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# *Why I Am a Socialist*

By JOHN W. KELLEY.

Sociology is the science of right relations between the individual units of Society.

It is the function of Sociology to bring the individual units of society into harmonious relations with one another.

The first problem that presents itself to the student of Sociology is the problem of distinguishing between right and wrong.

Of all the numerous paths that lead off in every direction which one shall he follow?

Of all the different isms and ologys now in existence, which, if any, are worthy of his support?

Just as the first instrument the mariner needs is a compass, so the first need of the Sociologist is some infallible test to which he may bring every problem that presents itself for his solution, and until he has provided himself with this, it is folly to push his bark out into the trackless ocean.

But in this we are very fortunate; for, there is not a want to which mankind has been created heir, that has not been anticipated and abundantly met.

Whatever we seek we find, and every door upon which we knock swings open unto us.

What we first need to learn is that He who created this Universe and set it in motion—He who created this earth and placed us here on it, did not leave to we midgets the job of making the laws by which the thing was to be run.

We should need laws, certainly. He knew this, and, anticipating this need provided a perfect code, and, to make sure that we would find them, wrote them into every stick and stone.

But at the bottom of all individual and social discords—all the wrong activities and exertions of the race, is the ignorance of these laws. And ignorant of these or ignoring them, mankind has gone on throughout all history trying to make some laws of his own; but with what miserable success—the principal business of each succeeding generation of law makers has been the repealing of the laws that the preceding generation had made, or rather, tried to make, for the student of sociology early becomes conscious of the fact, that with all its efforts, mankind has never yet made a law and that he never will make one, and furthermore, he also becomes conscious of the fact that none are needed. God's perfect law needs no improvement nor amendment. Perfection can not be improved.

If then every needed law has been

anticipated and provided, and we are now in need of a law, obedience to which will solve our every social and industrial problem, and bring social happiness and order out of the present chaos, where shall we find it? What law is it?

My answer is, that it is the law of Harmony. It is the same law that underlies the science of music and mathematics as well as every other science.

The Law of Harmony is the king-pin of Creation.

If universal discord should reign for one moment the Universe would collapse.

Every one recognizes the law of Harmony as a fact; but there is no such thing as the law of Discord. Discord is lawless.

Likewise the student of sociology must ever bear in mind that all these social activities that are right will conform to a fixed principle, while these which are wrong will not.

There is no such thing as the principle of wrong. Wrong has no principle. It is just any old thing that anybody wants to do.

Happiness, whether individual or social, is a condition of mind; a condition which endures just so long as we have harmony, but the very moment discord has been set up in our mentality that moment happiness has ended.

No amount of material wealth however great can ever make that indi-

vidual or nation happy in whose conscience there is discord.

Discord is not alone the death of music, it is the death of everything under the sun.

Harmony is constructive.

Discord is destructive.

Harmony makes for progress.

Discord for retrogression.

Harmony is heaven.

Discord is hell.

Just so long as we have harmony we are progressing toward heaven, but the very moment that harmony ceases and discord ensues, the very instant that we strike a wrong note or fail to give to each note its proper time or to each figure its proper value that instant our progress is at an end, and we can go no farther forward until Harmony is regained.

There is no limit to the height to which harmony may carry us. Neither is there any bottom to the pit into which discord may sink us.

Here then is our governing principle. Here is the acid test to which we shall apply every change proposed in our social order. If it makes for harmony it shall receive our indorsement. While whatever makes for social discord whether it be proposed or now existent shall be destroyed.

And strange as it may seem, that means that we have only one thing in the world to destroy, for, there is only one thing in the world that can produce discord, and that is a lie.

Truth is not the author of Confusions. Every truth in this Universe is in harmony with every other. Besides that which is true is indestructable. Everything that is true will conform to the principle of harmony.

God made everything that was made and he made it right.

Now, using this principle of harmony as our telescope let us take a survey of the existing social order and see what therein exists that should be removed and what is absent that might profitably be added.

First of all we find everywhere popular the idea that the private ownership of our material resources (including the whole machinery of production and distribution) is necessary to social progress and that competition is the life of trade.

The facts are that where a man's treasure is there will his heart be also, therefore so long as our treasurers are divided our hearts will also be divided.

We can neither establish or maintain a spiritual union over an economic division.

That which is necessary to a brotherhood of man is both Spiritual Brotherhood and a Brotherhood of property.

Many are they who pray for the coming of His kingdom on earth, but there are few who have yet realized that the Kingdom of Heaven on this earth can never come until the profit system of industry is gone. Profits

and peace won't even pass compliments with each other.

The private ownership of our material resources divides these resources into a multitude of small privately owned units, and pits each individual owner against all the rest. It brings the hand of every man against the hand of every other man, each individual in society into hostile relations with every other, and divides society as a whole into warring classes, who spend more of their life's energies in the devising of ways and means to let each other down than they do in the helping of each other up, and out of this confusion of interests grows that competition which is said to be the life of trade and so necessary to social progress.

But is it? Is social progress because of competition or in spite of it?

Does human progress increase with an increase of competition or does it decrease with an increase of competition and increase with increased cooperation?

For answer we have only to consult our governing principle.

All those social activities that may be said to be co-operative will conform to a fixed principle. When cooperating we all pull in one direction.

But what is the principle of Competition? It has no principle; and that is proof positive that it is wrong.

The facts are as afore stated, that private ownership and competition are both makers of discord, and dis-

cord is not the life, but the death, not alone of music, but also of everything else with which it comes in contact.

Therefore it becomes plain that human progress is not because of competition but in spite of it.

Every step that humanity has ever gained from the lowest savagery to the present civilization has been a step away from competition and toward co-operation.

Competition is the law of the Jungle and it make a Jungled mess of everything it undertakes to do.

Every light house, every school house, every public post office and every church house stands a monument in evidence that the principle of co-operation is a true principle and the whole history of mankind stands a monument in evidence that mankind never comes to grief by following true principles, the truth leads to peace, prosperity and happiness, the false to slavery, contention and war.

It was to overcome competition that governments were organized among men, and if the ideal of competition is founded on the truth, then, the Government should be abolished as the anarchists demand, and let the dogs of competition eat each other up.

Competition in the field of industry ends in competition on the field of battle. In fact Competition in the field of industry is but industrial war and Sherman had it right when he said that war is hell.

To say nothing of the wars to which

competition contributes, more than one-half of the world's industrial efficiency is today being lost through competition.

But there is another waste that growing out of private ownership of our national resources that is far greater than this, viz: The Waste of Life.

The head of the Clearing house for defectives says: "In New York alone we have twenty thousand defective children. Largely the direct result of the overwork and overstrain to which their mothers are subjected in factories."

Two million of the nation's children who ought to be in school or at play are compelled to work in canneries, mines and factories.

There are more inmates in our insane asylums than of all our colleges and universities—that is we are destroying minds faster than we are giving higher education.

The whole history of the profit system of industry is but the story of increasing insanity, degeneration in type, and progressive race suicide.

The logical end of competition is monopoly. If we start two men down the street to run a foot race they will not have proceeded very far before one or the other will have gained a monopoly of the race. And if we make the number two hundred or two thousand the result will be the same. Just what would happen in the foot race

is just what has happened in the field of industry.

Competition has ended monopoly and monopoly is again grubbing at the roots of human liberty.

There is infinite reasons why our government should intervene to abolish competition, but not one valid reason why it should seek to perpetuate it.

We will pull the load easier if we all pull the same way on the rope. So long as we do this we shall have harmony and progress but when we fail we shall have discord and retrogression.

Again, the private ownership of our material resources gives rise to what is known as the Wage System, and, inherent in the wage system is the law of "Surplus value," in conformity with which all the value that the worker produces over and above that which is necessary to his own sustenance and the perpetuation of his kind, goes to the private owners as rent, interest or profits, but never to the worker himself.

Though labor saving inventions may multiply and remultiply the productive capacity of the worker, increasing his product a hundred or a thousand fold he is thereby not benefited in the least, but his condition is thereby rendered more precarious and uncertain, while whatever gain is wrought by invention goes to the swelling of the profits of the owning class, thereby producing discord be-

tween them and the working class, and giving rise to strikes, lock-outs and the need of an increased police force and standing army. Inventive genius being ever active the productive capacity of the worker continues ever to increase, but his ability to consume remains permanently at the point of subsistence, which places on the owning class the burden of disposing of a constantly increasing surplus, this they must either consume themselves or find a market abroad for, because the consuming capacity of the working class is fixed by their wage, which is also fixed by competition for jobs at the point of subsistence.

Failure of the owning class to consume this constantly increasing surplus themselves or find a market abroad for it results in overflowing warehouse at home and a general paralyzation of industry, therefore a market abroad for the surplus becomes of paramount importance, not alone of the United States but alike of England, Germany, Russia, France, Japan in fact of every country in the world wherein production for profit is carried on.

Out of this need for a market for the surplus grows the need of a navy for the opening up and maintainance of that market. The United States, England, Germany, Russia, France and Japan must each have one because they all have a constantly increasing surplus. If any one or any

combination of these states should succeed in monopolizing the markets of the world the result would be industrial paralyzation in all the rest, because they could not then dispose of their surplus products.

Hence we see that out of the wage system grows these international jealousies which finally end in international war. For what is it that England and Germany and Russia and France are at this very moment fighting?

Markets.

Markets for what?

Markets for the surplus products which their millions of wage workers have produced but which they can not consume.

Why?

Because the wage they are receiving does not make it possible.

Notwithstanding the abolition of chattel slavery, the spread of Christianity, and the ages of invention through which we have passed. When measured by the percent that he receives of his product as his wage, it is easily seen that the worker of today is the poorest paid worker that the world has ever known.

Give him the product of his labor, **NOT SOME OF IT BUT ALL OF IT**, thereby making it possible for him to consume as much as he produces and industrial stagnation, the need for an increased police force, standing army and navy will disappear, and the nations of the earth will beat their

swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks, and learn war no more.

Why do we not do this?

Why do we not give the worker the full measure of value produced by his labor?

Because, notwithstanding the ages of Christian teaching through which we have passed, we are still blinded by the false belief that there is some other way that is more profitable than the right way. And we have not yet awakened to the fact that the beggar, the burglar, and the business man are all by different methods trying to do the same thing, viz: Get the value produced by the labor of others without the giving of an equivalent in return.

We have arisen to the point where we perceive it is morally wrong to rob a worker of the produce of his labor through the medium of a title that describes his head, but we still believe the same robbery to be righteous if accomplished through the medium of a title that describes the land upon which he must live or the tools with which he must work. Just as though a Just God could be a respecter of methods.

In our courts of Justice we declare murder to be murder no matter by what method accomplished but we are not willing to carry the same logic into our division of the products of industry.

What wonder we need an army and navy to keep the peace?

But until this is done, until economic Justice is given the worker, men may cry peace, peace, there can be no peace, the war must go on and on until error destroys itself though the earth be drenched in human blood.

The laws of Justice, like all divine principles, are automatic—self-acting—every sin carries within itself its own punishment. Therefore, while there is sin there must be doom.

The laws of Justice are divine—they are not man-made, therefore man can no more change them than he can the principle of harmony or the binominal law of mathematics. One of two things he must do, he must either conform his life to them or suffer the consequences.

That which must precede both local and National peace is individual and social righteousness.

If our Government would put forth the effort in devining of the laws of Justice and enforcing them that it contemplates investing in preparation for war, then no preparation for war would be necessary. But if the robbery of labor is to go on and the government proposes to compel peaceable submission to it, then the Jingoës are right and the preparation for war should begin at once, for along with our increasing ability to create wealth we shall need an increased army to keep the peace.

Throughout all the ages of the past,

ignorance has been trying to gain happiness out of the making of a profit; out of labors of others—it has always failed and it always will.

For two hundred years the people of the south carried off the wealth produced by the black slave, without the giving of an equivalent in return, and congratulated themselves that they were getting something for nothing. They were making a profit—but the day of Judgment came at last—the day when the last farthing had to be paid.

The day of Judgment has come to Europe for the robbery inflicted upon its toiling millions and it will come to America and come speedily.

If we would gain real happiness we must cast our nets on the other side. Instead of seeking a profit for ourselves out of the labor of our fellow-men we must seek to be a profit to them.

Those who are greatest among us must become our servants.

Real happiness comes from service rendered to others and not from compelling others to serve us.

Measured from any standpoint of truth the so-called profit system is the most unprofitable system that could possibly be devised. It has no foundation in ethics neither is it capable of any defense in justice.

If there be such a thing as the right of profit then I ask how much profit may one "rightfully" make?

If an employer may "rightfully"

take some per cent. of the value produced by the worker in the name of profits and without the giving of an equivalent in return, then what per cent. may he "rightfully" take?

Where between one and one hundred per cent. will you draw the line between "right" and wrong? between righteousness and robbery?

Where would Jesus draw it?

By the sweat of THY OWN brow shalt thou eat bread, says the proverb.

If the taking of one hundred per cent. would be robbery is it not clear that the taking of but one per cent. is only a lesser degree of the same thing?

Profit is a violation of divine principle, therefore wrong.

Profit is something for nothing, and something can not come out of nothing. Wherever one individual gets something for nothing there must be another or others who get nothing for something—there must be robbery.

Hence it becomes plain that in commercial exchange all net profit is robbery.

Legalized robbery to be sure (so made by man-made law) but none the less robbery because it is legal.

Profit is usury and the taking of usury is a violation of divine principle.

I believe the time will speedily come when profit will be outlawed by man-made law as it already is by divine law—when an "attempt" to make a

profit in the exchange of labor products will be looked upon as an attempt to defraud—as a form of larceny—which it, in fact, is, therefore it should be punished as such.

There is no such thing as the right of profit.

Therefore the so-called profit system of industry rests upon a lie. The lie is a maker of discord, and discord is death.

The only "right" way to settle with a worker whose labor has produced a hundred cents worth of value is to give him a hundred cents.

All other ways are wrong.

Socialism proposes the abolition of private ownership of all those things which must be socially used. (It's Motto is this, "The things we have to use together we ought to own together, while the things that individuals may use, Individuals may own.") Industrial competition and the so-called profit system, all of which are makers of discord.

And, it proposes to settle with its workers in the "right" way.

That's why I am a Socialist.

From Fred W. Reng

