

The Commoner

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The Superman Dead

Nietzsche tried to substitute worship of the "superman" for the worship of God. He dreamed of a lawless human being, living without restraint and free to do as he pleased, regardless of consequences to others.

Following his logic to its legitimate conclusion he looked upon religion as the doctrine of degenerates and upon democracy as a refuge for weaklings. The kaiser was the most modern illustration of one who thought himself a superman. In him the "will to power" was given free reign and he was ready to trample on anything or any person in his way.

But he fell, and, with him, autocracy went down. His fall stimulated a revival of the principle of love and confidence in dealings between individuals and nations, and in his fall democracy found a new birth.

There are only two theories of government — one the kaiser's theory (the Nietzsche theory); viz., that authority comes down from the man at the top; the other, the democratic theory, that authority comes up from the people.

The democratic theory has triumphed; it is spreading throughout the world; it is the theory of the democratic party in the United States.

New issues have arisen; they must be decided by the voters. Let the people get together in their several communities and compare views. Let them communicate their conclusions to those who represent them — then and then only can the representatives at Washington speak with the authority of the people.

Study — decide — instruct.
W. J. BRYAN.

Universal military training? Not if the peace, soon to be agreed upon, promises to be permanent. This is not a good time to establish in the United States the Prussianism overthrown in Germany.



PRIVATE MONOPOLY INDEFENSIBLE

A private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable — every monopoly must be a government monopoly so that the benefits may be enjoyed by all the people and not by a few. Man is still too selfish to be entrusted with the power a monopoly is able to exercise. It is for this reason that a telephone monopoly is intolerable.

The telephone system has become as necessary a factor in business and social intercourse as the mails and for the same reason must sooner or later become a government monopoly — the sooner the better. But in the telephone business a very clear line can be drawn between long distance messages and local calls. It would seem better, therefore, to divide the system and put the long distance lines under federal control and local exchanges under the control of cities or counties. In this way we could secure the maximum of advantage from public ownership with the minimum of risk.
W. J. BRYAN.

THE ISSUE AT PARIS

The real issue at Paris is whether the peace agreement will, as the President and Lloyd George ask, "Initiate on earth the reign of the Prince of Peace" or invite a return to the Nietzsche theory with its "old national rivalries, animosities and competitive armaments." That is the issue — again the world is called upon to choose between God and Mammon.

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP OF TELEGRAPH SYSTEM

The sentiment in favor of government ownership and operation of the telegraph lines in connection with the postal service is stronger than it is in the matter of telephones and railroads. The telegraph business will never be turned back to private corporations.

If peace is to be permanent; if swords are to be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks why not have universal training in plowing and pruning?

Republican senators who have tried to "cash in" their partisan checks have learned that the earliest date is March 4th, a little past noon.

The Railroads

The successful management of the railroad systems of the country during the war is quite sure to furnish a final and conclusive argument in favor of government ownership and it is worth while, therefore, to consider the large questions involved in government ownership. While the President's authority over the railroads is a war power and will terminate with the end of the war, the lessons learned are not likely to be forgotten.

The growth of sentiment in favor of public ownership is due in large part to three things. First, to the economic advantages to be found in the elimination of watered stock and of the waste caused by the duplication of roads between competing points. Second, to the resistance offered by railroad managers to efforts at effective legislation. Third, to the corrupting influence of the railroads, not only upon legislators and other officials, but also upon young men who, in their ambition to secure lucrative railroad positions, separate themselves from the mass of the people, and use their influence to shield the railroads from needed supervision.

The country has been passing through the same experience with railroad corporations that cities have had with franchise-holding corporations, and are being driven to government ownership as a matter of self-protection. The war has simply made more plain the evils inseparably connected with private ownership, just as it has made more clear the necessity for the abolition of the saloon. While the war lasts unity of management is necessary; and there is no time for careful consideration of the questions which must be weighed before a permanent system can be decided upon.

Believing that government ownership and operation of railroads will be the natural outcome of the President's action in taking over the management of the railroads during the war, I venture to outline a plan which will, in my judgment,

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THE ROLL OF HONOR

List of States That Have Ratified the National Prohibition Constitutional Amendment

- 1—MISSISSIPPI, Jan. 8, 1918.
- 2—VIRGINIA, Jan. 11, 1918.
- 3—KENTUCKY, Jan. 14, 1918.
- 4—SOUTH CAROLINA, Jan. 25, 1918.
- 5—NORTH DAKOTA, Jan. 25, 1918.
- 6—MARYLAND, Feb. 13, 1918.
- 7—MONTANA, Feb. 19, 1918.
- 8—TEXAS, March 4, 1918.
- 9—DELAWARE, March 18, 1918.
- 10—SOUTH DAKOTA, March 20, 1918.
- 11—MASSACHUSETTS, April 2, 1918.
- 12—ARIZONA, May 24, 1918.
- 13—GEORGIA, June 26, 1918.
- 14—LOUISIANA, August 8, 1918.
- 15—FLORIDA, November 27, 1918.