representatives of capital know very well that at the next election labor votes will re-elect them, in spite of all adverse acts of the past on their part.

In order to secure immediate relief, it is absolutely necessary that politicians be compelled to recognize the rights of, and beget

## Respect For Labor !

And this can only be done by organizing themselves into a separate political party which shall elect men to office who know what the workers need, have the set purpose and honest intention to vote, originate and enact laws favorable to the interests of the toilers.

Such a political labor party is already in existence. It is the *Socialist Labor Party*, organized in every country on earth, and has practically demonstrated that it perfectly understands the needs of the workers.

Workingmen, identify yourselves in a body with this party, and relief will be afforded quicker than many of you dare anticipate. If the politicians find that the workers are joining the Socialist Labor Party by tens and hundreds of thousands, they will realize that you have aroused yourselves from your Rip Van Winkle nap and political indifference, and frightened at the certainty of losing their positions, will immediately do all that is possible in the way of affording public work to relieve present distress.

Many of you may say : "Our most urgent need is work, and you talk glibly to us about politics ; we want bread, and you give us a cold stone !"

But he who argues thus, is a simpleton. Workingmen, we cannot and will not endeavor to deceive you. Whoever tells you that your case can be cured with beggar soup, or by spaniel-humbleness before old party claquers, is trying to deceive you, as you may speedily ascertain.

Profit by the experience of the past. Whosoever desires the object, must also adopt the means necessary for its attainment. You want immediate work, from the nation or municipality, because private capitalistic enterprise cannot furnish it. The state and city are political institutions, and he who desires to exercise control over them, and derive benefit from them, must do so through political action, the elections and the ballot.

Join the Socialist Labor Party at once, and then you can move for immediate relief from your dire need—you will then be on the highway to permanent improvement of your condition and the establishment of the Co-operative industrial system, in which crises, like the present, with their frightful train of woe and misery, will be impossible.

Earnestly consider your condition in the light of the arguments we have advanced, and then determine to pursue the path outlined, for there is no other means whereby emancipation from industrial slavery can be achieved, but political action.

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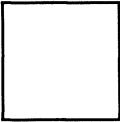
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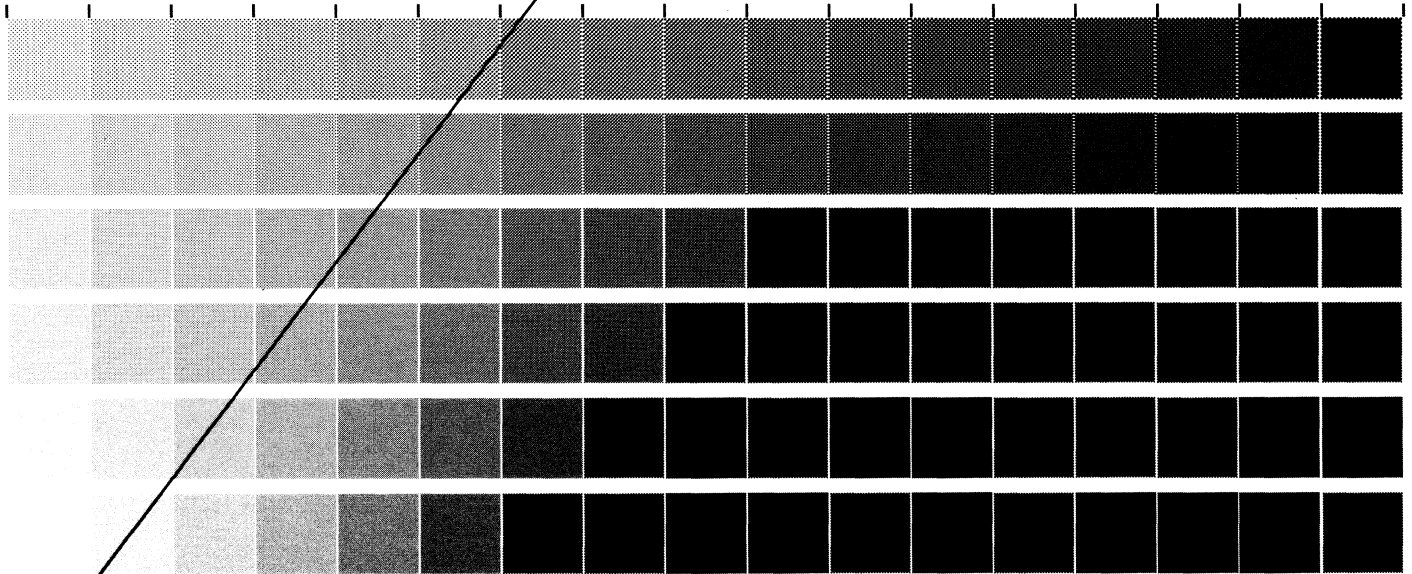
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