

Labor and Capital

An Address given by F. W. Green, Secretary of the S.G.G.A.,
Before the Young Peoples' Society of Zion Methodist Church,
Moose Jaw

IDEAS and opinions are legion as to what relation should prevail between labor and capital under present economic conditions—what condition ought to prevail, or in the future will prevail. The individual, family, community, tribe, class or nation—in fact, the whole world seems to advance morally, socially and economically through epochs or crises, much the same as the planetary systems revolve around the sun, or like an occasional comet, each one in its cycle or sphere being attracted by some powerful influence towards one common centre, ideal law, or truth; yet not seeming to realize the force or the wonderful magnetic power which draws it, and often seem to be resisting or fighting against this influence as it is whirled around by the all-powerful laws which underlie our moral, social and economic structure, and which, I believe, will draw until God's truth and the ideal condition for man on earth will be realized; when the principles of the man of Nazareth will conquer, and the common brotherhood of man be established.

Records of History

In recorded history there is much of evolution, revolution and radical reform. Epochs which students can distinctly mark like stepping stones across a stream. Much progress has been made, but there is still much to accomplish. There was a time when slavery was permitted. When men could go to foreign lands and secure men, women and children by sheer force and cunning, and utilize them for their own personal gratification or aggrandizement without let or hindrance. A time when England had one hundred and ninety-two ships engaged in the slave traffic. Between 1680 and 1780 there were in British and French possession some two million, one hundred and eighty thousand slaves, and in the year 1791 over a million were held in bondage in British possessions, and it took an annual importation of fifty-eight thousand to keep up the stock. To liberate them it took a powerful agitation and expenditure of millions of money, and in America rivers of blood was shed to bring on the evolution, revolution and radical reform. Earlier slavery had been succeeded by feudalism with its concomitant evils and oppression, and as we make a study of our present condition our minds revert to the time of Cromwell and evolution, revolution and radical reform. Our present condition, I say, this age of capitalism, of industrial development, invention and competition dominated as it is by the same monopoly spirit and tyranny as made slaves of men—the same as exercised by corporations, trusts and combinations—only much more extensive and gigantic in its operations. Slavery, feudalism, monopoly, capitalism, special privilege, party entangling, ensnaring, subjecting principalities and powers, governments, political parties of all shades, churches, preachers, workers in the shop, on the railways, on the sea and on the land, in the forest and in the mine. Entangling everything that is bought or sold. All product of labor being subject to their toll or domination. In fact this spirit is more or less in every individual. The same old necessity for evolution, revolution and radical reform.

The Powerful Ballot

The world has advanced, however, but altogether like spokes in a wheel, and labor is far better off today than in past epochs, although the relative positions are not much changed. But the workers now have in their hands an instrument which will work wonders when they have been properly trained in its use. And in our present cycle we appear to be approaching a little closer to the light which seems to be gaining in strength and intensity every day. This instrument of offense and defence will be the means of putting machine guns, sword, and spear into their proper class. Before slavery, feudalism, monopoly and special

privilege parties will fall down. Adventurers, fortune-hunting politicians, weak-kneed preachers who seek to please the rich will utterly fail and disappear before it. Strikes also will be a thing of the past when this cycle is completed and the epoch point reached, and the workers have learned to properly use this most powerful instrument—the ballot. When the laborer has learned that he has the ruling power and is a king, there will be objective bloodless evolution, revolution and radical reform.

Enjoying Past Efforts

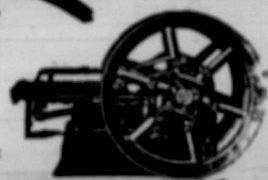
But the workers are getting today very much more than wages. They are today enjoying much of the labors of men that are now in their tombs—warriors, statesmen, painters, poets, musicians, historians, sculptors and results of mechanical inventing genius. Engineers have contributed with their tunnels, bridges, steamships, railways, canals; cities with their network of modern comforts, such as electric light plants, water works, sewerage systems, sidewalks, schools, colleges, universities, churches, hospitals, and street car lines. All are ours, contributing more or less to our enjoyment; so that I say labor is getting far more than wages today. But it makes me feel uneasy to think we have mortgaged all these and much of our own labor, our children and children's children, to the capitalistic combinations, who have managed somehow to get a lien on all this and compel all workers to pay tribute to them. And although the structures are here, we have bound ourselves to pay interest charges to non-workers for ages to come.

Big Interests Valuable

But while this is so, it would appear that these large interests or concerns have a function to perform in our social education. They tell us the larger the institution the more economical it can be managed, and by the amalgamation of capital a concern similar to our Canadian Pacific Railway can be better managed and give better service, and be more profitable to its shareholders because of its magnitude. If this be so, is it not possible for such an institution to be managed in a similar manner for all the people; and to even a much greater advantage when the principle of self-help and spirit of co-operation had been planted in the heart and hand of every workman on the system; and when those who perform the labor are receiving an equitable share in the proceeds. If such a gigantic institution can be so successfully worked for a corporate few, what might we not hope for from it when all the workers have an equitable share in the wealth they create. And may we not readily believe that the present conditions is a segment of a cycle, whose ultimate result is, as a school-master to us, developing and revealing the underlying laws or truth which we shall ultimately make our own. And may we not look for a time and condition when the cause of strife between labor and capital will be removed? When divisions, strikes and wars will be over? A time when we will be able to see that the struggle we are now passing through was a necessary part of our educational training and preparation for the coming emancipation. A time when we shall have organized and educated laboring citizenship, not subjected slaves or yoked retainers of feudal lords, or blind-folded minions of monopolistic trusts whose votes were bought and sold or bribed with whisky, cigars, cash or promise of position; but educated, spirited, independent dependent men and women (for women will then vote) actuated by neither fear or favor, but a desire for equal rights for all and special favors for none (but the helpless.) A time when there will be a larger production, a frictionless exchange, an equitable distribution, a well-proportioned consumption. A time when ruthless and wasteful expenditure will be ended. A time when the millions now spent in preparation for war, and the men now

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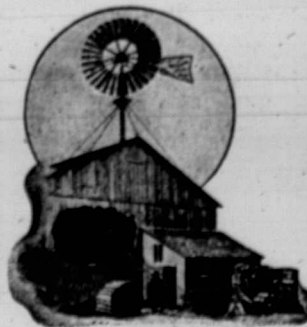
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