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THE
Nationalisation of Society.

BY
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Nationalization of Society

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THEODORE WALTON

THE NATIONALISATION OF SOCIETY.

POVERTY.



HERE is in the nature of every man a desire for happiness, enjoyment, and pleasure; a horror of pain and oppression. The physical constitution of man has craving instincts; the intellectual part of him has also its desires. These desires must be satisfied; they cannot be oppressed. All oppression of a man's lawful instincts means misery and death for him. The instincts of human nature are like dormant volcanoes, ready to burst forth when the opportunity offers. The passions of human nature may lie calmly beneath the surface, but when they break forth, they break forth with rage: men have in the course of the world's history risen against their fellow men, and like savage hyenas have made them their food. A man will slay his fellow man for the slightest angry word or look.

The lowest and meanest man will strive to avenge an insult; but why should he bear so meekly the monster of Poverty? Poverty is the crime which outrages all a man's instincts and feelings. What is it which condemns you to live in hovels unfit for brutes; to eat the food of swine; to wear out your life, health, strength, and beauty in a desperate inhuman struggle for your existence? Poverty. What is it which robs you of education, crushes your natural intelligence, and destroys the distinguishing mark of your superiority? Poverty. What is it that changes a man from contentment to sedition; from sobriety to debauchery; from humanity to brutality? Poverty. What is it that makes men criminals, society a barbarism, and hands down to posterity as an heirloom, deformed, stupid progenies? Poverty.

Poverty is the worst crime in the world. The greatest criminal is not shunned as the poor man. If you are poor, the rich man will not sit beside you, will not eat with you, will not speak with you; but will sneer at you. While you are delving for a mere crumb to eat, he is enjoying himself at your expense. While you are passed by as an insignificant object he is honoured. Who is he, this rich man? The man who has taken advantage of your stupidity and mean opinion of yourself.

Are we rich enough? Do you think there are no men poor except those who ask for a crumb of bread for God's sake? Poverty means the inability to satisfy your lawful instincts; if you cannot satisfy your lawful instincts with £10,000 a-year, you are poor. But nothing can be more barbarous than our idea of civilisation. If you can by a self-denial that eats out your very heart; by the economy of a miser, appear well before the eyes of men, then those that cannot practise your self-denial or your economy will deem you rich and blessed. Are we free from Poverty, when by a struggle that wears out our lives we can barely manage to cover our bodies and keep our blood circulating? In the present social condition of the world, the majority will consider themselves happy if they can find these two necessities. Must we then rest satisfied with these? Is there no grander civilisation for us; no more blessedness than a life and death struggle? I for one do not believe it; I see in reality no cruel Destiny commanding it to be so. All things have a cause; and there is a cause for Poverty. There is Poverty, universal, degrading, damnable Poverty; men have a life and death struggle for existence; but who is responsible for such a state of things? Are we not

ourselves responsible? The remedy is before us; we need only apply it. There is no Tyrant-God ruling over us. Is not the world ours? The earth will grow us corn and cotton if we only sow; will give us food, clothing, light, and heat. Where lies the fault? Is it not ours? The life of mankind is not a life of blessedness at present; we must make it a life of blessedness. Not the bare necessities of existence should be the ultimatum of our desires; but the abundance that will make life worth living. Let us try. If in the nature of things such an acquisition be impossible; if it be decreed by the immutable laws of the universe that Poverty must exist, then I say with Carlyle, "So scandalous a beggarly universe deserves nothing but annihilation,"

WHY WE ARE POOR.

How can a man become rich? What is it that will make a man rich? You would say if a shoemaker was making 1,000 pairs of shoes in a day instead of two pairs, that he was on the road to wealth. Precisely so. If a shoemaker, who by making two pairs of shoes in a day struggled through life, then he certainly has a better chance of a more human existence when he can make 1,000 pairs in a day. So also a farmer who rears 1,000 head of cattle has a better chance of being richer than if he only reared ten head of cattle. For 1,000 pairs of shoes are worth more than two pairs; and 1,000 cows are worth more than ten cows. The first condition of wealth therefore is;—A man must have a large amount of saleable commodity of some kind. The greater the amount the richer he will be.

But though that is the first condition, it is not sufficient. What would be the use of you making 1,000 pairs of shoes per day if competition with other shoemakers forced you to sell at a trifling profit; or if people were so poor that they could not buy your shoes. So then it is not enough that you have a great amount of saleable commodity; another condition is necessary. Other persons must have commodities to give you in exchange for your shoes. What would be the use of you making 1,000 pairs of shoes per day if you could not exchange them for other commodities necessary for your daily wants? To be wealthy, or in other words, to have all your wants satisfied, implies two conditions, viz., you must by your labour produce a great amount; secondly, others must also produce an equivalent amount. The most illiterate workman knows that these two conditions are implied in a good day's wages. If you are a shoemaker, you know that the more work you do in the day, and the greater the demand for shoes, the greater will be your wages for that day. So also with every other occupation. The more you produce, therefore the richer you will be; provided there be a demand for the produce of your labour. If a shoemaker can make two of pairs shoes in a day, he will be twice as rich if he can make 4 pairs in a day; he will be fifty times as rich if he can make 100 pairs in the day; provided that the condition of demand is co-existing. The question, therefore, "How can we become richer?" is reduced to this one, "How can we increase the produce of labour, and at the same time maintain an equivalent demand for that produce?"

HOW INCREASE THE PRODUCE OF LABOUR.

Do you imagine that a shoemaker or tailor, who works before his fire plying his awl or his needle, will ever become richer by that means? Never. He may by working late and early add a little to his income; but that little would be totally insignificant. Take your ordinary shoemaker or tailor, and you will say that in order to live a life worthy of being called Life, they should be at least twenty times as rich as they are. They must consequently produce twenty times as much as they are producing in order to be twenty times as rich. Men can never become richer till the produce of their labour increases.

How then can the produce of labour be increased? Evidently men cannot be left to themselves, to work when and how they wish. The shoemaker cannot be left to ply his awl at his own leisure, "far from the busy haunts of men." The greatest result in labour is got from combination or co-operation. A man who by his own aid can make ten pins in a day, will in a factory make 1,000 in the same amount of time. It is the combination of all sorts of skill working in union that has enabled men to become millionaires. We say, therefore, that the only means of increasing the produce of man's labour is the combination of all the individual workers into factories adapted for their several employments. Machinery is the great increaser of the labour of man. Brain and muscle power is valued a thousandfold when applied to machinery. The shoemaker who expends his energy in finishing off a shoe, can finish 100 shoes with the same amount of energy when it directs the forces of Nature. The highest result of individual labour is obtained, therefore, by co-operation and scientific machinery.

HOW MAINTAIN A DEMAND FOR THE PRODUCE OF LABOUR.

A shoemaker may make 1,000 pairs of shoes in the day by the aid of machinery: even the enormous produce of our factories may increase a hundred-fold; but what advantage would all that be if competition forced down the prices to an irreducible minimum; or if the poverty of would-be buyers was the cause of the goods lying on hand unsold? In order that any advantage may arise from increased production, there must be a demand for that increase; that is, these two phenomena, Competition and Poverty, must cease to exist. Competition which forces a man to sell at the lowest possible rate, and Poverty which condemns the produce of a man's labour to rot on shelves, are the two evils which would render an increase of produce on the part of a portion of the community of no appreciable utility. As we stated before, the only two conditions of wealth are: 1st. increased produce on the part of workers; 2nd. a universal demand for that produce. To increase the produce of your labour, with a co-existing co-ordinate demand means to increase your wealth; the same conditions carried to an indefinite degree means indefinite wealth. We have shown how the produce of labour can be increased; we have now to show how a demand for that produce can be maintained.

The two evils which prevent a universal demand for the produce of labour are poverty and competition. Let us deal first with poverty. We mean that if a certain portion of a community work, and produce a certain amount of commodities, and the other portion, for whom part of these commodities are intended, do not work and produce, and consequently have nothing to give in exchange for their wants, these commodities so produced will have to lie unsold. The poverty therefore of those who do not work is a direct reason why there is no demand for commodities produced; it nullifies the labour of those who have produced; it leaves the producer in the same position as if he had not produced at all.

It is evident, therefore, that all must work; there must be no exceptions. There is no use in one-half of a population working and producing, and leaving the produce to rot because the other half who have not worked are not able to buy. Labour must be compulsory. The more labourers, the more wealth. If the poverty of a portion of a community be the direct cause of the poverty of the other portion, no matter how much the other portion may produce, then, the only remedy is to remove the poverty by compelling all to work. No other remedy is possible. Not only must all be compelled to work, all must be compelled to work in such a manner as to obtain the maximum result from their labour: the more work the more wealth.

But though actual poverty may be removed by compelling all to work, and a demand in general created for saleable commodities, still the evil of competition would remain. Certain branches of industry would compete with other branches of the same industry; and while such a condition would exist increased production would only have the effect of increasing the evil. Competition, therefore, must cease to exist. How can competition be made to cease? There is only one way: there must be equilibrium of occupations, that is, the various industries must be so balanced, that the amount produced in any one industry must not be a surplus of what there is a demand for. If the produce of any one industry were more abundant than there was a demand for, then there would be depression or stagnation in that industry. We do not mean, as some political economists mean who cry out that there is overproduction, that industries in general should be restricted; we mean only that industries should not be allowed to overgrow themselves. That does not mean that men should be kept half idle; if men are not wanted in one industry, there are plenty of other industries for them.

Hence we conceive that with every man working so that he may have something to give in exchange for his wants; with every man, aided by science, producing the greatest possible amount so that he may have the greatest possible amount to give in exchange for his unlimited wants; with equilibrium of occupations, so that no particular industry would produce more than the population naturally demanded, we conceive that poverty would be unknown; that the present barbarism and savagery of our civilisation would disappear; and society would have more of the elements of perfection.

NO-CAUSES AND FALSE REMEDIES.

I. OVER-POPULATION.—Since the dawn of political economy as a science, "over-population" has been adduced as one among the causes of poverty. That "over-population" is essentially a source of poverty is self-evident, if we attach any meaning at all to the word. If the population of the British Isles were such that in town and country,

moorland and upland, a man could just find elbow room, then indeed you would say we were over-populated; and should try to find elbow room in some other part of the globe. But we have not arrived at such straitened circumstances as that yet; we are in fact a considerable distance from that. It is one thing to say over-population is an evil; it is another to say the British Isles are over-populated. What part of the habitable globe was ever yet over-populated?

We maintain that "over-population" is not the cause of either of the two great evils which we have pointed out as the causes of poverty. We maintain there is no such phenomenon in the British Isles as "over-population." That there are multitudes who can get no employment is no reason for saying there are too many people here. These multitudes could get employment if labour were properly organised.

Evidently a large population does not diminish the productiveness of labour. Neither does the fact that there are multitudes without employment prove that there can be no work here for them; and that they should go elsewhere to find employment. That would be the case if the work of a country were identical with the work of miners, who having a limited quantity of work to do, must necessarily have it finished at some time. When the mine is worked out, they must go to some other mine. But the work of a nation is not identical with that. The manufacturer will never be in want of materials for labour. He can dig down 4,000 miles without injuring his neighbour. To illustrate further: Suppose a settlement of 1,000 persons had formed a society among themselves, and by judicious apportioning of occupations, had formed themselves into a miniature nation, in which each man found ample demand for the product of his labour, why could not 1,000, or 10,000 more settle down there too, provided they adopted and maintained the same internal organisation as the first thousand. Where everyone found demand for the product of his labour, there would be no cry of "over-population." But if that internal organisation were destroyed, and occupations lost their commercial equilibrium, then necessarily there would be a loss of employment for some. Suppose a few thousand missionaries were to go to Africa to evangelise the Hottentots, there would probably be a cry from some after a time that there was "over-population" in the Hottentot territory. But let these few thousand missionaries betake themselves to the making of drums, wooden pipes, spears, or whatever may be in demand, and the "over-population" would disappear. It is not "over-population" that causes want of employment; it is want of employment that causes "over-population." It is the want of equilibrium or organisation in the occupations of life that condemns men to walk about idle, when they earnestly desire to work. The existing poverty will not be alleviated by diminishing the population. As long as the various industries remain unorganised, as long as some are permitted to live in voluntary pauperism and beggary, as long as one industry is permitted to compete with another, to reduce the value of labour to its lowest value, so long, with "over-population," or a sparse population, poverty will exist.

II. LANDLORDISM.—No greater despotism or diabolical wrong than our present system of landlordism could exist on the surface of the earth. It has been the cause of misery and death to millions through all the centuries of its existence. It has given a few a monopoly over the soil of this earth, which was made for the human race; and thereby has consigned the happiness and lives of the many to the caprice or selfish tyranny of the few. Men have been forced by landlordism to life-long slavery, not for their own benefit, but for the benefit of others.

Humane men, therefore, seeing the evils of the accursed system, have cried out for the destruction of landlordism. Such a cry cannot and will not be vain. Landlordism, or private property in land, is unjust, and must be swept away. But though landlordism has restricted the spirit of progress in man, and prevented the development of natural wealth; it must be remembered that its abolition would be only half a remedy. Abolished it must be; but its abolition will not alone suffice as a foundation for national prosperity. There are many who believe that if private property in land were abolished, we would then be on the road to wealth and happiness. But land nationalisation would only be a means towards the first condition of wealth, viz., increased production. It would not accomplish the second condition, viz., equilibrium of occupations. Were the land owned by the State, we would then have co-operation in labour, aided by scientific machinery, as the suitable means of getting the greatest produce from the land. We would then expect increased production from the land. But without equilibrium of occupations there would be the same life and death struggle as now. Were the land possessed by the State there would be increased production; but what would that avail if competition forced down the prices of that produce to a low degree. Land must be nationalised, as the first condition towards increased production; it must be followed by equilibrium of occupations.

If State ownership be not of itself the whole remedy, how much less the ownership

called "Peasant Proprietary." You will not abolish the evils of landlordism by creating an army of landlords. You will not destroy a great evil, says Henry George, by chopping it up into small pieces. To talk of "peasant proprietary" bringing any appreciable happiness to the cultivators of the soil is to talk nonsense. It is said existing rents are too high. But suppose all the rent of the United Kingdom were abolished, what perceptible benefit would it be to any individual in the United Kingdom? The rental of the land of the "United Kingdom" is about £67,000,000. Were rent abolished, it would be equivalent to a donation of less than £2 for every one of the population. "Well, you say that itself would be something." Yes, indeed; it would procure for each a suit of clothes, or some trifling playtoy. It may be said that present high rents are the cause of great poverty; but you will not introduce an era of blessedness or tolerable prosperity by merely reducing them, or even abolishing them. In our present social condition a few pounds is a matter almost of Life or Death for many; but if the life of man is to be anything beyond the damnable inane anarchy of to-day, a few pounds will be a matter of indifference.

The present cultivators of the soil may desire to have the land sub-divided and allotted to them, to take their stand on it, and call it their own; but there are more people in the British Isles besides the cultivators of the soil. To-day the majority when they rise in the morning cannot point to any spot of earth, and say, "Here can I rest unsubjected to the caprice of any one man to drive me forth a wanderer." Were land allotted even in minute sub-divisions to individuals the same could not be said. The entire abolition of private property is necessary for the first condition of wealth. To sub-divide land would be a means of preventing co-operation, and far from introducing wealth, would probably be not a means towards a greater increase of production than we have at present. But whether there would be increased or decreased production would not be a matter of much moment as long as our present anarchy of labour existed.

The worst evils of humanity are associated with landlordism. These evils will not be abolished by instituting the system of landlordism on a small scale, or on any scale of it. The improvidence, recklessness, and poverty have been a necessary outcome of the system; and the effects will not be removed till the cause is removed.

III. OVERPRODUCTION.—Many remarkable cries have been raised since the creation of the world, but this cry of "Overproduction" seems to be the most remarkable. I do not see how any man of common intelligence would say there was such a thing as overproduction. "You have produced too much," they say; "the supply is greater than the demand." Well, I can only say with Carlyle "That is a novelty in this intemperate earth, with its nine hundred millions of bare backs!" Good heavens! what shall we say of the audacity of the man who stands up and declares too much has been produced. "The supply is greater than the demand." Indeed! And will you tell me at what time since the creation of Adam was there a greater demand for all the commodities which this world can supply? Millions of bare backs, shoeless feet, hatless heads, and empty stomachs; and still the cry is "there is too much produced." We who are workers call God to witness that we cannot lay our hands upon one-twentieth of what we demand. A supply to satisfy us may be existing on the earth, but gods and demons forbid us to touch it.

There are millions of commodities hanging up in the shops, and no one buys them. Very true. But if people came and bought as fast as you could take them down, you would not say then that there was "overproduction." People say there is overproduction when commodities cannot be sold. But why cannot they be sold? Evidently because those who would buy them have no money. And now the ultimate question, why the would-be buyers have no money, is the very question we are trying to solve, and certainly will not be solved by saying that overproduction is the cause of poverty and no demand; when the fact is that there was never in the world's history a time when workers required more if they could only obtain it. There are millions of commodities, I say, hanging up in shops and we cannot obtain them. We have no means of obtaining them. Give us the means of obtaining them and then there will not be overproduction. Grant us the means of producing more, and then we will have more to give in exchange for all these commodities rotting on shelves.

Increased production on the part of every one is the first condition of wealth; what absurdity then to say there is overproduction. For such a ravenous, covetous animal as man there could never be such a thing as overproduction.

And you would remedy what you call overproduction by compelling workers to cease their producing for some time until we all get naked and hungry, and then, you say there will be a universal demand for all kinds of commodities. But if I cannot obtain one-hundredth of what I want now, how will I obtain all what I want by ceasing to produce? The evil lies not with overproduction; it lies in the fact that there is not universal production—equilibrating production on each individual's part.

IV. FREE TRADE.—What does Free Trade mean? It means free and unrestricted importation of goods. Free Trade has been condemned as the cause of poverty and depression of trade. The various industries of the "United Kingdom" have had to compete with foreign produce. Such competition has had the effect of decreasing prices here, and creating overflowing markets. On such grounds has Free Trade been condemned.

But suppose we returned to either partial or complete prohibition, how would the two great evils of deficient production, and anarchy of occupations be remedied? To institute protection or prohibition either partially or wholly would be useless unless the industries were organised. The two essential remedies of increased production on the part of all and equilibrium of occupations, must be instituted first; all other remedies will be merely subsidiary.

Absolute Free Trade has its evils just as landlordism has its evils. But the abolition of Free Trade or landlordism would be of themselves only half remedies. No one can rationally deny that absolute Free Trade may ruin a country. Were the sole industry of the United Kingdom orange-growing, and had it to compete with Spain, it is evident our orange-growing would be useless. The natural advantages of one country may render some of its industries capable of destroying similar industries in other less favoured countries. Absolute Free Trade has not the advantages claimed for it. Its advocates point to the extension of our industries as a result of Free Trade. They point also to cheapened prices and say it has brought luxuries within the reach of all. But if prices of commodities have been cheapened, labour has also been cheapened, and consequently its good effects have been counteracted. As to the extension of industries, they have been forced into existence by pressure of competition. Absolute Free Trade cannot continue. It would be antagonistic to the equilibrium of occupations. We will retain what is lawful of Free Trade; we will abolish what is detrimental. We must have free what we cannot produce; we must prohibit what we can produce in abundance.

V. NON-CO-OPERATION.—There are some who say the poverty of the people can be remedied by co-operation among the people themselves. No one will deny that co-operation is the only means of getting the highest production from labour; but it must be remembered that there are two conditions for wealth and prosperity, viz:—Increased production and equilibrium of occupations. With co-operation, increased production would come, but not equilibrium of occupations. Competition would still be in existence, and would be at a higher rate than now. The fact that there is not general co-operation at present does not account for the universal poverty; for with co-operation, the competition of the various trades would tend towards their destruction.

VI. CAPITALISM.—The Socialists of to-day cry out for the abolition of capitalists. Capitalists have tyrannised over the workers; have given them wages barely able to sustain life; these have been the evils of capitalism. But capitalism is not universal; and yet poverty is universal. Were the existing system of capitalism swept away, and the operatives themselves formed into co-operative communities, by each one contributing a share of capital, I say even that would be no safeguard against competition and consequent depression. Co-operative societies have flourished; but that has been because of their limited number: if the whole British Isles were formed into co-operative communities there would still be competition. Co-operation truly means increased production, and consequently increase of wealth; but it in nowise means just distribution of wealth. With co-operative communities alone men may work as long and laboriously as now, and still reap very little benefits of it.

VII. INTEMPERANCE, IMPROVIDENCE, WANT OF EDUCATION.—It is said the evils of intemperance and improvidence have kept portions of the masses in a condition bordering on absolute starvation. The amount we spend in intoxicating drinks yearly in the British Isles is £126,000,000. It is about £3 per head of the population. Do you believe that by rooting out intemperance, and thereby saving to everyone that £3, you will perceptibly increase the welfare of the people? Three pounds granted to each individual in the year is only a matter of a plain loaf or a sweet one occasionally. We claim for every individual a life embracing all the advantages which modern civilisation can bestow. Do we possess that now; or are we in any slight degree approaching it? Intemperance must be destroyed as one of the many evils of life; but its destruction must be accompanied by intelligent scientific organisation of mankind. The one will not suffice without the other.

The want of technical education among our industrial classes has been assigned as one of the causes of our chronic poverty. We are said to be far behind some of the Continental countries. Truly, Germany was the first European country to recognise the advantage of technical training; and, as a consequence, she has made more progress than any other country in manufacturing. But at the same time there are two techni-

cally trained men in Germany for every one that can find employment suited to his training. All these so-called remedies are useless without equilibrium of occupations. You may train workmen to the highest degree in their profession but unless the number trained in each profession be regulated by the demand for them you will have competition among the members of these professions, and consequent low wages. Education alone therefore is no remedy.

HOW APPLY THE REMEDY.

Who is to apply the remedy? Who is to compel the unwilling to work; locate isolated workers into co-operation; and determine the equilibrium of occupations? Evidently such work is the work of a government.

At first sight there may appear difficulties in the way of applying the remedy. But why should there be a difficulty in applying a remedy if that remedy be proved to be for the benefit of the people. The first duty of the government would be to divide the population into industrial communities, so that each community may be capable of being centres for factories. The next duty would be to determine approximately the amount of every saleable commodity for which there would be a demand in every community. Let us suppose one of these industrial divisions to consist of 10,000 persons. We can determine approximately the number of shoes for these 10,000 persons to be 50,000 pairs in the year; the number of hats 40,000; the number of loaves of bread 30,000 per week. That being determined for such a community, we see that if one shoemaker could make 1,000 pairs of shoes in a year, then 50 shoemakers would be required for such a community. More shoemakers than 50 in that community would be an injury to each other. So if one hatter could make 1,000 hats in a year, then 40 hatters would be required for the same community. And if one baker could bake 3,000 loaves in a week, then 10 bakers would be required.

But you say, "What would the remaining 9,900 persons be doing?" Have we not wants enough to keep these 9,900 employed, even supposing an occupation to be allotted to each man. There are about 12,000 different occupations in the British Isles; every man needs a little of the service of each. Given the amount required to be produced; and also the amount each person is capable of producing, it is only a problem of arithmetic to find how many workers are required in each occupation, so as to create an equilibrium of supply and demand. The population of the British Isles is about 35,000,000; the amount of every commodity utilised in daily use by such a population can be determined. The number to be employed in each occupation can be determined.

We look forward to the development of science, and the means of shortening human labour, or, at least, the means of getting the greatest possible produce from a man's labour, as the principal means of increasing the welfare of man. You may object: In case machinery and science should be so developed, that comparatively few would be able by working all day to supply all the necessaries required by the population, multitudes would have no occupation; for the very reason, you say, that machinery, and all means of high production, would tend, as it has tended in the past, to throw persons out of employment. Granting that such a high rate of production may arise, and that comparatively few could supply multitudes, it would not follow, that equilibrium of occupations would be destroyed. If comparatively few, working ten hours a day could supply ten times their own number, then by reducing the time of labour down to one hour a day, both suppliers and supplied would have their share of work. The approximate amount of commodities of every description required for the population being determined; the numbers to be employed in each occupation, based on the resources of scientific research being determined; the next duty of the State would be to organise the factories already existing, and to institute others in localities naturally adapted to such factories.

In order that the State may institute and organise factories to the best advantage, it will be necessary for the State to be the owner of all lands and buildings. Land must therefore be nationalised. Society must be nationalised. Private individuals could not be left in possession of either buildings or land; because the tenants would have to pay rent to the owners; and the payment of rent or interest to any private individual is another name for tyranny and robbery. The State must become the owner of all lands, railways, ships, buildings, and all means of distribution and exchange. Compensation must be given for all these. How much compensation should be given; or whether any should be given for land, are debatable questions; but those who are desirous that our present system of anarchy and poverty should cease, will not dispute about reasonable compensation. Following, however, computations already made, the land value of the United Kingdom has been estimated at £2,000,000,000; the railways

£4,900,000,000. To say the State is to become the owner of all this property means that the people are to become the owners of it. Each one would contribute an equal share towards possession of the common property. Following the above calculation, each one's share would be about £140 for everyone of the population. In our present circumstances that appears a large amount; but under the Social Government I have advocated I anticipate the consideration of the sum as insignificant. The State could become the owner by a number of years' purchase. No loan need be effected; as the property in the United Kingdom has been the work of millions who have worked while they starved, it is only just that those who call themselves owners should wait a little for compensation to be paid them.

The State should have the whole control of labour. No private adventurers or speculators could be permitted to disturb the equilibrium of labour once established. The State would be the capitalist and employer of labour. Every individual would receive his appointment from the State. The occupation allotted to each individual would be determined by the State according to that individual's natural and acquired intelligence.

Labour would be compulsory on all; for as the demand for one man's production depends on the production of another, if labour were not compulsory we would not have that great amount of production, which is the first condition of wealth.

The imports should be regulated so as not to interfere with the established equilibrium of occupations. Any article capable of being produced in adequate quantities for the United Kingdom should be strictly prohibited from being imported. It may be said, that means Protection: we have given up Protection, and to return to it is impossible. But as long as absolute Free Trade would exist, there would necessarily be competition and a forcing down of the value of labour to its lowest point. There must be complete Free Trade in those commodities which we cannot produce in this country; but there must also be prohibition against the importation of commodities which can be produced in sufficient quantities at home.

At present, prices are determined by competition: establishing equilibrium of occupations, prices will be determined by the equitable value of labour expended on the production of the saleable articles.

With such an organisation of labour, the conditions which are necessary for wealth would exist; the circumstances which originate and perpetuate poverty would disappear. There would be increased production by all, which is the first condition for increase of wealth for all. With everyone producing, there can be, strictly speaking, no poverty, though the things produced may not be readily exchanged. With equilibrium of occupations competition would not exist; for, no surplus in any branch of industry existing, there would be no room for competition. Competition exists only where there is a surplus of production. Hence with increased production and a co-ordinate demand, the conditions of wealth and social well-being would be realised.

OBJECTIONS.

But is it not true that our factories are yielding an enormous amount of produce; as much as we could ever hope them to produce, and still the operatives are not wealthy? Very true; but the rate of production may still increase, and the wages of operatives remain the same. Competition is capable of keeping the wages of workmen at their lowest rate. Until competition ceases no benefits will be derived from increased production.

But is not competition a beneficial thing? Does not competition procure for us cheap food and clothing? Yes; and bad food and bad clothing. Even grant that you get labour at a cheap rate also?

Land must be nationalised. Society must be nationalised. That means that the State shall be the owner of all lands, buildings, railways, ships, and all the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Those who possess property at present must therefore be compensated when the State assumes the ownership. The value of the State purchase all the land, buildings, and everything thereon? The value of the land alone of the "United Kingdom" has been estimated at £2,000,000,000. It appears a large sum, but it is not £60 per head of the population. Under the organisation of Nationalised Society, that amount would be considered almost insignificant. It has been demonstrated that if machinery were properly applied, less than two hours work a day for every man above twenty-one would enable all to live in comfort. Only about one-fourth of our adult population are employed in producing, and the value of

their labour is calculated at £1,300,000,000 a-year. That great income is derived from inferior machinery: how great the amount of the annual labour would be if all persons able to work were employed, and using proper machinery.

It may be argued also that in a very wealthy community where all would become supplied with certain articles, say watches, there would not be any employment for watchmakers, and consequently there would not be any employment for them. Though a watch is an article that lasts a considerable time, in a wealthy community there would be a constant demand for new styles, or new inventions in watches just the same as there is now a continuous demand for new styles of hats. Even if the demand decreased the surplus watchmakers could be organised into some cognate branch of business.

It is said that the only remedy we want for Poverty is to increase and promote habits of industry and economy among the working classes. Everyone sees the need of that; but everyone does not see there is need of something else. People cry out for industry, production, and economy, believing justly that these are elements of wealth; but how few there are who raise their voices against competition, which is capable of nullifying the effects of industry and economy. Is there any thinking man who ignores the evil of competition; who does not see it is competition that compels men to work longer, to work harder, to reap little benefit from work, and the weak to be crushed down and trampled upon by the strong? A man may eke out an existence with industry or no industry, with economy or no economy, with over-production or under-production; but when competition comes to bear upon him he must either sink or swim.

ADVANTAGES OF THE REMEDY.

The system which we have sketched would bring wealth and leisure; which means all the advantages or luxuries man is capable of enjoying. Life at present is both an inanity and a warfare. The masses are so crushed that far from aspiring to wealth, they are satisfied if they can gain enough to sustain life. Life is to them therefore an inanity: a mere automical drudgery; man himself a mere mass of organic forces. Those whose instincts for progress will not permit them to drag out their lives as serfs, but urges them onward—the same men will find life a warfare, a ravenous scramble between each other for whatever there may be any chance of getting. In one word there is no happiness for any man in our present social condition.

[[I]]l the end of the world, men must work; we acknowledged the right and duty of every man to work. And that system which condemns some to work for the maintenance of others, is it not damnable? We acknowledged the right of every man to work; but not the right of another to rob him of the fruits of his work. Brain conquers muscle; cunning prevails over honesty; and the indolent manage to get themselves supported by the labour of others. Such a system must cease. Equilibrium of occupations being established, the hosts of merchants, lawyers, doctors who manage to get supported without giving labour in return, would then find themselves in a position where they could live without practising extortion and injustice.

One of the greatest evils of our present social condition is the fact that a man who is willing and anxious to work, and eager for advancement, cannot realise his ambition. You may put before you in the commencement of life, some end to be attained; you may sacrifice your whole life, your money, your health, and go to the grave worn out with anxiety; but the object of your ambition still unattained. The greatest condemnation of any system, I say, is the fact, that a man is desirous of becoming nobler, and longing to lead a more human life, and yet is prevented from attaining these ends by that system. Is there a man who, having in him the least instinct of nobleness, the least feeling of what human life ought to be, has not cursed the social system that prevented him from realising the lawful aspirations of nature. Each man plodding away at his daily drudgery longs for some nobler mode of life; knows that in reality he is above the irrational animals, but feels that actually his life is inferior to theirs. Each man longs to relieve himself from poverty, drudgery, and ignorance; but still there is no chance for him. Do you say it is impossible? Do you mean to say it is impossible that there could be no poverty in the world? I know there are persons who think so. I know there are persons who believe that the existing universal poverty must as necessarily exist as the law of gravitation; and that it is ordained by the Creator of the Universe. I make no reply to such a blasphemous assertion as that last; those who believe that the Creator of this Universe is such a tyrant as to condemn human beings to misery, deserve nothing else but poverty. The pious ascetic exclaims: Poverty and tribulation prevent people from committing crime. Indeed! But when all rational men can see that poverty has been the ultimate cause of all the crime and evils of the

world, what then can be said in its favour? Poverty has existed now for some hundreds and thousands of years; but that is no proof that it is impossible to remove it. Poverty has existed for centuries, not because of any laws of the Creator, but because of the laws of men—because of Might against Right. The day has now come when the few shall not trample the many; when Might and Right shall be on the same side. A nobler life than the present is possible for every man; I have shown it to be possible. No laws of God or the Devil prevent it being possible; it is man himself that renders it impossible.

The human race want organisation of labour, equilibrium of occupations. The era that introduces that, will be a blessed one. Then the time, money, and energy a man will expend will not be spent in vain; he will gain some reward for his labour. If his ambition be reasonable he will have the satisfaction of seeing it gratified. The inhuman feline scramble for wealth will then cease. The evil deeds which men commit in order to attain ends they cannot attain by fair means will no longer be necessary. Men will not then be afraid to live; self-destruction will not be necessary to end the miseries which are the companions of poverty.

Men too will become more human; more God-like; less brutal; less demon-like. Incessant drudgery, which deforms the body and leaves no opportunity for intellectual culture or enjoyment will vanish into the past. Society then will deserve the name. Each human being brought into this world will be deemed a blessing, not a curse. A bright era of intelligence will take the place of stupidity and ignorance. Men will realise that we cannot live without society; that the more intelligent a man is, the better for his neighbour. "It is as real a loss," says Emerson, "that others should be low, as that we should be low; for we must have society."

WHO IS TO APPLY THE REMEDY?

Here let us ask the question: How is it that although schemes for the welfare of mankind have been propounded, have been demonstrated to be for the good of the people, have been fought for, still they are unaccomplished? The masses through all ages have wished to be emancipated from their slavery; there have been brave men through all ages who have struggled for their redemption; yet their redemption has not been realised. How comes it? Well, the reasons are clear. The people of a country are compelled to be subject to the laws of the country. The laws for the masses of mankind have through centuries been made by the few who have made them in their own interest. From the dawn of history the few who have managed to get possession of the wealth and power have made laws to degrade others in order to elevate themselves. The laws were not made to benefit the people, because those who made the laws did not represent the people.

But you say we have changed all that now; the lawmakers now represent the people—at least the people give them the opportunity of making laws. Perfectly true. But though the masses have the power of electing persons to represent them in national assemblies, of what use is that if the people who are to decide for or against Reform are so ignorant concerning social evils and social remedies that they are unable to know the merits or demerits of the remedies proposed. One-half of the people of a country are generally opposed in their opinions on social questions to the other half. Not till the majority of the people are freed from hallucinations; not till they come to understand thoroughly the real causes of human poverty, and the futility of the so-called remedies of to-day, can you expect any more blessed era than the one we live in. The people must be educated. Till that is accomplished, nothing is accomplished. It is folly to suppose that because people are taught to read, they will read, or will be capable of seeking out for themselves a solution to the problem of human misery. It is true the masses are able to read: it is in no wise true that they are able to think. For the thousand men says Ruskin, who can read and speak, you will find one who can think. The masses are ignorant and indifferent. If there is to be a nobler life for them their ignorance and indifference must vanish. "Why are the masses," says Emerson, "from the dawn of history down, food for knives and powder"? The heirloom of the masses from the dawn of history down, has been poverty and misery; and they have grown so accustomed to it that they take it for granted that poverty must exist in the world. They have no hope beyond the present. Their only desire is to obtain sufficient to keep them alive. We can account for such a low standard of human progress; for anyone who looks around him, and sees the cruel wrongs and sufferings that men endure without uttering a word of complaint, will also see that poverty and misery are looked upon as a thing which must necessarily be, and for which there is no remedy.

When the ignorance of the people will pass away, their indifference will pass away. They must be educated: in that lies the hope of better things. They must be taught

that there is a remedy for poverty, They must be made to know what that remedy is. Alas! what a world of labour lies open there before all earnest men.

One of the many reasons which have kept, and are still keeping nations in a state of slavery, has been the absence of organised union. They who fight for nobler aims must fight in unison. And not a union of sentiments alone will win the battle; but steady, wise co-operation. Can you point to any nation where the people as a whole are acting in real unison for their common good? No. The masses condemned to toil for mere subsistence, either in the dingy lanes of crowded cities, or on the lone wastes of mountain land, have no time or energy to think of remedies for social evils even if they would. Do I then expect from these downtrodden masses the commencement of a new era? No; but I look forward to those select few to whom the favour of Nature and Human Destiny have given souls capable of feeling for the degradation of their fellow-men, and clear-sighted intelligence to see wherein lies the cause of our miseries. I look forward to those noble and courageous few who have endured the worst hardships of life, have triumphed over them, and are determined to lead a nobler existence or die. I look not to the things called "Governments" for the advancement of a nation, but to the nation itself. "What intellect," says Carlyle, "can regulate the affairs of these millions of labouring men? No one—great and greatest intellect can do it. What can? Only these millions of ordinary intellects, once awakened into action; these well presided over may do it." By each individual getting a clear idea of what he is to do, and what must be done—only by that means can a nation prosper.

But how can the people be educated? Let us learn from the past. Men have laboured in the past, and have written books to point out to mankind a pathway from their slavery, but their efforts have been vain; they have passed away unknown to the working millions. Even to-day movements are on foot for the regeneration of the human race; but the nature of these movements are known only to those immediately connected with them. It is not sufficient to scatter noble opinions broadcast; there are barren soils for them to fall on. It is in the real contact of mind with mind that the dormant intelligence rouses itself into action. Men come together in the market place to buy and sell the scanty produce of each others' labour; but they must also come together in order to elevate human existence.

Looking forward earnestly to the advent of a more human existence, and asking myself the grounds of my hope, I again appeal to those noble few in whom the spirit of Right and Justice must make itself known against oppression and injustice. Ye courageous Few! my hope rests upon you. Organize! organize! organize your fellow-men. They are ignorant, and know not the way; you must point it out to them. The poor two-footed slave far away on his mountain patch knows nothing of you or of your thoughts till you speak. Hide not, I say, the light that has been given you. Gather together your fellow-men in the thoroughfares and there teach them that a nobler life than a life of slavery is possible for every man. The doctrines which have caught men's hearts, and which they have followed for centuries, were so preached. Teach them there is a remedy for all the miseries of our present existence; that they themselves are to apply it. Is there a man who shall dare to say we are well enough? For the base, worthless, indifferent you must have pity. You may have enemies, as all noble men have had since the creation of the world. But fear not; the spirit of a nobler existence is abroad, and the time of man's redemption is at hand. The institutions of the past have failed to bring social happiness to mankind. They must change. There are some who cannot foresee the good a change may bring them; but fear they may lose by it. These will be your enemies. But venture forward; you shall have the many millions on your side. You may make sacrifices, but you should remember that there is but one life given you, and no chance for you for evermore after that. The tomb shall close over you, and your chance of leading a noble life and of causing others to lead it shall have passed away for ever.

Is life worth living at present? "Life is an ecstasy" says Emerson; but alas how few there are who can say likewise. Is it worth living a life of monotonous drudgery? There is no form of life worth living at the present moment if it be not in combatting with all the energy that is in you against the tyrannical wrongs, the insane bedlam delusions of our age. No Demon-God is ruling over and condemning you to misery and scorn. If we are in misery it is because of our own unwisdom. Then why are we unwise? If the life of man can be elevated why not attempt it? This beautiful earth was made for us, and shall we be condemned to drag out our existence in some obscure corner without any chance of beholding the fairest portions of it? The wonders of creation and the knowledge and secrets gained by generations are unknown to the mass of men: they are born and they die as the lower animals. Let us then urge forward, fearing not for the cause that has Justice and the masses of men on its side, heeding not

the opposition of those who foolishly fear a change, and be determined that we must have a better life, or die nobly struggling for it. Let us not fear: we shall not be alone, the whole civilized world has risen against tyranny, oppression, and slavery. When all men shall know each others efforts, and shall be bound together in one common brotherhood, to demand freedom it shall not be denied them.

SUMMARY.

CHAP. I.—The feelings of man are easily aroused; he will rise up in resentment against an angry look or word. But why not arise with noble indignation and with earnest endeavour strive to throw off the yoke of poverty that outrages all the dearest instincts of man?

CHAP. II.—Why are we poor? We are poor because, first, we do not produce enough; second, the demand for the products of labour is not co-ordinate with production itself.

CHAP. III.—How, then, can we increase the produce of labour? By co-operation; by the establishment of factories; by the highest adaptation of scientific machinery; by compulsory labour.

CHAP. IV.—How maintain a co-ordinate demand for the produce of labour? By establishing equilibrium of occupation; by having as many workers in an occupation and no more than the wants of the community necessitate.

CHAP. V.—What are the false remedies for our universal poverty? Diminution of population, destruction of landlordism, restriction of production, protection, co-operation, abolition of capitalism, education, temperance, providence.

To diminish population by emigration or other means, and still leave occupations disorganised, will not cause any decrease in the universal poverty. The United Kingdom seems to be over-populated because the workers are not organised. In a community either populous or otherwise, without equilibrium or organisation of occupations, the great monster of Competition will exist. So with the other false remedies, which are no remedies because such phenomena as over-population, over-production, intemperance, improvidence are the *effects* of poverty and the disorganisation of occupations; while the abolition of landlordism, free trade, and capitalism would be only half-remedies.

HOW APPLY THE REMEDY.

CHAP. VI.—The State would (1st) determine approximately the amount of every saleable commodity necessary for the population. (2nd) It should determine the number of workers to be employed in each industry, so as to produce the amount required, and no more. (3rd) The occupations so organised should be carried on co-operatively, totally under State supervision, compulsorily. The State must be the owner of all lands, conveyances, means of transit, of distribution and exchange. Everything tending to destroy equilibrium of occupations should be prohibited.

OBJECTIONS.

CHAP. VII.—Is not our production as high as we could expect? Does not competition bring cheap articles within the reach of all? How is it possible for the State to buy up such immense property as the land, railways, ships, buildings? At the high rate of production proposed, would not some industries in a short time produce so much that there would be no further use for them? Would not increased habits of industry, thrift, and temperance remove poverty?

ADVANTAGES OF THE REMEDY.

CHAP. VIII.—Life would cease to be an inanity and a warfare. To become rich it would not be necessary for one to prey on another. A man's ambition would be realised. Inhuman strife and dark deeds would be unknown. Man will become more god-like, less demon-like.

WHO IS TO APPLY THE REMEDY?

CHAP. IX.—The people must apply the remedy. The people must be educated, must be made to understand there is a remedy for poverty; that they themselves are to apply the remedy. They must be taught that poverty is the worst crime in the world; that there are many, their oppressors few. They must know that henceforth their watchwords must be "Union!" "Organisation!" You whom nature has gifted with a love of justice and nobleness, be you in the vanguard, and in social circle or public thoroughfare, by word and action, proclaim the doctrine of man's social redemption!

SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PROGRAMME.

OBJECT.

The Establishment of a Free Condition of Society based on the principle of Political Equality, with Equal Social Rights for all and the complete Emancipation of Labour.

PROGRAMME.

1. All Officers or Administrators to be elected by Equal Direct Adult Suffrage, and to be paid by the Community.
2. Legislation by the People, in such wise that no project of Law shall become legally binding till accepted by the Majority of the People.
3. The Abolition of a Standing Army, and the Establishment of a National Citizen Force; the People to decide on Peace or War.
4. All Education, higher no less than elementary, to be Free, Compulsory, Secular, and Industrial for all alike.
5. The Administration of Justice to be Free and Gratuitous for all Members of Society.
6. The Land with all the Mines, Railways and other Means of Transit, to be declared and treated as Collective or Common Property.
7. Ireland and all other parts of the Empire to have Legislative Independence.
8. The Production of Wealth to be regulated by Society in the common interest of all its Members.
9. The Means of Production, Distribution and Exchange to be declared and treated as Collective or Common Property.

As measures called for to palliate the evils of our existing society the Social-Democratic Federation urges for immediate adoption:—

The Compulsory Construction of healthy artizan's and agricultura labourers' dwellings in proportion to the population, such dwellings to be let at rents to cover the cost of construction and maintenance alone.

Free Compulsory Education for all classes, together with the provision of at least one wholesome meal a day in each school.

Eight Hours or less to be the normal working day in all trades.

Cumulative Taxation upon all incomes above a fixed minimum not exceeding £300 a year.

State Appropriation of Railways, with or without compensation.

The establishment of National Banks, which shall absorb all private institutions that derive a profit from operations in money or credit.

Rapid Extinction of the National Debt.

Nationalisation of the Land, and organisation of agricultural and industrial armies under State control on Co-operative principles.

As means for the peaceable attainment of these objects the Social-Democratic Federation advocates:

ADULT SUFFRAGE. ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS. PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. PAYMENT OF MEMBERS; AND OFFICIAL EXPENSES OF ELECTION OUT OF THE RATES. ABOLITION OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND ALL HEREDITARY AUTHORITIES. DISESTABLISHMENT AND DISENDOWMENT OF ALL STATE CHURCHES.

Membership of Branches of the Federation is open to all who agree with its objects, and subscribe One Penny per week.

Those ready to form Branches should communicate with the

Secretary, Social-Democratic Federation, Bridge House, Blackfriars, E.C.

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