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(No. 6)

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# Social-Democratic Federation



## The Gospel of Discontent!

We Social Democrats preach the gospel of discontent to the workers. We call upon them not to remain content with the miserable surroundings which are the sad lot of the majority of their class.

What have they to be contented with? Are they to be thankful that the only property they possess is their power of labour which they sell to the capitalists and employers at, roughly speaking, the cost of its production? Are they to be contented with the fact that the moment the employing class can no longer use their labour to make profit for themselves they—the producers of wealth—are thrown into the street, workless and penniless? Are they to offer up blessings that they are born under a system of society wherein those who work not enjoy all the good things of life, whilst those who toil early and late for weekly wages—those to whom a cessation of their exhausting labour means poverty and starvation—have to exist as best they can?

Oh, yes! "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Praise the landlord for being good enough to squeeze as much rent as he possibly can out of you! Praise the capitalist for giving you work when he can wring, and only when he can wring, profit out of you! Praise, bow down and worship the Moloch of modern society which deals disease and death throughout your class!

But let us consider the matter seriously. The middle and upper classes constantly urge the workers to be contented. They are supported by a whole posse of parsons who endeavour to gull the workers by post-dated cheques on the Bank of Futurity. What would these people do if they were suddenly bereft of their luxurious surroundings and plunged into the precarious poverty of the average artisan, let alone the abject misery and degradation of the mass of unskilled labour? Would the landlords and capitalists, the dividend hunters and the profit mongers, the parsons and lawyers, and the whole tribe of parasites who feed upon the rottenness of the capitalist system—would any of these, we ask, practice what they preach to others? Would they remain content with that station of life into which it had pleased the Almighty to drop them down suddenly? We know they wouldn't. They would be so infernally discontented that they would have a revolution in about twenty-four hours.

It is the duty, therefore, of the workers as a class to be discontented, and to actively manifest that discontent at every opportunity. But it must be no mere dissatisfaction at their individual surroundings; it must be reasoned discontent with the enslaved position of the whole of their class. Is there anything mean, base, or ignoble in this? On the contrary such discontent will elevate and ennoble all men or women who truly feel it. It will urge them to work continuously for the overthrow of this commercial society and the wage system which so degrade and embrate mankind. It will cause them to throw in their lot with the Socialists who in every civilised country are educating, agitating, and organising for that Social Revolution which shall bring peace, plenty, and happiness to the workers of the world.