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The Ubiquity of Socialism

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WHEN READ, PASS ON.

"Wealth is acquired by over-reaching our neighbors, and is spent in insulting them."—
Godwin.

"Mankind, without any common bond, has sought, each and all, to tread their own paths little heeding if they trampled on the bodies of their 'brothers' in name, *enemies* in fact. This is the state of things we have reached to-day."—
Mazzini.

"The highest point in civilisation can only be reached when the Industrial Class, or which the existence of society depends, shall have attained to the principal position in the Commonwealth.— ST. SIMON.

"What is the wealthiest land on earth, if the
Millions suffer and cry,
And all but the happy, selfish Few would fain
—curse God and die?"

What are the glorious Arts as they sit and sing
on their jewelled thrones,

If their hands are wet with blood and their
feet befouled with festering bones,

What are the splendid Sciences, driving Nature
with a bit steel,

If only the rich can mount the car and the
Poor are dragged at the wheel?

Wealth is a curse, and Art a mock, and Science
worse than a lie,

When they're but the gift of the greedy Thieves,
the leeches that suck men dry!"

FRANCIS ADAMS.

There are still in "Society," that is to say, among "the leeches that suck men dry," many deluded persons who affect to believe that Socialism is merely the device of more than ordinary wicked 'agitators,' countenanced by certain crazy 'philosophers' with a sprinkling of the baser sort to back them. Even of late responsible "Liberal" politicians of the older school have admonished me in conversation—men with whom I was wont to act in days gone by, and whom I have never ceased to respect—that Socialism is nothing more than a 'fad' of the Extreme Left of the erstwhile Party of "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform," and that it will presently pass away.

But there could be no greater hallucination, Socialism is just as true as 'Evolution' in the physical or biological world is true. The struggle through which any plant or animal passes in obtaining necessary food and cover inexorably determines the form and structure of that plant or animal. The process may be accelerated by human intelligence and sympathy, or it may be retarded by human perversity and Egoism; but its eventual advent is as certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow. IT IS THE WILL OF GOD, be it the Voice of the People or not.

As for the form or forms it may assume—my own special brand is Communistic Anarchism—no wise man would care to dogmatise or hazard a prediction.

On the highway of human evolution the milestones already passed by civilised man have been three in number—namely Savagedom, Slavedom and Serfdom. At present he is about to pass number four; to wit, Wagedom, on his way to the grand terminus, Freedom or the Co-operative Commonwealth. "The Five Doms" I have ventured to call them in my little volume, *The Old Order and the New* (q. v.).

When the seemingly cast-iron system of Feudalism gave way, and the economically self-sufficing Manor ceased to exist, Individual-

ism, for a time, but only for a time, had a genuine *locus standi*. Under handicraft production the ownership of the simple tool was in the Worker. He paid no Rent to any one for its use, and he was consequently able, under an equally individualistic system of Exchange, to exact just equivalents for his products.

And with the loss of the tool, of course, went all control of the product of the tool. For his products he received somewhat less than a fourth of that for which he could repurchase it, for his own use, in the retail market!

No preceding System of Production and Exchange was ever marked by one-tenth of the absurd anomalies of the existing form of Wagedom. Slavery, for example, and Serfdom were both perfectly consistent and logical. The slave owner naturally owned the slave himself. Similarly, the serf had a perfectly intelligible position as an "appurtenance" of the estate on which he vegetated. His lord could not sell him off the land and, if he ran away from it and his well-defined duties thereon, he was guilty of theft—he stole himself!

THE CAPITALIST REGIME.

But what of the Capitalist Regime? Therein the wildest disorder is visible on every hand. "Anarchy," in the popular acceptation of that sorely misused word is in full swing. In all our chief industries, whether productive or distributive, the *method* is now co-operative. Modern Machinery *necessitates* Co-operative Labour, but the advantages of Co-operation—the "profits"—are, not, alas, for the Co-operating Labourers, but for Individualist Exploiters. And this is what constitutes the grand economic contradiction of the whole system. It is an everlasting *Sic vos non vobis*.

Nor is it the wage-worker alone who is a victim of this hitherto undreamed of form of *Compulsory* Co-operation—the progeny of the Machine Frankenstein. Every year our

smaller business men admit with greater and greater unanimity that competition no longer competes. Neither in production nor distribution can they long hope successfully to "face the music" supplied by the huge combinations and aggregations of Capital, now everywhere menacing their existence.

Already in many, perhaps in the majority of instances, they are really more to be pitied than the better class of machine-slaves into which they are constantly thrust. Indeed, the eventual bankruptcy of the entire Middle Class is almost a certainty of our near economic future. And when that is an accomplished fact the end of the Capitalistic System will have come. The ruined *bourgeoisie* will lead the proletariat to certain victory. The expropriators will be expropriated.

And who will venture to say that such consummation is undesirable or premature? Within the last fifty years Co-operation-compelling machinery has multiplied production at least twenty-fold all round, with the result that one-half of the Workers can produce more than enough to supply the markets of the world, while the other half must beg, borrow, steal, or starve the major portion of the time. It is impossible, on the face of it, that such a state of things should endure indefinitely.

On this point *The People* (New York, 17th inst.) contributes some valuable testimony from the private letter of a British "Captain of Industry," manager of "one of the largest machine works in the United Kingdom." In discussing the alleged decline of British Industry and trade, so alarming to "Imperialist" alarmists, the writer tells his American friend:

WEALTH COULD BE DOUBLED.

"My smallest estimate of the saving that could be effected by improved methods is from one-half to nine-tenths. I have put up a new shop in my works, entirely filled with the best

machinery I could buy or design for certain classes of work. The average saving is from five-eighths to nine-tenths. If I were permitted to do for the whole industrial system of the country what I have done for a small part of our own, **OUR WEALTH COULD BE MORE THAN DOUBLED IN TEN YEARS, AND THE HOURS OF LABOUR SHORTENED BY ONE-HALF.** It is only by socializing the whole production that this can be done. It pains me every day when I think how awfully stupid we are.

"As things are done now," he continues, "so long as trade is growing all is comparatively well; but when it stops and goes back, then **THE WORKMEN MUST SUFFER.** I have had to part with about thirty men within the last month—all good, honest, useful men—and simply **BECAUSE WE ARE PRODUCING TOO FAST FOR THE DEMAND.** It is too absurd to think of, but under our competitive system it is inevitable. Now this will go on and is going on all over the country, and the remedy the wise-aces propose is to produce wealth still faster, work harder, and therefore throw more workers out of employment. **IT IS ONLY WHEN ALL WEALTH IS FOR THE WEALTH-PRODUCERS THAT WE SHALL HAVE A SANE SOCIETY.**"

Here you have a proper "Captain of Industry" who, whatever his own practice may be, undoubtedly discerns the true all round inwardness of the situation. More power to him! Clear vision is after all more than half the battle. It is as near to Socialism as cleanliness is to Godliness.

In what lands, it may be asked, will the Capitalistic System first succumb to the Socialistic and the "profits" of Co-operation be to the Co-operators? Obviously, as I argued in a previous issue, in those where Capitalism has reached the stage of old age—where the elements of destruction and dissolution predominate over those of construction and cohesion.

In Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany, and Austria, the infancy, youth and manhood of Capitalism, it cannot be doubted, are already past, and the infirmities of old age strike the thoughtful observer as more and more conspicuous and bodeful of change.

On the other hand, in China, India, Persia, and most Asiatic countries, Capitalism is merely in its infancy. Handicrafts and Individualism everywhere predominate, while in Africa, the "Dark Continent," the slavery stage has barely yet been passed.

Japan, Russia, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Mexico, and the South American Republics may all roughly be regarded as in their Capitalistic adolescence; but, even in the most nearly stationary community, the pace of capitalisation is now extremely rapid. It has taken a couple of centuries to capitalise British industries, but only one century to capitalise those of France and the United States, while Germany has accomplished the feat in less than fifty years.

And now that land of seething millions and of mystery and seclusion for over four thousand years can, it is confidently predicted, be well 'syndicated' and capitalised within the next twenty years.

But syndicate and capitalise when and where the exploiter may, the Socialistic Nemesis will be found close at his heels. Even John Chinaman, like the promising Jap, will make an excellent Socialist, as soon as European machinery converts him into an involuntary Co-operator in the big factory or workshop. In a word Socialism is of no country. It is as ubiquitous as the Capital, which is, after all, but the husk of which Socialism is the inevitable kernel.

Great is International Socialism, and prevail it undoubtedly shall. It is the legitimate heir of all Capitalism. To the Co-operator, State or Non-State, be the 'profits' of Co-operation.

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