

SOCIAL ILLUSIONS—III. THE PROPERTY ILLUSION.

For the Appeal to Reason by Ernest Untermyer.

THE oldest and most pernicious social illusion is the "property" illusion. Universally accepted axioms declare that a Supreme Being created the property system; that things have always been what they are today; that there have always been rich and poor, masters and servants. However, these views are not even sustained by the book which their advocates regard as inspired.

For the opening chapters of the Bible also point to a time when human beings lived in harmony, undisturbed by the specter of private property. But apart from mystic documents, historical research during the last quarter of the 19th century clearly demonstrated the untenability of the idea of eternal private property.

Whatever may be the first causes of creation, property at least is not eternal and its first causes are known. True, it reaches back to the dim prehistoric ages, but it is certainly not as old as the human race. Many thousands of years elapsed before humanity acknowledged the principle of private property.

When food became abundant, man was less under the domination of the natural environment. It was no longer necessary to stay in the same locality and in the same group, in order to be sure of a living.

Individual ownership of land and other tools of production and the division of labor transformed the former production for use into production for profit.

When the wealth of the world increased, the various individuals each carried along a part of the formerly common possessions. This, in bold outlines, is the story of the origin of private property.

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But though it is dead in fact, it still survives in the imagination of the despoiled millions. They are still selling their lines and liberty for the handful of land, and for that dingy heap of stones or box of boards, called home.

How long will the property illusion succeed in chaining the American people securely to the block of the capitalist henchmen? Unless something unexpected and stupendous happens, they will stumble along in the ruts of ancient illusions.

The wealthy gathered an armed retinue of profitless men around themselves who protected them for board and lodging, so to say. By the help of their economic and social power, the wealthy then made laws and enforced them in their own interest.

Private property first resulted in private ownership of women. Then followed the ownership of the bodies and productive faculties of men and women came a complete transformation of the leading ideas of men.

Selfishness was henceforth enthroned as the ruling passion of human beings. It was developed at the expense of all nobler qualities, especially of honesty, truth, and fellow feeling.

How much of this transformation was due to the conscious initiative of those who benefited by the new principle, is beyond any man's ken.

But property proved false even to those who had accepted it as the foundation of human society. For individual incentive and the struggle for individual wealth naturally and logically lead to concentration of wealth into fewer and fewer hands.

Today, near the end of its career, the principle of private property finds three quarters of the American people without any property which they truly call their own.

The Wandering Jew.

By Marcus W. Robbins, Author of "Trying to Cheat God."

In Eugene Sue's story of the above title, is a thought that appeals very strongly to me, especially when I consider the coal magnates of Pennsylvania and their attitude toward the coal miners.

As to the door of the shoemaker he came, weighed down by the burden of the heavy wooden cross that he was compelled to carry, physically weak from fasting, the blood streaming from his scarred forehead, suffering mental agonies, he asked permission to rest.

All around us, every day, journeys are made from Judgment Hills to Mounts of Calvary. And on that road is always found the Ahasverus who cries to the sufferer: "Go on; 'Go on; 'Go on; 'Go on."

But the time is coming when the workers of the world will turn and say to this Ahasverus: "You, too, shall go on until the time of redemption."

To the reader: If you think there are no Ahasverus' in these modern days, I would ask: How would you class Baer and his fellow coal barons?

Senator Hanna is quoted by the Washington Times of October 1, speaking of the coal strike, as follows: "These people do not know what sort of a valenza they are living over."

Senator Hanna knows that the only vote that can express a disgust at conditions is a vote for the Socialist party—and that is what he fears. He don't care for the workers. He has a record as a most brutal employer.

Look Out for Open Switches.

For the Appeal to Reason by A. M. Simons.

THE Socialist train is now on the main track headed straight for the cooperative commonwealth, with a red-hot hard coal fire under the boiler.

Speed is increasing every moment. There is no stopping it. Those who are foolishly standing on the track will, like Stephenson's cow which got in front of the first locomotive ever built, discover it is "verra bad for the cow."

Just now labor is in revolt. The struggle in the coal mines has attracted attention and roused universal indignation against the more flagrant abuses of capitalism.

The illustration has been used before, but it applies so well at this point that it will bear repetition, of the decoy steer in the great Chicago packing houses.

So it is that all through the country union officers are being nominated on democratic and republican tickets in the hope that they may lead their deluded followers into the shambles of capitalism, while the decoy steps to one side for the petty political rations that is awaiting him.

But while the steer of the packing houses is not supposed to be endowed with intelligence and knows nothing of class interests, what shall we say of the union official who having roused that sense of class consciousness, having risen to the recognition of class interests, then exploits that feeling to his own advantage and to the destruction of the men who have trusted him.

No possible excuse can palliate such action. No man with a particle of sense can imagine that he as an individual on the democratic or republican ticket can sway either of those parties against the influence of a Hill, a Cleveland, a Hanna, or a Morgan, and do anything for the laboring class.

Sometimes instead of a union officer some one is nominated because of his professions of friendship for labor. Many men have seen, as indeed who can be blind to the facts of exploitation and suffering. Such a one may be perfectly sincere and really roused to the wrongs of the laborer, but does not see their real root in private ownership, or he may be simply a smooth scoundrel, the results to labor are the same in both cases.

The defects of our present society are now attracting such universal attention that they must be used as a text by whoever speaks on political or economic questions.

broad principles of the exploitation of labor and no clear vision of the road to freedom. The old party politicians recognize these facts and offer but slight opposition to such parties.

They know that it generally takes but a few months or years to steer the deluded workingmen back into the old party camps while exploitation goes on unchanged.

Sometimes in late years these parties have proved stepping stones to the Socialist Party.

The Socialist Party has a long and tested organization. Its principles have been determined by world wide experience and formulated by the ablest students of the labor problem.

Its strength is drawn from the workers, its nominees are laborers, its one reason for existence is the welfare of the laboring class.

With such a party in the field no workingman can lend his energies to the support of any other existing party or assist in the formation of a new one without proving false to himself, his union, his class and to humanity.

The interests of capitalists and laborers are diametrically opposed to each other. There is no friction between capital and labor—for labor makes all capital and needs it. But the laborer no more needs the capitalist than a potato vine needs the potato bugs.

It is to the interest of labor to get all the wages (products) he can for the shortest hours. It is to the interest of the capitalist to get his wage slaves to work the longest possible hours for the least possible pay (produce).

Ex-Congressman J. G. Otis, at the Socialist club meeting in Topeka, Sunday, Oct. 5, offered the following resolution: Resolved, That President Roosevelt should proclaim an industrial emergency to exist, that renders it necessary for the United States to possess all of the coal mines, and operate them in the interest of the public.

Isn't it odd that there is no law to which miners can appeal for justice, but thousands of statutes that the capitalists can use? That shows that the capitalists have been in politics, while the workers have simply been voting what the capitalists put up for them.

From the Chicago Record-Herald. John Quincy Adams, Socialist. John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the United States, wrote: "Independence in politics has always been a characteristic of the Adams family."

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Working People!

You belong to a Class—the Working Class.



Strike November 4 at the ballot box for Family, Country and Liberty.

You are the lower strata of the human beings that inhabit the earth. You are lower in clothing, lower in food, lower in shelter, lower in enjoyment and in mind power.

The Friend of the Poor.

Have you noticed lately in passing how private ownership of the earth and the other planets is on the defensive? The monopolists have to show an unusual amount of patriotism.

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Another Change in Missouri. Some time ago the authorities of Missouri ruled that the candidates of the Socialist Party could not appear on the official ballot.

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WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

Many people have queer ideas of what Socialism means. They confound it with anarchy, disorder, dividing up property, killing off the capitalists.

ARE YOU AMBITIOUS?

We inherit our temperaments. Some children are happy and bright, while others are nervous and cross. Care should be taken that the child is given proper food and drink.

American Coal and German Hog.

Cable to Chicago Daily News. Berlin, Oct. 8.—Pork is the topic of the hour in Germany. The refusal of the imperial authorities to listen to protests against the exclusion of foreign hogs has temporarily united all sections of the population.

Vote, Vote, Vote.

Look up in Webster's dictionary and see what Socialism means and then remember brother it will be two years before you will have another opportunity of expressing your disapproval of private owned trusts and monopolies.

other. The public owns the postoffice because all contribute in some way to it. For the same reason the public owns the coal mines.

Mr. Hewitt might with equal reason shade off his insistent belief that Mr. Roosevelt should not submit his office to arbitration.

I tried to tell him that middle-class reporters were small bother compared with truth violators and principals that unsolved came back to vex us.

You must recognize that the nation is not by any means a unit on these questions, and that the tide that is submerging old ideas is in shorter and shorter periods rising constantly a little higher.

Enroute To Butte, Montana.

Dear Appeal—Have just spent ten days for Socialism in Colorado and am now on my way to join the Montana comrades in their campaign.

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