

GS243

THE
SOCIAL QUESTION.

A SPEECH DELIVERED BY

DEPUTY JOHANN JACOBY,

TO HIS CONSTITUENTS OF THE SECOND ARRONDISSEMENT
OF BERLIN, ON THE 20TH JANUARY, 1870

“Men shall not be masters and servants, for all are born to liberty.”
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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—
1870.

TO JAMES

THE



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DEAR FELLOW CITIZENS AND FRIENDS,

The mandate you have confided to me expires with the close of the present session of Parliament. I am happy that this meeting of my constituents gives me an opportunity of thanking you once more for the confidence you have so faithfully and truthfully continued to place in me at a time when political convictions are vacillating in the extreme.

The last time I addressed you from this tribune, I essayed to

BUT YOU ALL KNOW THAT THIS WONDER HAS BEEN GREATLY FACILITATED, without the aid of the gods, in the most natural manner in the world, namely, by insight into the laws and by employment of the forces of nature; that which appeared formerly impossible to the wisest of the Greeks, is realised daily under our eyes. But how has this miracle come about? How has this happy result been brought to pass, which Aristotle anticipated, of such a state of things?

Experience teaches us that by the grand mechanical discoveries which have been made in our time, national riches have immeasurably increased, but that the unfortunate and painful lot of the laborious classes has been at best but ameliorated.

ERRATA.

- Page 1, last line, for "laborious," read *labouring*.
- Page 5, line 14 from bottom, for "restoring," read *restricting*.
- Page 7, line 20 from top, after "credit," put a comma.
- Page 7, line 3 from bottom, for "gem," read *germ*.
- Page 8, line 22 from bottom, for "only," read *on*.
- Page 10, line 14 from top, for "these," read *other*.
- Page 12, line 10 from top, after "does," put *not*.
- Page 12, line 2 from top, for "verum," read *rerum*. Same page
line 2 from bottom, for "law" read *labour*.
- Page 16, line 13 from bottom, after the word "majority," insert
—of *mankind as wage-labourers*.

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The mandate you have confided to me expires with the close of the present session of Parliament. I am happy that this meeting of my constituents gives me an opportunity of thanking you once more for the confidence you have so faithfully and truthfully continued to place in me at a time when political convictions are vacillating in the extreme.

The last time I addressed you from this tribune, I essayed to explain to you the end which the radical German party had in view, and above all, its position with regard to the working men's agitation; permit me to-day to take as the subject of my deliberation, this working men's movement itself, or, as it is ordinarily termed, the social question. The political and social conditions of a country being intimately allied, every elector has a right to demand a declaration of social as well as political faith from his deputy. I shall endeavour to answer this question with entire frankness. Aristotle, one of the greatest thinkers of humanity, divides mankind into two classes—free men and men born for slavery. He pretends that the Greeks, thanks to their independent character, were called to dominate over other nations, whilst the barbarian races were destined either to be governed or for slavery. He sees a social necessity in this institution—he considers it as an essential and indispensable basis of the State and of society; for supposing that free citizens should find themselves under the necessity of providing by their labour for the needs of life, whence could arise the desire to form their intellect, and the leisure to occupy themselves with affairs of State? And yet, gentlemen, we find in Aristotle a remarkable passage concerning the possibility of a state of society without slavery. If there were animated instruments (automatons) he says, capable of rendering us those services now performed by slaves; if each of these instruments, comprehending or even acting in advance of the wish of man, could execute the labour confided to him after the manner of the Statutes of Dædalus and the tables of Héphæstus, which, according to Homer, entered of their own accord into the chambers of the gods; if the shuttles could weave alone, and guitars could perform melodies without musicians, then weavers would have no need of workmen, nor masters of slaves.

But you all know that this wonder has in great part already been realised, without the aid of the gods, in the most natural manner in the world, namely, by insight into the laws and by employment of the forces of nature; that which appeared formerly impossible to the wisest of the Greeks, is realised daily under our eyes. But how has this miracle come about? How has this happy result been brought to pass, which Aristotle anticipated, of such a state of things?

Experience teaches us that by the grand mechanical discoveries which have been made in our time, national riches have immeasurably increased, but that the unfortunate and painful lot of the laborious classes has been at best but ameliorated.

Permit me now, in conformity with enlarged experience, further to develop the dream of Aristotle. Let us suppose that in some distant future of the human race, the entire soil of the globe shall have passed into a state of private property, and that man, by the progress of science, shall have acquired the mastery of nature, that the inventions of mechanism shall have attained such a state of perfection, that machines shall be constructed, and shall practise by means of other machines, so that all physical labour shall have become superfluous, or that at least its necessity shall have been reduced to a minimum. What would be the result of such a state of things?

It will then naturally happen that in virtue of the force of attraction, which the greater capital exercises upon the lesser, a relatively small number of rich persons will find themselves in the possession of all the machines and all the means of labour; it is to this small number alone to whom the common revenues of the country will accrue, as well as all the wealth which is necessary for the wants and the pleasures of life, and that from a point of view now admitted as just.

But what would happen under such circumstances—and granted the complete depreciation of labour—what would become of the disinherited mass of the working proletariat, if the charity of the possessors of capital did not come to their rescue?

What other resource would remain open to these unfortunate people, but the alternative of dying of hunger, or modifying in their own favour the existing relationships of society and of property, either by force or by fraud?

It will be said that this is a vain phantom, proposed to frighten us, and that a similar state of society will never be realised, either in the present or in the future. I admit this—not however, because the thing in itself is impossible—but because it is impossible that intelligent men will allow matters to reach such a point. But can we hide from ourselves the fact that existing social life, based as it is upon the domination of capital, and upon the system of wages, tends to such a direction, that unless obstructed, it would lead us nearer every day towards a state like that we have just described? Must we not acknowledge, that even at the present time, the distribution of the common revenues of the country is made in such a manner that, at least, a part of the working proletariat is exposed to the distress we have depicted.

In such a condition of things, it is the incumbent duty of every honest and thoughtful man, to put to himself the following question:—

How can we modify the present relations of society and property, so as to realise a more equitable distribution of the common revenue, and to obviate the distress of the working classes, which daily assumes more extended proportions?

In examining more closely the problem, the solution of which we seek, there are two principal features which characterise the economic relationships of the existing order of society, and which

distinguish it from those of the past—the *system of wages and great collective industry*.

In the past, the social labours were executed in a great measure by slaves or serfs; since the great French Revolution, there have no longer existed seigniorial rights of man over man.

By right, that is to say legally, every workman is free and disposes of himself, but in the fact, he is anything but independent. Deprived of the necessary means and conditions of labour, without any other property but the faculty of labour, he sees himself under the necessity of working in the service of another for "wages," and for wages which scarcely suffice for the bare maintenance of life. If he finds no demand for the sole merchandise he has to dispose of, that is to say, for his labour, he falls with those depending on him into extreme misery. Notwithstanding this painful and precarious situation, a labourer could with difficulty be found, who would return to the ancient social state; what he wants is an existence worthy of a man, and he knows that it is in liberty alone that he can attain it.

As the French Revolution declared the labourer free as regards his person, it also delivered property from the fetters of the middle ages; without regard to primitive obligations and destinations, it gave him who was then in possession the absolute right to dispose of his property.

This liberation of property, the employment of steam which soon followed, and the general introduction of machinery into workshops, introduced great and weighty changes into economic and social relations. Trades and small commerce were more or less driven into the background: commerce upon a large scale, and great industry, that is to say, production by capital, took their place. Nevertheless, painful as became the situation of the poorer workman and of the small dealer by this change, the advantages of great collective industry are too important with regard to the development of civilisation for society ever to forego them. A return to small commerce and to small trade is for the future as impossible as a return to statute labour.

In consequence, we must confine our question to the following propositions:—

How can we, without restoring the liberty of labour, and without prejudicing the progress obtained by industry (on a large scale), realise a more equitable distribution of the common revenue, and one more suited to the interest of *all*?

The answer for us at least cannot be a doubtful one; there is but one means which can lead us to this end: *The abolition of the wage-system and the substitution in its place of co-operative labour*.

Whoever can read the signs of the times, will not deny that this is the thought, which more or less consciously is at the bottom of all working men's movements in every country of Europe. Just as slavery and serfdom, which were also formerly held to be *necessary* social institutions, have everywhere given way to the wage-system, so impends to-day a revolution of the same kind, and not less important; namely, the transition of the

wage-system to labour, and labour free and equal in the right of association. It is needful so to act, that this revolution be effected in the most peaceful manner, which cannot happen except by the unanimous concurrence of all the social forces interested in it.

The question which now occupies us should therefore be thus stated :—

What must (1st) the workman, (2nd) the manufacturer—the possessor of capital, (3rd) the State do, to advance the transition already commenced towards production by association, and to conduct it to a good issue in the interests of the community ?

We see that, to answer this question, we have nothing to do but review the facts which are occurring before us, a certain proof that we find ourselves at present in the midst of a social change.

(1.) With regard to the workman himself, it is needful, above all, that he should have a clear idea of his position, and that he should learn to know and to respect the nobler side of human nature that is within him.

We have already said that, in general, the wages of the labourer suffice only for the miserable support of himself and of his family. If any one doubts this pitiful condition of wages, we would refer him to the testimony rendered some time back by a Commission of the Customs to Parliament, in a report upon the estimate of the wages of workmen; it is written in striking terms.

“We cannot allow the assertion that there is a sensible difference between the wages of the workman and the means necessary for his bare maintenance to pass unnoticed. The amount of wages is precisely the point around which the whole of the social question practically moves. Workmen affirm the insufficiency of wages, the employers do not contest this in principle, but they declare the amount of wages to be a fixed link in the chain of economic phenomena, and that under the control of the market in which they find themselves, they cannot arbitrarily change it without breaking the whole chain. As long as this contest is not decided, and we fear that it may be eternal (*sic*), we must rest ourselves as being the sole point of any real solid foundation upon the opinion that the two terms, ‘wages’ and ‘means of indispensable existence,’ generally compensate each other.” “*The indestructible chain of economic phenomena!*” Really one could scarcely find a more striking expression! Doubtless, the lords of capital and the dispensers of labour will not be impeded in the accumulation of capital upon capital; but very heavily does this “chain of economic phenomena” weigh upon the working classes. And yet here again the saying of the poet confirms itself—

“There dwells a spirit of good even in that which is evil!”

The dominant industrial system whilst necessitating the assemblage of large masses of labourers in the same locality, furnishes at the same time the first step for doing away with the evil it engenders. As man learns from a glass the knowledge of the features of his own face, so the salaried workman attains to a complete acquaintance of his situation only by perceiving his own

condition reflected in the common misery of his companions in suffering. In common with his equally ill-favoured and equally oppressed companions, by constant intercourse and exchange of ideas with his equals, by the mutual co-operation of reciprocal assistance and of defence against the common danger, there is developed by degrees among the workmen a bond of brotherhood, which supports individuals, educates them, and urges the whole body to struggle for their social rights. It is a singular occurrence that it should be production by capital that itself assembles and disciplines the forces destined to put an end to the domination of capital and of the classes which represent it.

It is from these great industrial agglomerations that the working men's movement has arisen, which for this last ten years has spread itself from England to France, to Belgium, to Germany, to Switzerland, and has acquired by the foundation of the International Association a precise form and a positive power. On all sides we find societies taking root, whose object is the amelioration of the material condition of the working classes; societies of artisans and of labourers, associations for instruction, for assistance, for consumption, for advances, and for credit unions for manufacture and production. It is to be foreseen, that under the pressure of prevailing financial and economical relationships, all these institutions proceeding from the workman alone, and founded upon the principle of "self-help," will prove insufficient in the face of the common wants. But their services will have been considerable in aiding the intellectual and moral development of the working class and in starting a serious reform in the condition of labour. The true meaning of the inappreciable value of these associations consists in that, irrespectively of their specific end, they form a school for the members of the Association, and render them capable of managing their own affairs as well as of co-operating efficaciously with others. By education, by progress in the knowledge of affairs, and by the development of a friendly lien among the workmen, they prepare them insensibly to pass from the wage-system now in vigour to the system of production by association, which is that of the future.

It was the spirit of association which elevated the laborious citizen class, in the middle ages, to such a high degree of civilization, of well being, of power, and of importance. The awakening of this spirit of association, will lead us in our own days to results, similar, yet more fruitful, not for a single state, but for the entire human society.

The labour question, as we understand it, is not a question of mere bread and money; it is a question of justice, of civilization, and of humanity. Our pretended saviours of the State and Society, "the glorious conquests of politics by blood and iron," will long, like a superannuated legend, have fallen into the profoundest oblivion, when it will be accorded as a merit to our time to have awakened and fostered the spirit of association, the gem of human virtue and greatness. By this means, our epoch will have laid the foundations of a new social life founded upon the

principles of equality and fraternity. The creation of the most insignificant working man's association, will be to the future historian of civilization of more importance than the sanguinary day of Sadowa!

Let us proceed now to the second question.

(2.) What ought the manufacturer, the enterprising possessor of capital, to do?

All we ask of him is simply to consider in each workman, "the man;" we ask of him to recognise, and to treat the hired man he employs as a being who has exactly the same rights as himself—in one word, as his equal.

Every medal, it is said, has two sides; in this saying there is a good deal of popular good sense; the most difficult problems of science and of life find therein a satisfactory solution. Just as the medal, man also has two sides: the one peculiar to him as an individual; the other general, stamping him as a member of a great community. In fact, these two sides are inseparable and without a defined limit, for it is but in their entirety, and in their unity that they constitute man; but it is nevertheless possible that one of these two sides, temporarily or lastingly, may manifest itself in excess, and thus exercise a decisive influence upon our thoughts and upon our actions.

Let us suppose, for example, that it is the more particular or individual side, which allows itself to be felt and becomes preponderate in the conscience of a man. First of all, there will result a more exaggerated appreciation of personality, a deeper sentiment of his personal value and a greater confidence in self. "Aid yourself! man is his own architect." This is one man's motto, the rule of his thought and his actions. If he preserves at the same time his sentiment on the other side, that is only the general side of his existence, if he does not lose sight of the entirety, which binds him to his equals, he will say, that his own isolated forces will not suffice to procure for himself a life worthy of a man; that man can only live and prosper in the society of his fellow creatures, and that a fraternal co-operation with others is his interest if well understood.

Reverence for others, the sentiment of community and the spirit of fraternity, will constitute the necessary counterpoise to his egotism and self-confidence. But the case is quite different when this personal egotism develops itself to excess. Even then he will doubtless not overlook the insufficiency of his isolated individual power, for the consciousness of the general and universal side can never be completely stifled, but it is the consequences which he therefrom deduces, which are quite different; he will consider other men not as beings who are his equals, not as members of a great whole to which he himself belongs, and in which they have all equal rights with himself, but as members subordinated to his individual self, as simple instruments, destined to the satisfaction of his own wants and desires. It is thus that the personal feeling, so laudable in itself, degenerates into egotism—confidence in self into arrogance. Cupidity,

pride, ambition, will decide him to make of his neighbour a servant of his will, and of that which he deems his own interest.

What we have just said of each man in particular is true also of man in the abstract; the same forces which act upon the mind of the individual, act also upon the life of peoples, and upon the history of the human race.

Domination of man over man, right of the stronger, exploitation of the weaker, these are the characteristic features, which distinguished alike the history of antiquity and that of the middle ages. Is it otherwise at the present time?

Does not social order even to-day, notwithstanding our boasted progress, repose upon the same principle of human servitude?

Has the present epoch, in truth, a right to contemplate with pride and satisfaction its present state in contrast to the social relations of pagan antiquity, and the Christianized middle ages?

With a frankness which cannot well be surpassed, a statesman of the nineteenth century, Count Joseph de Maistre, thus expresses himself. "The human race has been created for the benefit of a few. It is the business of the clergy, of the nobility, and of the high functionaries of state, to teach the people that which is good or bad, true or false, in the moral and intellectual world. The rest of mankind have no right to reason on such subjects, and must suffer all things without a murmur."

If the style is somewhat highly-coloured, the portrait is taken from nature. As long as the leaders of the people "shall make war without consulting the people; as long as ecclesiastics shall unite in council or in synod to give judgment under the auspices of the Holy Ghost, upon the false science of man," we shall have no right to give a denial to de Maistre. His error consists alone in approving a similar state of things, and of supposing that such a state can and ought to last for ever.

Allow me to cite another testimony. From this double view the truth will be elicited.

Robert Owen, the founder of the co-operative system in England, meets one day in the house of a Frankfort banker, the renowned statesman, Frederick von Gentz. Owen expounded his socialistic system and displayed its excellence; if union could but replace disunion all men would have a sufficiency. "That is very possible!" replied von Gentz, "but we by no means wish that the masses should become at ease and independent of us, all government would then be impossible."

This, gentlemen, is in two words the social question of the present time! For Owen the enigma of the solution is, "union."

Gentz indicates the source of the evil which opposes this solution, "the spirit of domination among the privileged classes."

Aristotle, you will remember, also divided mankind into two classes: the one destined by nature to dominion, the other to servitude; but this difference was to be attributed to nationality, and it was the character of the Greek or the barbarian, which was the basis of his distinction. De Maistre and Gentz, on the contrary, established a distinction in the same race,

between a limited aristocracy called to power and well being, and the rest of the masses condemned to be governed and to suffer want.

If we consider the relationships of the Church, the State, or of society in general, everywhere, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact, that the domination of classes and the system of tutelage, such as it existed in the middle ages, are to be found. The only difference between the present and the past is that, thanks to the reform in Germany and the revolution in France, these convictions penetrate daily into lower and lower strata of society, and this state of things cannot last long.

It is now understood that man is not born to be governed, lorded over, condemned, and despoiled by his fellow-men; it is now exacted in fact, from the State and society, that these doctrines be seriously applied.

There was a time, and the oldest among you may remember it, when he who placed a doubt upon the right of absolute rule was declared a "rebel." In the same manner is treated in the present day, whosoever dares to shatter the chain of economic relations. Endeavour to attack the privileges of the well-to-do classes, the abuses of power of the great capitalists, the dominant system of credit; or only to talk of a more equitable distribution of material rights, in a certain sphere, you will be at once condemned as an enemy of all social order, as a heretic towards society and as a communist. But do not let this impede us from frankly and openly recognising this truth—that all individual property, material no less than intellectual, is at the same time the common good of society. Just as man, so has the property of man also its particular side, which makes it the property of the individual, and its general and universal side, upon which the community have positive claims. That the State and the commune levy rates and taxes upon the fortune of each individual, that the law should limit the disposal of property in each, is legitimate in the eyes of all.

But we demand, has not the proprietor other duties besides those which the law of the State prescribes, and when necessary imposes? Has he not duties towards society, as he has towards his family, the community, and the Church?

Is the sum total of what each man possesses in goods, real or personal, the product of his own activity? Is he not indebted for the greater part of it to the co-operation of others, to the common and social labour of his predecessors and his contemporaries? As the individual cannot attain property without the assistance and succour of others, so neither can he enjoy its fruits without the assistance and succour of others. It is only in society that property can have any value, it is only in society that man can enjoy his property. The moral duty of every proprietor is therefore to make such a use of his property, as shall profit not himself alone, but also the community at large, and especially that part of it less liberally endowed than himself.

"Riches are the wealth of all, when it is a man of worth who possesses them."

The remarkable working-men's movement of the last forty years has produced excellent results in this respect. It has awakened in the workman a sense of his social rights, and in the well-to-do classes a sense of social duty. We willingly acknowledge this; there are manufacturers to whom the workman is not a machine to be bought, like any other merchandise, at the lowest possible cost, in order to make the greatest profit, and then to be got rid of.

In England, France, and with us also in Germany, there are manufacturers, enterprises, commercial men, and great landed proprietors who make it a duty to ameliorate the hard lot of the workmen they employ, by raising their wages and reducing their hours of labour, by organising savings' banks, benefit societies for succour and for old age, by procuring healthy habitations for their workmen, and, at a small cost, asylums, hospitals, schools, &c. We designate in particular the system known under the name of participation in benefits (industrial partnership), by which the workman, besides his wages, obtains a share in the profits arising from his labour. In England alone, more than 10,000 workmen find themselves in this position with regard to the manufacturers, and the two parties have reason to be contented with the result.

But let us not forget that here again, all depends more or less upon the good will of the employer, and that under the most favourable supposition, only isolated workmen or groups of workmen find their condition ameliorated. However profitable these efforts may be as a means of education and preparation, they are not less insufficient as a remedy for the social evil arising from the system of wages, than the efforts made by the workmen themselves. To obtain this remedy another power is needed, that shall act in a general manner and upon all points.

And this leads us to our third question:—

(3.) What is to be done by the State to obtain a peaceable solution of the labour question?

The new Constitution of the Canton of Zurich, of the date of the 18th April, 1369, gives us the following answer:—

“Art. 23. The State promotes and facilitates the development of Association founded upon the efforts of individuals (self-help). It decrees by the agency of legislation all the necessary measures for the protection of the workman.

“Art. 24. It institutes a Cantonal Bank, with the object of developing a general system of credit.”

The primary drawing up of this project was yet more precise: it ran as follows:—

“Art. 23. It is the duty of the State to protect and to further the well-being of the working classes, as well as the free development of Associations.”

Art. 24. As above.

Protect and further—these two expressions clearly and precisely denote the end of the great Association termed the State. But what are we to understand from this direct protection and furtherance by the State?

The despot also terms himself the protector of the people, and war is extolled as a means for advancing civilization. *Vera verum vocabula amisimus.* "The real sense of words has been lost to us." It is all the more necessary to explain the sense attached to these.

The protection of the State means to us, the duty incumbent upon each community constituted into a State to procure for each individual, in the free development and manifestation of his faculties, a sufficient protection, in so far as it shall not militate against the liberty of others.

Protection alone, however, does constitute the entire duty of the State; notwithstanding, that certain politicians limit it to this, the mutual advancement of the members of the State must necessarily be added.

"By the advancement by the State" we understand, the duty of the community to interfere by every means in its power where the providence of the individual will not suffice to procure him an existence worthy of a man.

As the protection of the State answers to the principle of "liberty," and the advancement by the State to that of "fraternity," it results that protection and advancement become at the same time, and according to their respective needs, the lot of each, and that thus the principle of equality is satisfied.

You see, gentlemen, that the social doctrine I have put forward is the same as that which I summarised, upon a previous occasion, in the following formula:—

Each for all—this is the duty of man.

All for each—this is the right of man.

But what, some one will ask, if protection and advancement by the State is to be equally the lot of each, why is the working class specified in the Zurich Constitution?

The working class—is it to be a privileged one on the part of the State, and favoured at the expense of the others? This objection is a specious one at first sight, but it will not sustain a closer examination.

Let us recollect, first of all, that the equality of all consists in that each is protected and supported *according to his wants*, and who can deny that in our time, it is exactly the wage-receiving class who have need of protection and support?

Moreover, allowance being made for the most pressing needs, another circumstance here presents itself, which for the present, as well as for the impending future, imposes the duty upon the State of having especial regard to the situation of the working classes, in order to hasten the advent of the justice which equalises and reconciles.

Consider only the origin of what is ordinarily termed "capital," and you will at once understand what I mean.

However different may be the ideas formed of capital, all the world agrees in considering it as an economised labour, accumulated and destined for productive purposes. But who, we ask, has furnished this law? Is it those who possess the capital? Do the manufacturer, the merchant, and the great proprietor owe

their capital, this accumulated labour, to their own activity and to that of their ancestors?

On the other hand, is the want of capital, the poverty of the labourer, and the proletarian, merely the consequence of his own faults and of those of his ancestors? No one will dare aver this? If, therefore, the actual inequality in fortunes is not alone the result of the economic system of those who possess, and of the anti-economic system of those who do not possess, to what other cause must we attribute this inequality?

How does it happen that, day by day, capital accumulates in the hands of a small minority, whilst the majority of the wages scarcely suffice, notwithstanding the labour, for the needs of the masses?

It is evident that one must seek the solution in the iniquitous redistribution of the return of labour in respect of the labour provided.

Listen to what one of the most celebrated political economists of England says upon this question—

“The produce of labour,” says Stuart Mill, “is redistributed at the present time in an almost inverse ratio to the labour supplied: the greatest return falls to the lot of those who never work: after these, to those whose work is only nominal, and thus in a descending scale, wages are reduced in proportion as the labour becomes more onerous and more disagreeable, until at last that which is the most fatiguing and pernicious to the body can scarcely secure with certainty the acquisition of the immediate necessities of existence.”

We will not inquire by what concatenation of historical events the labourer has been by degrees deprived of the means of labour, and how the disproportion which exists between wages and labour has been brought about. The question before us is the following:—

What has the State done to obtain a more equitable distribution of the products of labour?

Has it ever tried either by laws or by other institutions to protect the labourer against the preponderance of capital and to place a limit to the social inequality which daily increases?

If we examine the history of all States, we shall find that up to the latest times, nothing or nearly nothing has been done in this respect.

The nobility, the clergy, or the higher civic class have exercised for centuries, one after the other, or at the same time, an almost exclusive influence upon public affairs; they have never hesitated to employ the power and resources of the State which ought to be the inheritance of all for themselves and for their particular interests. Legislation itself, far from producing equality in competition and in economic relationships, has contributed by conceding privileges on the one side, and by limiting liberty on the other, to enlarge the social gulf between those who possess and those who do not.

How can we then be astonished that working men, having at last attained the consciousness of their rights and of their strength, exact from the State that it shall take into particular

consideration their interests so long neglected? If the Constitution of Zurich accords to the labourers alone the protection and assistance of the State, it is not a violation of the principle of equality. It is not a question here, as some timid minds fear, to maintain the needy workman at the expense of the well-to-do citizens; much less is it a question to create, by a lasting assistance on the part of the State, a kind of labour feudality; the legislator was only desirous to recognise in a frank and loyal manner, that a duty was incumbent upon the State to make amends for the past, to efface the injustices committed, and to remedy the social evil it has contributed to produce. It is merely a question how to realise what we have called the demands of an equalising and reconciling justice.

The Constitution of Zurich does not content itself, it is true, by proclaiming in general terms the duties and obligations of the State; it indicates at the same time, in clear terms, the means by which we can come to the aid of the working class.

"The State must favour and facilitate the development of association founded upon personal effort."

The final end of this development is the cessation of the wage by the insensible transition of the wage-system to that of free labour through the means of association.

Let us now survey, one after the other, the exigencies which are imposed upon the State, that is to say, on the body of the citizens.

In the first place, is the absolute liberty of manifesting one's opinion and the unlimited right of meeting and association. We must renounce all limitation or, according to the usual term, *réglementation* (organisation) of liberty.

Hence the equal right of each to participate in political life, whence results universal and direct suffrage, and, as a necessary consequence, the direct and universal participation of the people in legislation and in administration.

We ask, moreover, gratuitous instruction in public institutions which should be independent of the Church, and the establishment of a popular militia in the stead of permanent armies. We combine these two propositions, the one with the other, for the instruction and the military training of the people find themselves in mutual relationship; to make war, above all, money is needed, and capable soldiers, and both are obtainable by means of good schools. The wealth of a country depends upon the productive labour of its inhabitants, and labour is the more productive, in so far as the labourer is able to calculate the product of his own activity, that is to say in proportion to his intelligence. And as the labourer, so also does the soldier by means of education become more able to perform his task, which is to defend his country. With us, and with the majority of European countries, nearly half the revenues of the State are expended in preparations for war, whilst insignificant sums are awarded to educational instruction. Reverse this order of things, and the public income will be increased tenfold, without the respective value of things diminishing.

A minister of instruction who understands his business, is at once the best minister of war and of finance.

For the working classes in particular, and that having in view the general interest, we ask—

Reduction of the hours of labour, and a fixation of the day's work.

The paid labourer (or receiver of wages) must also have time and the leisure to form his mind and watch the affairs of the State. The congress of the English Working Men's Association, which was held in the month of August last year, at Birmingham, advises a period of eight hours as a common measure for all trades, and expresses the conviction that by this means, will be fortified the physical and intellectual energy of the workman, and we shall thereby further morals, and diminish the number of the unemployed.

Prohibition of the employment of children in manufactories, and an equal rate of wages, both for women as well as for men, are necessary steps to prevent the diminution of wages, and to the decline of the rising generation.

Furthermore, we desire the abolition of indirect contributions, and the establishment of a tax progressive and proportional to the fortune of the individual.

Every tax upon consumption, is a tax upon the strength of the labourer, and consequently, an impediment to the production of wealth, and a prejudice to the well-being of the people.

Finally, reform of the system of credit, and the furtherance of associations, both industrial and agricultural, by the means of the institution of credit, or by the protection of the State.

It is necessary to lay open the road to credit to the workman. What the State has done hitherto, and to such an extent directly and indirectly for the support and protection of capital, it must now effect, and that in its own interest, for the advancement of the working classes and working men's association.

Nothing is so advantageous to the community as justice in all things.

These are the first conditions of the reform of labour. Workmen have been advised, perhaps with good intentions, to keep themselves aloof from all politics, and to concentrate all their attention on their economic interest, as if we could separate economic and political interests, as we cleave wood with a hatchet. Whoever has followed the course of our considerations will not doubt, I hope, that it is just the working classes whose interest it most imports to modify public relationships on the side of liberty! The assistance of the State, no less than that of the individual, is necessary to secure to each workman the complete and intact product of his labour, that is to say, the possibility of an existence worthy of a human being. The State alone can come to the workman's aid, and the free State alone will do it!

Let us now briefly summarise what we have said:—

The wage-system answers now as little to the exigencies of justice and humanity, as slavery and serfdom in former times.

Just as it was with slavery and serfdom, the wage-system was formerly a progress by which society has derived incontestable advantages.

The social question of our times consists therefore in the abolition of the wage-system, without prejudice to the advantages resulting from the common labour of great collective industry.

There is for this but one means, the system of free labour by association—the co-operative system. The present time is a transition period from the wage-system (system of production by means of capital) to the system of labour by association.

In order that this transition may be effected in a peaceful manner, it is requisite that the workmen, employers, and the State act in common.

It is the duty of workmen to unite, in order to resist the oppression of capital and to raise themselves by education to moral and material independence.

It is the duty of the employer to engage himself in the cause of the workman's well-being in a philanthropic spirit, and especially to accord to him a share of the profits of labour.

Finally, the State, by the protection of association, by fixing the hours of labour, and by giving gratuitous instruction, ought to further the efforts of workmen towards civilization. Upon the State devolves, at the same time, the duty of protecting the system of production by association on a large scale, of a reform in the system of banks of credit, and of the institution of State Credit?

As such help can only be expected from a free State, it is clear that the workmen and their friends must, before all, procure for themselves political liberty.

Political liberty, social liberty, liberty of the citizen, without sacrificing the majority, this is the problem of our era.

The conquests of the *blood and iron* policy, the din of arms, which has reverberated in our day, the struggles and the combats which occur for the sake of dominion and power, for fortune and for advancement—these are but ripples on the surface of the stream of time; in the hidden depths, slowly but steadily advances the science of nature and of mind, and with this science, the consciousness of the independence of man—the world-moving idea of the Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity of all. Years and years may pass away, and still that saying of the Scripture will be fulfilled—that joyful message which the electric-wire brought as a first greeting from free America to Europe encumbered with arms: "Peace on earth and good will towards men."

THE END.