

What Socialism Is.

The Effects of Unsocialism.

South Australia is supposed to be the property of the South Australians, but this is at present a mere figure of speech. The aborigines held the country tribally, but the intelligent white man gives or sells it to “owners.” We have already parted with *eight and a half millions* of acres, and so absolutely have we thereby delivered ourselves over, bound hand and foot, into the hands of these landowners that 66 absentees hold no less than £2,377,016 worth of land in the City of Adelaide alone, and their permission is required before we may build or live thereon. To get this permission we have to pay Rent, and the consequence is that these people, who do not even live in the country, much less work in it, draw from the savings of the workers as much as would maintain hundreds of those workers' families in comfort.

Out of every 64 persons in the colony, 56 are disinherited and own no land, while only *one in 64* owns more than £1,000 worth.

As no wealth is produced without labour, it is evident that the worker pays for all; and when we consider how heavily he pays the men of “independent means” and the classes who have made (or, more properly speaking, taken) money, we shall not be surprised to find that he barely leaves enough for his family to live upon. Two out of every hundred inhabitants of the colony are always paupers, and if many people are not yet here, as in England, starved to death (though some have been even here), a great many die every year from diseases caused by want. The death rate of folk who die from atrophy, debility, and inanition varies with the pressure upon the Poor Law in a most curiously certain way.

While South Australia supports some hundreds of persons in wealth many of them without doing any work in return, and some, as we have said, without even looking at the country, she has 280,000 inhabitants who have no land, and many thousands without any capital at all except their bodily strength. These latter, if laid aside by illness or want of employment for a very few weeks, necessarily become paupers. Some would say that those rich persons who live on the labour of the others have worked hard in the past, and by their own “abstinence and thrift” have laid up the results and now gain their reward. No one would object to that, if it were so; but it is not on the savings, but on the interest, rent, or dividends commanded by those savings and their unearned increase that they live, and consequently by the “abstinence and thrift” of the workers of to-day! Some of our pioneers, who have borne the burden and heat of the day and led sober decent lives, are rewarded with the imprisonment uniform of the Destitute Asylum.

This Great Inequality

is not owing to personal merit or demerit. What do you think of it? An ordinary man thinks it bad and unjust and cruel. If you are rich you perhaps think this great inequality is a good thing: that it fosters emulation and enterprise, and prevents things from stagnating at a dead level. If you are poor, or know anything of your neighbours, you know well that it fosters only despair, recklessness, and brutality among the very poor; meanness, envy and snobbery among the middle classes;

arrogance, wastefulness, and callousness among the rich. Great poverty means disease and ugliness, drunkenness and violence, stunted bodies and darkened minds. Great riches mean flunkeyism and folly, insolence and servility, too often bad example, false standards to worth, and the destruction of all incentives to noble and useful work in those who could best educate themselves for it. Great poverty and great riches side by side mean the perversion of industry to the production of frippery and luxury, while wholesome and useful food and clothes and dwellings are not possessed by all; while education, music and the arts, learning and refinement, are apt to be left out of count.

Wealth is the result of work; and so we want more real workers—more farmers, bakers, honest builders, tailors, artists, and schoolmasters—and fewer jockeys, agents, bookmakers, larrikins, loafers, and prostitutes. There need be no unemployed and no over-employed. It is absurd that the two should exist side by side, is it not? Yet, who is to blame? We all are, so long as we allow the present anarchic industrial system to continue. We must mend it. Will you help?

No Remedy Without Political Change

The way for the country to produce more wealth is (1) to set more people to work, or (2) to get machines made to do the work. (1) More people means a demand for more lands to work and live on. This demand raises rent, and this the increased production enriches property holders. (Hence the cry for immigration!) The workers are left as they were. (2) The railways, machines, factories, and scientific organization of labour all have to be paid for out of savings, and not out of the money people are living on. Now, the people who have more than enough to live upon are the rich. Consequently the machinery is introduced and factories built by rich people; and, as they pay for these, they expect to get all the advantages of their use, so that here again the workers are as badly off as ever. The worst of it is that when the rich find out how easy it is for them to get still richer by saving, they think it is as easy for everybody as for themselves; and when the worker complains they say, “Why do you not save as we do?” or, “Why are you not thrifty?” They forget that, though you can save plenty out of £20 a week without stinting your family, you can hardly save out of £2 a week without starving them.

Three Monopolies

Moreover, the propertied classes can give their sons an expensive education and fit them for the learned professions and the higher managers' places in business over the heads of wage-workers, who are too poor to get more than a short and feeble schooling. Out of the price paid for them for the use of the land the propertied class buys machinery; out of the profits of machinery it buys an education which secures to its sons a monopoly of the highly skilled and highly paid work, and the manual workers are hopelessly cut out of it all. The figures for the United Kingdom show the state of things there, and if we could get them for South Australia they would be proportionately much the same. If all the national income is divided into 25 parts—

The land-owning few	take 4 of these
The machine-owning few	take 5 ”
The education workers	take 7 ”
The manual workers,	

who far outnumber all
these, take among them
only ... 9 ”

This means that, in spite of unions and democratic institutions, the rich are masters of the workers. The workman has until now patiently chosen between one rich man and another to rule his municipality and colony, and to conduct his schools, public institutions, and his Destitute Asylum.

It will always be thus,

In spite of Protection, Federation, Unions, Eight-Hours festivities, and the like, so long as land, machinery, and higher education remain in private hands, instead of the nation's hands.

Socialism.

Is the alliance of human beings in a community, where all have equal rights and opportunities. For this end the Socialists try to get the land and machinery made the property of the whole people, to free all education, and to secure the whole product of his work to the worker. To further establish Socialism is not very difficult. If a man wishes to work on his own account, the rent of his place can be paid as easily to the State or to the municipality as to the landlord; the interest on the capital needed to start him can be paid as easily to a State Bank as to a private one. Factories, breweries, has works, and tramlines can be as easily worked by the local authorities as they can by joint stock companies. Mines can be as well worked by the central authority as railways, post-offices, and telegraphs. The income tax collector, who collects shillings, might just as well collect pounds on unearned incomes if the people wish it. Parliaments, with all their faults, have always well served the class of the majority of their members. The English House of Commons served the country gentleman well before 1832. Since then it has served the capitalists and employers, who won a majority at the Reform Bill; and our Parliament has faithfully served the squatters, and the speculators, and the rich traders in turn. It will serve the workers equally well, if they choose. Socialism may be brought about in a quiet and constitutional way, thanks to our democratic institutions; and the leaders of thought are rapidly giving their adhesion to Socialist principles. Few now believe Socialism to be impracticable, except those whose wish is father to their thought.

Basis of the Society

The FABIAN SOCIETY consists of Socialists.

It therefore aims at the re-organisation of Society by the emancipation of Land and industrial Capital from individual and class ownership, and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit. In this way only can the natural and acquired advantages of the country be equitably shared by the whole people.

The Society accordingly works for the extinction of private property in land and of the consequent individual appropriation, in the form of Rent, of the price paid for permission to use the earth, as well as for the advantage of superior soils and sites.

The Society, further, works for the transfer to the community of the administration of such industrial Capital as can conveniently be managed socially.

For, owing to the monopoly of the means of production in the past, industrial inventions and the transformation of surplus income into Capital have mainly enriched the proprietary class, the worker being now dependent on that class for leave to earn a living.

If these measure be carried out, without compensation (though not without relief to such expropriated individuals as may seem fit to the community), Rent and Interest will be added to the reward of labour, the idle class now living on the labour of others will necessarily disappear, and the practical equality if opportunity will be maintained by the spontaneous action of economic forced with much less interference with personal liberty than the present system entails.

For the attainment of these ends the Fabian Society looks to the spread of Socialist opinions, and the social and political changes consequent thereon. It seeks to promote these by the general dissemination of knowledge as to the relation between the individual and Society in its economic, ethical and political aspects.

The Society seeks recruits from all ranks, believing that not only those who suffer from the present system, but also many who are themselves enriched by it, recognize its evils and would welcome a remedy.

Copies of this Tract can be obtained on application. Copies of the "Fabian Essays" will be sent *gratis* to any Institute, Public Library, or other institution applying to the Hon. Secretary.

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