

PREFACE.

Amongst the many problems confronting the Socialists of the world one of the oldest and most perplexing is that of spreading a proletarian viewpoint amongst the more or less scattered and detached agrarian workers. The presentation of our case to the wage slave has been a comparatively simple and direct process, the method of exploitation being at once easy of comprehension and stark naked to the most casual glance. With the country slave, however, the position has been obscured by the form of concentration of capital which extracts full measure of profit behind a mask of small ownership of property.

Where the wage worker has but a job, and that only at spasmodic intervals, the Farm Slave has:—"my land; my horses; my machinery" and the steadiest kind of employment. He is, therefore, deeply mystified and in many cases aggrieved by the first presentation of the Socialist position he may hear or read, for he understands (and truly) that land—in common with other means of subsistence—is to be made the common property of society, and that the Socialists contemplate confiscation of his hard won indebtedness. The unfaltering presentation of Marxian Socialism does not then make rapid strides anywhere and least of all amongst the rural communities. Yet experience has infallibly shown that this is the only possible road to victory. Compromise may bring a big following, a deluded following, which, once having but superficially realized the nature of the deception, will turn and rend its erstwhile gods in an agony of reaction.

History has shown, all too clearly, the fatal character of any such procedure. The Socialist Party cannot afford to ignore the great mass of agrarian workers, neither dare we swerve to the right or left in delivering our message. A PSEUDO-SOCIALISM IS ANTI-SOCIALISM.

It is surely well enough known that the fatal weakness of the Commune of '71 in Paris lay as much in the fact that outside the three or four cities involved, stretched an ocean of ignorance—a mass of peasants to whom the revolutionists appeared as devils incarnate, who were used to beat down and smother the insurrection, as much as any other contributing cause just as, in like manner, the large rural, anti-taxation membership