

POPULISM WORLD WIDE

The daily press furnishes the people with misinformation in incalculable amounts. Nine-tenths of the people in the United States have been led to believe that the social democrats in Germany were promulgating the same ideas that are advocated in this country by such socialists as Wayland and DeLeon. The plutocratic writers have made it a point to hold up to the people the horrors of German socialism. From time to time The Independent has referred to the movement in Germany and told its readers the real facts about the reforms that the social democrats were advocating. They are the same demands that the populist party makes in this country. It is not Karl Marx socialism at all.

The truth is that populism is world wide. It involves fundamental principles that apply to all mankind. It is found in New Zealand, in Australia, in Germany—in every part of the world where men are making efforts to abolish special privileges. Whatever name it goes by, it is the same thing.

The Independent is surprised to see the dailies at last admitting the truth about the advance that populism is making in Germany, for that is what is meant by the large increase in the social democratic vote in that country.

The Chicago Record-Herald says: "The social democrat party is no longer clamoring for Utopias, and, indeed, its platform does not show direct demands for those projects which in ordinary discussion are called socialistic. It is rather the great liberal party of Germany, and its leadership is admittedly stronger and more effective than that of any other party."

The populists of the United States can learn many things which will be to their advantage from their brethren in Germany. The German organization is a thing to copy from. Every member of the party is enrolled and subscribes a small sum toward the expenses of the party and for the circulation of literature. There is no scramble among them for offices, but a common effort for legislation that will be of benefit to all.

MAKE THE POOR PAY IT

The heartlessness of the corporations and the rich is so great that the thought of it discourages us common toilers who like to pull our full share. The great dailies and corporations of Chicago fought the public ownership of the street car lines until they were whipped by the votes of the common people. Now they are trying to so arrange that public ownership will shift the taxes that they have been paying onto the wage-workers who are the principal patrons of the street cars. They each and all insist that the present exorbitant fares shall be maintained, and that the city shall lease the lines and the lessees pay to the city 20 per cent of the gross income, which shall be applied to reducing the present rate of taxation. That is a robbery of the poor that equals the present system of private ownership. The street car lines of Chicago, and every other city, should be operated by the municipal government at cost and fares reduced to that point. Why should the countless thousands of wage-workers, men and boys, women and girls, be made to pay excessive fares so as to reduce the taxes on the Chicago corporations and sky scrapers? That is exactly what these Chicago dailies propose to do and the proposition is so unjust that every honest man gets discouraged whenever he thinks of it. As far as any relief or benefit to the common people is concerned, the street car companies might as well have been given their 99-year lease. It is about time that Dr. Taylor, Darrow and some of the other Chicago populists and believers in populism were heard from. This is

simply a scheme to shift more taxes upon the poor.

The whole object of the municipal ownership of street car lines was to reduce fares. If fares are not to be reduced the work has all been in vain. The only result will be a reduction in the taxes of the rich. But as the farmers of Nebraska rejoice in paying the taxes that the railroads should pay, perhaps the wage-workers of Chicago will also rejoice that they will have the privilege of paying taxes for the rich.

THE FOURTH OF JULY

Following a custom adopted several years ago, The Independent this week publishes on its first page the foundation stone of American liberty—the Declaration of Independence—in plenty of time so that the paper may reach every home and be read on the 127th anniversary of the birth of our republic. It is to be hoped that every reader of The Independent will take the time to read every word of this immortal document some time during the Fourth of July. The grand truths enunciated can never grow old.

THE DEZVER CONFERENCE

A letter from National Secretary J. A. Edgerton announces that the St. James hotel, Denver, will be headquarters for those who attend the conference of reformers he called to meet July 27, and that the meeting place will be either in the hotel or near by. He believes that either the whole national committee or the executive committee of the people's party should be called to meet the 29th at Denver, so the conference may have time to get through before the committee meets.

The action taken at the populist committee meeting here Tuesday ought to induce Chairman Butler to act. If he fails to do so by the 10th of July, Vice Chairman Edmisten should take the action himself. The members of the committee should not be prevented from holding a legal meeting simply because of the dog-in-the-manger attitude of the national chairman. They elevated him to that office—and the power to create includes the power to destroy.

Secretary Edgerton expresses the hope that Chairman Parker may also call a meeting of his mid-road committee for the same time and place.

SLOW COACH DAILIES

The dailies continue from a month to a year behind The Independent in furnishing the news in which the people are interested. They are on time when it comes to murder trials, divorce cases and unusual calamities, but those things in which the people are vitally interested get scant space and are usually a long time in getting into their columns. The Independent has kept its readers informed concerning the work of the trans-continental railroad managers to delay and defeat the construction of an isthmian canal. For the first time after all these years one of them makes editorial mention of these conspiracies. The Chicago Tribune has at last mentioned it, and says:

"Newspaper correspondents stationed at Bogota, the Colombian capital, write that American railway companies, which fear the completed canal would divert much of their trans-continental traffic, are back of the delay. A band of expert lobbyists fresh from their labors at Albany, Harrisburg, Springfield (Ill.), and Jefferson City (Mo.) is described as descending on Bogota, accompanied with heavy bound casks. Paper is not a popular medium of circulation in South America."

Even if the Colombian congress ratifies the treaty under pressure from the present administration, that is not at all conclusive that an isthmian canal will be built in the near future. The railroad managers have still other cards up their sleeves.

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DAVID RICARDO

Curiously enough David Ricardo is a sort of god-father to a number of "schools" of political economy. By him the populists prove their paper money theories. According to Henry George, he is the original discoverer of the "marginal" utility idea which is predominant in the Austrian school. And the Marxists refer to him in proving that labor is the actual foundation of value.

The whole trouble is that Ricardo was careless in expressing his ideas. The ideas are clear enough when one can get at the kernel by tearing off the husk of ill-chosen words. This done, and Ricardo undoubtedly believed value to be a matter of ratios. He did not believe that the value of commodities is determined by the value of the labor exerted in producing them. He spoke of labor as regulating value in the long run by means of competition, and the socialists interpret him as meaning that labor creates value.

FUNDAMENTAL ERRORS

Two fundamental errors run through every work, however learned the writer may be, in all socialistic literature. The first, and the one upon which almost every argument is based, is the assumption that there was among all mankind in primitive conditions the common ownership of property, and especially of land. The truth is that man had to advance far, before he could conceive the idea of the common ownership of anything. It is not a primitive concept, but one that developed after long association. Most of these writers with a little investigation, especially those of the United States where they have been in contact with man in primitive conditions ever since the first white man landed on these shores, could have easily learned the truth. There is nothing owned in common among American Indians and never has been. Every knife, spoon, bowl, kettle, horse or dog, had an individual owner. The idea that two or more persons could own a horse in common was one that no Indian could comprehend. That same thing is true of men in primitive conditions all over the world. Therefore for socialist writers to assume that in the primitive condition, men owned property in

common, is to assume a thing that never existed anywhere in the world.

As far as the ownership of land in common or individually, that was an idea that no primitive man could understand. They could not conceive how it was possible that man, either collectively or individually, could have a proprietary right to a part of the earth's surface. They could not conceive how land could be property at all, as a knife or bow or arrow was property.

The second error of socialist writers is the assumption that all wealth is created by one thing, namely, labor. While labor is the prime factor in the creation of wealth, there are other things that create wealth besides labor. The association of people in large masses creates millions of wealth—wealth in which the labor cost does not enter. Houses, goods, food products, all become more valuable. It is a fundamental error to say that labor alone and unassisted by anything else, produces all wealth.

The proper and decent thing for Regents Von Forell and Kenower to do is to announce in a public manner some time before the meeting of the populist state convention that the pressure of business will make it impossible for them to accept another nomination for the offices that they now hold.

"First liberty, then glory; after that wealth, vice, corruption, barbarism at last." From the reports concerning the thieving contracts in the postoffice department, the purchase of legislatures and city councils, it would seem that we had reached the stage of corruption. How long it will take to reach the next stage no one can tell. We have had our years of liberty, glory and wealth. Vice and corruption surround us. What next?

O, Land! O, Land!—
For all the broken hearted
The mildest herald by our fate allotted
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand
To lead us with a gentle hand
To the land of the great departed,
Into the Silent Land.

—Longfellow.