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NEW EDITION,

PRICE ONE PENNY.

# SOCIALISM

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BY

❧ H. A. SORGE ❧

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LONDON

JUSTICE PRINTERY, 337, STRAND, W.C.

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# Socialism and the Worker.



By F. A. SORGE.

SOCIALISM has been attacked and incriminated at all times, but never with more animosity than recently. Socialists are reproached with every kind of wickedness; of the tendency to do away with property, marriage, family, to pollute everything that is sacred; they have even been accused of arson and murder. And why not? If we look at the originators of these incriminations we are not the least astonished, for they have to defend privileges and monopolies which in reality are in danger, if drawn to the broad daylight and handled by the Socialist. They act according to the old jesuitic stratagem: invent lies, pollute your enemy in every way you can; something will stick. But if we find those reproaches repeated and echoed even by working men whose interests are quite different we must wonder indeed.

If the workers, however, hate and attack Socialism it is not a clear perception of the wickedness of the aims of Socialism by which their judgment is guided, but by a dim and vague idea, and it is well known that spectres are awful things in the dark for people who believe in them.

But everybody who hates and persecutes other people for their purposes and pursuits should be convinced that he is right in doing so. For, if we hate and persecute persons whose purposes and pursuits are reasonable and right, we are wrong.

For this reason let us examine the real aims of the Socialists. I think I know them pretty well, and I promise to tell the truth and nothing but the truth about them.

When you have read this to the end you may persecute the Socialists with renewed hatred if you find they are bad; on the other hand, you will think favourably of them if you find their views good and right. For I am convinced that you, dear reader, whoever you are, have not a mind to love the bad and hate the good.

Foremost and above all it seems to be certain that the Socialists intend to divide all property. Everybody who owns anything must give up what he owns; this whole mass has to be divided equally among all the people, and each person may use his part just as he likes. After a while, when some have used up their allotted part and a new disproportion of property has arisen, a new division will be made; and so on. Especially the money and the soil are to be divided,—this is what some people say concerning Socialism.

Now, honestly, reader, have you ever seen or heard of a man of sound mind who really demanded such nonsense? No, you have not! Such a demand involves the highest degree of craziness. Just reflect, dear reader, to whose lot, for instance, should a railroad fall? Who should have the rails, or a locomotive, or a carriage? And since everybody would have a right to demand an equal share all these things would have to be broken and smashed up, and one would get a broken axletree, another the door of a carriage, or perhaps some bolts. Not even lunatics could recommend such a state of things.

A division of money or soil might possibly be thought of, but money and soil form only a small part of the wealth of a country. The ready money forms even a very small part. And if the soil should be divided all the new owners would be in need of houses, barns, stables, agricultural implements of all kinds. Such a distribution of the soil is, therefore, utterly impossible, and the Socialists know well enough that such a proceeding would benefit nobody. During the great French Revolution in 1789 something similar was tried; large estates were divided among poor country people to make them happy. What is the result? The French peasantry, generally, are so poor that thousands of them live in dwellings with only a door and no window at all, or with only one small window at the side of the door. And small farmers are not much better off in any country, except, perhaps, in the vicinity of large cities. The small farmer must, as a rule, toil harder than any other person to make a living, and a very scanty and poor one in any case. Farming in our age only pays well if done on a large scale, if large tracts of land can be cultivated with the aid of machinery and the application of all modern improvements. And this knowledge and doctrine of the Socialists is strictly opposed to a division of the soil. On the contrary, the Socialists are of opinion that there will be a time when a number of small farmers will unite to cultivate their farms in common and divide the products among themselves, seeing that farming on a small scale cannot compete with farming on a large scale, just as manufacturing on a small scale cannot compete with manufacturing on a large scale. Therefore, what has been said about the intention of the Socialists with respect to dividing the soil is an apparent falsehood.

Concerning the division of money I must relate an anecdote invented to ridicule people who are represented to have such intentions. One day in 1848, as the story goes, Baron Rothschild took a walk on the Common of Frankfort-on-the-Main. Two labourers met him and accosted him thus: "Baron, you are a rich man; we want to divide with you." Baron Rothschild, not the least puzzled, took out his purse good-humouredly and answered:—"Certainly! We can do that business on the spot. The account is easily made. I own 40 millions of florins; there are 40 millions of Germans. Consequently each German has to receive one florin; here is your share;" and giving one florin to each of the labourers, who looked at their money quite confused, he walked off smiling.

This teaches that the division of money is but an idle invention.

And with a little brain and thought everybody must easily come to the conclusion that the great number of those who confess to the principles of Socialism cannot possibly consist of blockheads or rather lunatics, which they would prove to be if they demanded such nonsense. In Germany 700,000 voters (more than 1,000,000 at the last election) voted for Socialist candidates. Can they all be crazy?

Therefore there must be something else in Socialism. The number of Socialists in Germany is constantly growing. Even Prince Bismarck confesses that. There must be something in it.

Now if we go the meetings of the Socialists, if we read their papers and pamphlets, what do we find?

They do not intend to introduce division of property; on the contrary, they are for abolishing its division.

This sounds strange, but it is so.

The Socialists are of opinion that division of property is flourishing in our society at present, and further they are of the opinion that this division is carried on in a very unjust manner. If you doubt, only think of our millionaires, and say whether those fellows did or did not understand how to divide and to appropriate to themselves large sums of money. Think of those swindling railroad and other companies. How many honest mechanics, farmers, labourers, have been swindled by them out of the little sums of money they had gathered by hard work and saving?

The Socialists do not claim the honour of being the first to discover that this kind of distribution is going on everywhere throughout the world: they have learned it. Men who belong to their adversaries taught them. John Stuart Mill, who was opposed to Socialism, said in one of his writings: "As we now see, the produce of labour is in an almost inverse ratio to the labour—the largest portions to those who have never worked at all, the next largest to those whose work is almost nominal, and so on in a descending scale, the remuneration dwindling as the work grows harder and more disagreeable, until the most fatiguing and exhausting bodily labour cannot count with certainty on being able to earn even the necessaries of life."

This sounds really dreadful, but if you look around and consult your own experience, is it not so? Certainly it is!

There are people who have a princely income, who plunge from one pleasure into another—and perhaps they have never in their life done the least useful thing; they need not work, they do not work themselves, but—they draw the proceeds of the work of other people and enjoy them.

On the other hand, look at him who "eats his bread in the sweat of his brow," look at the labourer who works for wages. If he is skilful, industrious and strong, and if he is lucky enough to find employment, he may even be able to save a little. But the large majority of labourers cannot even think of that, in spite of all the hardships they undergo. When they have to stop work, they are as poor as when they began it. And many, many labourers, hard toiling men, are not able to protect themselves and their families

from exposure and hunger. You need not go far, reader, you will find them everywhere. Ragged, pale-faced, despairing people will meet your gaze, and on enquiring you will learn that they were industrious, orderly workers, and that there are thousands, aye, hundreds of thousands of people living in the same miserable condition, in the cities as well as in the country.

Now look at the mechanics. A few of them may succeed; they may be able to reach a state in which they are safe from sorrow and care for the necessaries of life. The greater number of mechanics who have a little shop of their own and work on a small scale have to battle with poverty and care. Thousands, hundreds of thousands of mechanics fail in this battle; they give up their small establishments and turn wage-labourers. One manufacturer on a large scale deprives hundreds of small mechanics of their independent existence; one large shop or "co-operative store" crushes out fifty small shopkeepers. As things stand to-day, only those will succeed in the great struggle for life, in the universal competition, who command large means, a great amount of capital.

In commerce it is the same; merchants with small means rarely do a good business many go bankrupt. Merchants with large means grow richer and richer. It is similar with farmers throughout the civilized countries of Europe and America. Owners of small farms just eke out a scanty living and have to work very hard; many gradually fall off; in general the peasantry get poorer. There is the usurer, who knows how to make a profit of a poor crop. Very frequently, we find that small farms are bought by owners of large farms to be united with them. Only the latter understand the business and are able to farm with profit.

Thus we see how the large class of those who work hard and assiduously do not make money, do not amass riches—on the contrary, many of them must suffer from want and care. But now, who creates these riches which fall to those who never worked, or whose work hardly deserves the name of work? Who else, but that self-same working-class?

For industry and work scarcely a living! Riches for those who never or seldom did anything useful! Do you call that just? Can you approve of such a state of things? I know you cannot. No sensible man can approve of it. And now say what you may against Socialists—in this point they are right. This state of things cannot and must not continue. It is wrong, and therefore it must be changed. Socialists do not object to acquisitions made by honest work; on the contrary, they try to secure the product of work to the worker himself, and to protect it from the clutches of those who hitherto have been accustomed, not to work themselves, but only to draw profit from the work of others, and who, in doing so, are not content with a small part, but try to take the lion's share as it is in the fable.

But do the Socialists not go too far in their zeal? It would, certainly, be well and just if it could be accomplished, that those who toil and work should be liberated from care and want, and those who have been idle so far should be forced to work also. But are



not the Socialists enemies of the property-holders, and is not everybody who owns property threatened to lose it by the Socialists, should they come into power—so much so that he would have to face penury and want? *Are they not Communists?*

These objections and reproaches have been made and are made. Let us not make light of them, but let us consider them quietly, in order to judge rightly and justly.

Before we go on we must explain two conceptions:

I. What is Communism?

II. What is property?

About Communism many lies have been set afloat, especially by people whose interest it was to do so, viz., by those money-making idlers, so that most people cannot but connect with the word Communism the idea of rascality; Communist and scoundrel of the worst kind appear to them to be synonymous terms. Therefore it is not an easy matter to speak of Communism without running the risk of being condemned before one commences. Many people in such a case will not hear, will not see, will not judge. Their verdict is formed. All social prejudices are awakened and called forth by this expression. For that reason it is very difficult to come to a quiet understanding about it. But the reader, who has followed us so far, will follow us farther, not blindfolded, but using good common sense.

If we open our eyes and look around us, we find many beneficent and useful institutions established by many or by the whole people *in common*. In one place associations are formed, for instance, to save and shelter shipwrecked persons; at another place the *community* erect a school, or the State, the commonwealth, builds a harbour or a canal. In ordinary life everybody cares for himself, but in such cases as those just mentioned, people unite for advancing a *common, social* purpose. Experience teaches that in doing so they do admirably well; every one of them who will reflect a little must confess that his own welfare is greatly advanced by such institutions of *common* usefulness. What would people be without *common* roads, *common* schools, etc., that is, such as are built and instituted at the cost of the *community* for *common* use? We should be in a terrible situation if all at once the different insurance companies were to cease to exist, whose object is to transfer a calamity, by which a person might be struck heavily, or perhaps be ruined, from his shoulders to the shoulders of many. If I chose I could mention here a thousand other things, but the above named *common* institutions will be sufficient. Now all these institutions are nothing but *Communism*. For *Communism* is nothing but the principle of the *common interests* of society. In every-day life everybody looks out for his own interest, even at the cost of his fellow-men; here cold, ugly egoism is dominant. The large cotton mills have ruined thousands and thousands of weavers; but who cares for hundreds of honest, industrious, happy people who are ruined by one mill? Who cares how many honest shoemakers are deprived of a living by the large shoe manufacturers? What does the usurer care for the victims of his avarice? What do the speculating swindlers care for the fate of the shareholders after

their hard-earned savings are gone? Nobody ever thought of caring for such things, and it is my firm belief that a business man in our days who should show any consideration for the welfare of his fellowmen in his transactions would be certain to become a laughing-stock. Egoism rules supreme. Everybody thinks of his own welfare, and does not care whether by doing so he destroys the welfare of others. "What business have I to care for others if I am comfortable?" In spite of the prevalence of Egoism, the *common* interest of mankind is irrepressibly gaining ground. More and more people unite to cultivate it, more and more associations are formed, the activity of the State and the community is extending its influence over more and more objects. Who would have thought in former times of all the different associations which are formed to-day to advance any number of *common* interests of every description? Who had an idea in former years, that whole countries would be cut in all directions by railroads, that telegraphs would communicate news to the remotest parts of the world in an instant? Who could have predicted the admirable development of our postal system? Who thought of waterworks or of gas? Who had an idea of the modern arrangement of the fire brigades? The root of all these is *Communism*. They represent the victory of *common* interests over hideous Egoism.

To turn institutions of *common* interest to the use of all is the tendency of the age, and however people may curse at Communism they are bound to obey its mandates. Everywhere *common* interests press their claims, and *Communism*, proudly elevating its head, marches on triumphantly with all conditions of human life in its train.

He who declares himself an enemy of Communism declares himself an enemy of common interest, an enemy of society and mankind! Whoever wishes to annihilate Communism will have to destroy the common roads, the schools, he will have to destroy the public gardens and parks, he will have to abolish the public baths, the theatres, the waterworks, all the public buildings; for instance, town halls, courts, all the hospitals, the alms-houses; he will have to ~~destroy~~ the railroads, the telegraphs, the post-office! For all these belong to *Communism*.

Communism cannot be annihilated. It has its origin and root in human nature, like egoism. Everybody who will open his eyes must see that in the present time we are in full sail to land in its sheltering harbour. Sheltering? Yes, sheltering! Sheltering for the great majority of mankind for whom a better time will come, must come, when the common interest, the interest of all, will be the rule governing all our social conditions, when a barrier will be erected against egoism by the regard for the common or public welfare. If it happens nowadays that rich speculators make people in hard times pay exorbitant prices, and take advantage of a common calamity to double their wealth; or if railway shareholders make their own rates for freight, injuring by high prices producers as well as consumers, in order to gain a large dividend; or if manufacturers prefer running short time to selling at lower prices—

*In France*

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these proceedings are considered "all right," for everybody can do with his own as he chooses. But everybody must see that such egoism is opposed to the common interest; and there will be a time when people will know how to protect the common interest against egoism. When that time has come it will be better for all; all will enjoy life, not those only who do so now at the cost of their fellow-beings.

If you define Communism in this way, some of my readers will say, we do not object to it; quite on the contrary, we must confess we belong to the Communists ourselves. But this is not what people generally understand by the word "Communism." We were to consider the Communism which the Socialists want to introduce, the Communism with regard to property. We admit that they do not intend to divide, but do they not intend to abolish property? That is what we oppose; otherwise we would not object to it.

What is property? "To be sure that which a person owns, possesses!" Well! But now tell me, are you certain that the Socialists are, or ever were, opposed to what Peter or Paul owns? Can you show me a sentence or passage from any of the writings or pamphlets of Socialists which justifies the supposition that they intend to attack the property of any person?

You cannot, because such an idea never entered the head of a Socialist. I should not wonder if you yourself have not thought sometimes that, considering the means and ways by which many amass their riches, it would be only just and right to take that ill-gotten wealth from their rascally owners. But it is a firm principle of Socialism, never to interfere with personal property in order to investigate its origin or to arrange it in a different way. Never and nowhere! And whoever asserts to the contrary either does not know the principles of Socialism or willingly and knowingly asserts an untruth. The Socialists deem an investigation into the origin of an acknowledged personal property an unnecessary trouble. They do not envy the Duke of Westminster or Lord Brassey their wealth. Although they perceive very well the constant changes with regard to property; although they investigate and are acquainted with the causes producing those changes; although they are well aware that fraud and meanness and violence in a great many instances are among those causes, they forbear to investigate how much these causes, how much others, have influenced the state of property of this or that single person. They consider the personal property an accomplished fact, and respect it; so much so that they consider stealing a crime. Every time Revolution was victorious in Paris bills were seen at the street corners threatening death to thieves. A remarkable fact is that Baron Rothschild fled suddenly from Paris as soon as these bills were posted. At Lyons during an insurrection in 1832 a man who had appropriated another man's property was shot by a labourer in command. During the reign of the Commune of 1871 Paris had no thieves, no prostitutes.

On the other hand, the right of the owner is not always respected

in our time, but they are not Socialists who violate the sanctity of property in these cases, although it must be confessed that in many instances an abrogation of the right of a property-holder becomes necessary. Socialists cannot be reproached with ever having condemned houses or tracts of land for the purpose of building a street or opening a railroad. They certainly are not Socialists who seize and sell houses or lots at auction for unpaid taxes. Nor will you find Socialists who connive at those shamefully unjust appropriations of the property of others which however go on in a lawful form.

One thing, however, calls forth all the energy of the Socialists, and they will try with all their might to remedy it. I have stated already, they do not care whether a person owns hundreds of thousands or millions of pounds, whether that person makes use of his money one way or the other, whether he spends it wisely or foolishly. He may spend his own as he chooses. But—these sums of money are not used simply to be spent, but to bring interest, to increase, if possible, the wealth of the possessor. Does he himself want to work, to do something useful? Far from it. His money works for him, his money makes money, as the saying is; or in plain English, his money is the channel through which the earnings of other industrious people flow into his pockets. Socialists call all kinds of property in this respect “capital,” this expression comprising all means for production. And because one class of the people possess, by their wealth, these means—that is, capital—another, and by far the largest class, have only their physical or mental strength and skill for labour. Hence capital becomes a means for enslaving workers, forcing them to give up the greater part of their produce to him who owns the capital. They themselves obtain hardly enough to support themselves and their families, while the capitalists enjoy life and get richer without working at all. This is the point: dead property deprives living work of its fruits. Now since work should, by rights, own what it produces as its sole and legitimate earning, dead property becomes the bitter enemy of working life.

Hence the struggle of labour against capital.

Returning to the question, “What is property?” the answer given above appears unsatisfactory. We must add another question: To whom justly belongs what the working part of the human race produces?

The answer to this question is of the greatest importance. Now it is capital which appropriates the greater part of it, leaving to the workers, who form by far the greater number, only so much of it that they may keep alive. They are treated like bees; they are robbed of the honey they make. This class is excluded from enjoying the blessings of civilisation; the greater part of their product is taken by capital.

What right has the owner of a beehive to rob the bees of the fruit of their industry and labour? They are his property, his is the might. What right has capital to rob the working class of the greater part of the fruit of their industry and labour? The wage

labourers, the mechanics, the farm hands, are they the property of the capitalist? Are they his slaves?

As things stand to-day, they are! Might is right, and by the title of such right the slaveowner considers the fruit of the work of his slaves his property; by this right, in former times, the feudal landowner made his serfs work for his employment and benefit. Slavery is injustice; serfdom is injustice; so the right which capital claims to the work of the worker is injustice. I would not like to be misunderstood here. As far as anything is the personal property of a person he may enjoy it as he chooses; nobody has a right to interfere. But as soon as he tries to use this property to enslave other people, he steps over his domain and must be checked. For I think it is acknowledged among civilised people that nobody has a right of ownership over his fellowmen. Slavery has been abolished, serfdom has been abolished, so the power which capital exercises now will be abolished: its place will be occupied by the natural and sacred right of the worker to the proceeds of his work.

But—is not capital as necessary as labour? Can labour produce anything without capital? There must be raw material, there must be tools, there must be machines, there must be workshops, warehouses, and so forth; there must be soil to be tilled, &c. What can mere labour do without all these? But labour existed before capital, and made the tools, workshops, &c. Is it necessary that capital, now the foundation of successful labour, which has been produced by labour, should be owned by a few individuals? Has this minority a right to continue to take the best part of what labour produces?

The Socialists take the side of Labour. They maintain that it is everybody's duty to work, unless he be sick or crippled. They maintain that whoever is able to work and is not willing to do it, has no right to enjoy the fruits of the industry and labour of others.

If capitalists attempt to justify their way of making profit by saying that they have to run risks sometimes, that a part of their property might occasionally be lost, we answer that labour has nothing to do with that. The real cause of it is the competition among the employers, the custom to produce at random without investigating whether what is produced is really wanted. For the class of capitalists there is no risk, because its wealth increases every day. But there is a great risk for the working-class. When business is slack, when wages go down, when many workers are out of employment—when, in consequence of this, mechanics, grocers, and even farmers suffer, the condition of the working part of the people is pitiable, and many suffer. The newspapers tell about that. Have they not had startling accounts of people starving to death in our great cities? Look at the local columns of the daily papers, and it is exceptional if there is no account of some family or other being poverty-stricken, of people driven to despair, driven to commit suicide by want. And all this in cities that have stores and warehouses crowded with goods. Is this no risk?

But how could this state of things be changed?

This, certainly, cannot be done of a sudden. There is a natural

process of development in this, as in all changes that history has recorded so far. According to the reasoning of the Socialists this development will be as follows:—

Some time ago the middle-class formed the firm and solid foundation of society and State. Machinery was invented and a change occurred. Manufacturing, and even farming to a certain extent, were conducted on a large scale; the middle-class people were pressed down into a class of wage-labourers, and were employed in large numbers by the manufacturers or employers. More and more this middle-class cease to be property-holders; it is getting more and more difficult for the mechanics and small farmers to hold their ground; thus the middle-class is constantly decreasing, the class of wage-labourers increasing, until there will be only two classes of people—rich and poor. In this process the number of rich people is diminishing, wealth becoming concentrated in the hands of comparatively few persons who are getting enormously rich.

But this process must soon have its limit. There will be a time when the large mass of the working-people will feel its consequences unbearable, and will abolish it. That will be the time when Communism will enter into its rights. Labour will then be organised according to a certain reasonable plan, and since, for that purpose, the use of the existing capital—comprising soil, houses, railways, shipping, manufactories, machines, &c.—will be necessary, those comparatively few possessors of all the wealth of the nations will have to be expropriated. Perhaps they then will consent themselves to such a measure, and give up everything necessary for production of their own accord, honoured and praised for their patriotism and humanity, and remunerated deservedly; perhaps they will use their ample means to resist the common demand, and will perish, overwhelmed by the newly-formed organisation of the State. As I hinted before, in the new order of things all branches of labour will be organised in a similar way to the arrangements we see to-day in large factories, large estates, or institutions of the Government. Unnecessary work will be avoided, and the reward for work done will be greater. Labour will not be wasted in making luxuries for the idle, but will be usefully employed in making the necessaries of life for other workers. It will be everybody's duty to work, hence everybody will have ample leisure for recreation and mental development. All will strive to ameliorate the conditions of the community they belong to; for, by doing so, everybody will improve his own private situation.

The basis of this state of things will be abolition of private property of individuals in such things as are necessary for production and transportation, such as land, factories, machines, railroads, &c., or which have been created for instruction and amusement, such as schools, colleges, museums, parks, &c. Personal property will be what is necessary or useful for private life. These are the outlines of a picture of future times. Nobody is able to state whether the development will go on exactly in the way we sketch out; but that does not matter, if only the underlying idea of Com-

munism is right. When Stephenson more than fifty years ago built the first railroad, he certainly did not plan all the locomotives, rails, signals, stations, &c., such as we find them to-day; but his idea was right, and it conquered the world. Thus the idea of Socialism will conquer the world, for this idea is nothing but the real, well understood interest of mankind. It is an injustice that a large majority to-day must work hard and suffer want in order to procure a superabundance of enjoyment for a small minority of people who do not work. And who would deny that, if it is everybody's duty to work, if the production of unnecessary, nay even of injurious, articles is abolished, if production is organised in conformity with the real wants and pleasures of mankind—who would deny, I ask, that the standard of life of the whole human race might be raised infinitely above its present grade, that the great mass of human beings might enter into that sphere of life worthy of a human being, from which they have been rigorously excluded so far?

Let me point out to you an example of organised labour in one branch, to show the benefit of such an arrangement. How would it be possible to send a letter to any place in the United Kingdom for a penny, a postcard for a half-penny, a letter to America for 2½d., if the postmasters in the different parts of the world were private contractors like the merchants and manufacturers of to-day, if we had not the communistic arrangement of the post? Formerly the post was also a private business in nearly all the countries of Europe, like our railroads, and the owners of this institution derived a princely income from it, although its use was very limited. And well arranged as our post-office may be, it might be better yet, and will be more convenient in time.

Similar benefits would arise from the reorganisation of all branches of human activity. Look at our railroads—might they not be the property of the community at large as well as the high roads, instead of being a monopoly in the hands of private persons, whose sole object is to enrich themselves at the cost of their fellow-citizens? If so, it has been proved that you could go to any part of these islands with a shilling ticket, just as a letter goes now by post with a penny stamp. In this manner one branch after the other will be organised according to the ideas of Communism, perhaps by classes of people who are far from admitting the truth of the principles of Socialism, of Communism, by classes who are inimical to it—because they do not understand it—and who are still narrow-minded enough to shut their ears and their eyes to everything that does not tend to their private interest.

This is not yet enough. All means for transportation, such as ships, &c., must come into the hands of the community at large; so must all means for production. This demand of Socialism has caused people to accuse the Socialists of hostility to property, even to the property of those who own but a little. But who is it that actually drives the owner of small means from his house, from his soil? Is it the Socialist? It is the large capitalist, the large land-owner! As the magnet attracts iron filings, so large capital attracts

the small sums round it. And the same capitalists who in all directions seize what they can get, try to persuade the small owners to beware of Socialism, because it is ready to tear their property from them. What a shameful falsehood! Socialism only teaches the way in which in a future time people will try to re-establish justice and a more equal condition of life for the whole community; while the owners of small property are being robbed of the little they own, not by Socialists—they have neither the power nor the desire to do so—but by the rich capitalists.

And this way is well-organised labour.

This certainly includes expropriation of those who have expropriated the mass of the people, and restitution of all means of production to those who made them. Socialism is the true and only friend of the man of small means, for it is the party of the working people. Large property is the natural enemy of small property, as long as it has not been able to seize and devour it.

Moreover, Socialism, far from intending to abolish any property to-day or to-morrow, only predicts that there will be a time, not suddenly provoked, but brought on by historical development, when the working people will insist upon their right to the product of their own work, against the privilege which property enjoys with regard to the work of others.

The conception of "property of capital" will be transformed gradually into the conception of "property of work."

Nowhere, you will perceive, is abolition of property thought of by Socialists, and nobody, I trust, will object to the change just mentioned. The development of mankind to greater perfection never was and never will be arrested by the prevailing laws concerning property. For instance, it was not arrested, when humanity demanded abolition of slavery, by the pretended divine right of the slave owners. And if such rights and laws demand that humanity stop its progress, such demand is madness. Laws and rights concerning property are subjected to constant changes, when such changes are in the interest of progress. But even in our better institutions injustice is ruling, and the change just spoken of will abolish that injustice and lead mankind to a higher state of perfection. At the bottom of our institutions there is a remnant of slavery; as soon as capital shall cease to govern, wage-labour and the rest of slavery will be abolished.

Freedom and equality will then be no longer empty and cheap phrases, but will have a meaning; when all men are really free and equal, they will honour and advance one another. The working man will then no longer be deprived of the fruit of his work, his property, and everybody who will work will be able to spend a good deal more in food, clothing, lodging, recreation, pleasure and instruction than he can spend at present.

If the Socialists had nothing to offer to the suffering people but the consolation that Communism will bring help at some future time, when the condition of life, nearly unbearable now, will have become quite so, this consolation would be poor. Long enough a future state of bliss has been held out to suffering mankind, in



which they would be rewarded for all the wants and sufferings and pains of this world, and now most people have lost confidence in such empty promises. They demand an amelioration: not words, not promises, but facts. They do not want to expect, with resignation, what may come after death: they demand a change of their unfortunate situation while living on earth.

The interests of all workers are the same! This is best shown by the fact that in many strikes working shopkeepers are in favour of the wage-labourers. Low wages are unfavourable to the farmer as well as to the mechanic, for when wages are low the struggle for economical independence is more difficult; large capital increases at the expense of small property. If the working people would only learn to comprehend the solidarity of their interests!

As it is with the increase of wages, so it is with the decrease of working hours. Eight hours' work a day is judged sufficient by physicians. A person who has worked properly eight hours a day ought to have done his duty, and has a right to request some hours for recreation, for instruction, and for his family. Those who are the loudest in complaining of the laziness of the working men would soon make wry faces if they were compelled to work only six hours a day. This decreasing of the working hours will better the condition of the whole of the working class. Everybody can easily see that. Even in the country it could be done, although there such a shortening will meet with the greatest objections, but it will be done. What a great benefit will be achieved by this measure alone! Whole armies of paupers, tramps, &c., will find useful employment. They will disappear, and with them a great deal of mischief and crime.

Now if the wage-labourers of the cities and manufacturing places will be ready to lead the van in the struggle for the interest of labour, the rest of the whole working-class have no right to put themselves in the position of idle, indifferent, or even grudging and hostile spectators. On the contrary, it is the duty of the whole working-class to participate in this struggle, for this war is carried on in the interest of all workers, and the wage-labourers who have taken up the gauntlet are the Pioneers for the human race.

But in order to carry on this war successfully, the workers must be organised. Singly and isolated they are powerless; if all would unite for the same purpose, they would be a formidable power which nothing could resist. You may easily break many single matches, but you may try in vain to break a whole bundle of them tied together.

With regard to this, the Socialists have the gratification of seeing that their endeavours have not been fruitless. In Germany Socialism already forms a respectable power, which has puzzled even the great Bismarck. They have been able to elect twenty-four (now more than thirty) representatives into the German Parliament, who, by their untiring activity, by the speeches they have delivered, have opened the eyes of hundreds of thousands of people in Germany. And who would venture to pretend that those men strove for something that was bad, that they betrayed the interests

of their constituents? But not only in Parliament, but in a great many municipal assemblies also we find members belonging to the working-class or representing its interests.

And all this has been accomplished in a few years. It is only twenty-four years since the labour party unfurled its banner there. And what has been tried and done during those twenty-two years to suppress the labour movement! It has been ridiculed, scorned, incriminated. Many of its prominent leaders have been put into prison. Many were deprived of their offices and situations, and customers. In spite of all this it grew and thrived. In France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Austria, Russia, Italy, Spain, and now in England—everywhere throughout the civilised world Socialism has taken root. Everywhere it has begun the struggle against capital, monopoly, and class rule, and its victory is assured. Concerning Socialism there might be said what was said in olden times about Christianity: If it is bad it will die of its own badness; if it is good it will conquer the world in spite of all persecutions!

And Socialism will conquer the world. Its principles will carry the whole human race to a higher state of perfection.

Reader, you may judge for yourself and decide either in favour of or against Socialism. If you think the aims and endeavours of the Socialists deserve your hatred, try to crush them; if, on the contrary, you are convinced that they are good, that the Socialists endeavour to promote the happiness and welfare of mankind, join them! And if you do not like to act publicly, help them secretly. Try to propagate their principles among your acquaintances, explaining them in your intercourse, destroying the falsehoods brought against them. Tell them that the Socialists form the true and only party of the working people. And if you are a capitalist yourself, reflect how much nobler it is to help to promote the welfare of the many than to serve only your own interest, ugly and hideous Egoism.



## JUSTICE

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