

What Will the Farmer Do?

What place will the farmer take in the great impending social transformation? He must play a part. In America he still forms the largest single group of producers in our society.

This is not a question which the wage workers can settle. There are not enough of the wage workers to do anything with the farmer that he does not want done. This is a fact which some Socialists who are writing out utopian programs for Socialist society might do well to remember.

Moreover, the Socialists should be the last ones to seek to make out programs for anyone, and least of all to have one body of workers make programs for another.

So the old question returns: "WHAT IS THE FARMER GOING TO DO?"

Up to the present time the farmer has generally used his voting strength to help decide the little squabbles of the capitalist class. He has voted for the Democratic or Republican party the same as the majority of the wage workers, only with a little more unanimity.

While doing this he has seen the sickle and the cradle change into the self-binder and the steam harvester, the flail into the great thrashing machine, and in a hundred other ways has seen his productive power multiplied from ten to a hundredfold.

In many cases he has been so proud of the small favors secured out of his multiplied powers of production that he has closed his eyes to where the lion's share of his product is going.

But the old divisions in politics are changing. The working class is insisting on voting in its own interest. All over the world the political line-up is following the industrial and is between the capitalists and the workers, the employers and employes.

WHERE WILL THE FARMER STAND IN THIS BATTLE?

Will he stand with the capitalists who have exploited him or with the workers who are seeking to restore the product to the producer? Will he unite politically with the owners of the farm mortgages, the harvester trust, the twine trust, the beef trust, the cotton combine, and the whole host of exploiters who have been fleecing him and the wage worker alike, or will he join with his fellow workers of the city against the common enemy?

There can be no doubt of the answer to this question. The farmer is already answering it. In many countries and in many states of this country the farmer has already begun to follow the flag of brotherhood and freedom that waves above the Socialist camp.

In the ranks of the Socialists he will have his voice in deciding how the industries that are essential to his existence will be managed. He has no such voice today.

The time is near at hand when the farmer will refuse to act the part of a hired political Hessian of the capitalist class with which to help whip his fellow workers in the cities. He is coming to see that those workers, composed in no small part of his own sons and daughters, who have been driven from the farm to the factory, have the same interests as he has, and that only in political unity with them is there hope of anything for either.

"Nothing more remarkable has occurred in the recent history of American politics than the tour of Eugene V. Debs, the Socialist candidate for president, from coast to coast in his 'Red Special'."

In 1900 Debs got 87,814 votes; in 1904 he got 402,263 votes; few would be surprised if he got a million this year. To talk of evading an issue that is gaining ground so rapidly is to talk short-sighted folly.—Duluth Evening News.

Well, what are you going to do about it?

The same day that Borah could not get an audience William D. Haywood could not find a hall large enough to hold those who wished to hear him speak on Socialism, and Debs was requiring a whole string of "overflow meetings" to hold his crowds. Speaking of "undesirable citizens—" But why rub it in?

The Denver Times says it likes the sort of Socialism H. G. Wells preaches, but has no use for the kind that is based on a political movement of the workers. Fortunately the progress of events and not men's or newspapers' opinions decide what kind of Socialism will prevail.

Gompers has not yet explained about those lies he told concerning the labor record of E. V. Debs. He might also do a little explaining about those Standard Oil advertisements in the American Federationist.

Persia, Turkey, China all have stepped out on the road from autocracy to democracy. The world do move. The rest of the world is about ready to take the last steps into Socialism.

The Boston Journal has discovered that Socialism will not work. It will be against human nature. Seems as though we had heard that before.

THE INDEPENDENT FARMER

The farmer of today is "independent" in the sense that he is independent of the capitalist class in the shape of prices for his products. Most farmers when approached upon the subject of Socialism, grip the handle of a little trowel (there is a mule at the other end of the plow) and declare that everybody in this country has an equal chance to get rich. Let us see. The farmer takes his cattle, hogs, corn, wheat, oats, butter and eggs to market and this independent farmer asks the price of his produce. Now, remember, he asks what the price of his own product is. The other fellow weighs it and this independent farmer asks what it weighs. As a general rule the other fellow figures up how much cash the farmer has coming and then pays him. We will now follow our farmer "up town."

THE FARMER AND THE WAGE SYSTEM

BY HENRY E. ALLEN.

Scarcely one city wage earner in a dozen is satisfied with his job.

Like the "hired hand" on the farm his job becomes more and more uncertain with the introduction of every new labor-saving machine.

The wage earner in both city and country is coming to realize that the wage system must be a fraud. Industry and frugality seem to count for nothing, for the only way he can save for the future is to deny himself almost every luxury and live like a tramp.

I am asked repeatedly by city wage earners if the farm would not afford them a more certain income for advancing age. The prices they pay for farm products compel them to believe that farming must be very profitable. My experience of more than twenty-five years on a farm has convinced me that the average farmer works harder for his dollars, all things considered, than any other worker.

While he may have more to eat than the city worker, this does not make up for his meager income, long hours and inferior social advantages.

The fact is the country is as unfit for residence in the winter as the city is in the summer. The city worker is chained to his job until he grows sick and disgusted with its monotonous rounds. His nerves become hypersensitive. Naturally he pines for the air and sunshine of the lake, fields and woods.

On the other hand, the intellectually inclined farmer gets too much of breeze and sunshine. His is another kind of dull monotony. If he does any reading and thinking he naturally pines for the social life so rarely found in country neighborhoods.

Will we ever have brains enough to inaugurate a system which will eliminate the monotony of both city and country life? Will life always be a treadmill? I have never known but one person to accumulate \$1,000 exclusively from wages as a farm hand, and he was a half-witted fellow.

There are many cases where wages have been used as a stepping stone in the acquirement of a competency, but never aside from the exploitation of labor in some form. This fact had much to do with my conversion to Socialism.

The wage system is not fair between man and man. It is dishonest because it does not provide for a rainy day without the exploitation of labor either through speculation or through rent, interest and profit.

No wage earner, either in city or country, can live decently on average wages and save sufficiently for infirm age.

The renting farmer is practically in the same boat with the hired man. In order to save anything almost every pleasure and luxury must be denied. This is the price of a competency under capitalism. Is it worth the whistle?

The farmer who owns his farm and works it is often as much of a slave to disagreeable conditions as the hired hand.

He works so constantly through the crop season that he has no leisure for enjoyment and when winter comes it is too cold to go anywhere. Socialism would destroy the nerve-wrecking monotony of both farm and city life. It would afford a change of environment without endangering the worker's income. It would make shorter hours of toil for all by eliminating useless toil.

For the first time in human history it would make it possible for every worker to live an untrammelled, natural life.

Under Socialism if the farmer could not make at least \$3,000 a year he would have the privilege of securing employment in any public industry where such an income would be assured.

No farmer has anything to lose by Socialism. The worst under Socialism would be better than the best under capitalism, and especially is this true of the working and renting farmer.

THE FERTILIZER TRUST

BY B. M. W.

Farmers east of the Mississippi, even those who patronize them, do not realize the power and significance of the two fertilizer trusts, the American Agricultural Chemical company and the Virginia-Carolina Chemical company, which operate in the north and south, respectively.

In fact, farmers generally do not understand the immensity of the fertilizer industry, which has grown rapidly during the last twenty years, until now the total value of the products is close to a hundred million.

According to their own statistics the Virginia-Carolina Chemical company controls about 50 per cent of the southern business, which means that the farmers of the south patronize them to the extent of nearly a million tons per year.

The American Agricultural Chemical company is equally strong in the north. Both are gaining in strength each year. At the close of their year, June 30, 1903, it was found that the first named company had increased its output 28.28 per cent, besides having orders for 100,000 tons which the railroads could not move.

In 1900 the number of firms in the fertilizer industry were 432; in 1905, but 400, although the capital invested in the business had increased about ten millions. If this does not awaken the farmers to the significance and trend of business, perhaps when they realize that they will now proceed to hand over the costs for both sides in the recent proceedings of the federal government against the Virginia-Carolina Chemical company it will mean something.

This case was opened April 24, 1906, four counts of the indictment being put under the first section of the Sherman act, which is as follows:

"Every contract, combination in the form of trusts or otherwise, or conspiracy in restraint of trade or commerce among the several states, or with foreign nations, is hereby declared to be illegal. Every person who shall make any such contract or engage in any such combination or conspiracy shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$5,000, or by imprisonment not exceeding one year, or by both said punishments, in the discretion of the court."

In his letter of September 27 to Mr. Bryan, Mr. Roosevelt says:

"To show the difference between deeds and words I compare the record of this administration with the record of one of your most prominent supporters at the moment, Mr. Olney, attorney general under the last Democratic administration. Under this administration a mass of such cases have been brought, including the cases against the Northern Securities company, against the beef packers, against the Federal Salt company, against the Virginia-Carolina Chemical company, against the Standard Oil company and others."

In a number of these cases the government has already succeeded by injunction and otherwise. Some of the cases are now pending. In hardly any important case against great law breaking corporations has the government yet suffered final defeat."

As will be noted, the Virginia-Carolina Chemical company is one of the concerns against which Mr. Roosevelt thought a case was still pending, while at that very time the printers of the organ of the fertilizer manufacturers were setting up, or had already set up, the following:

"Announcement has been made from the Middle district of Tennessee by the U. S. district attorney (Nashville) that further prosecution of the fertilizer manufacturers' case has been abandoned."

Since Mr. Roosevelt says: "In hardly any important case against great law-breaking corporations has the government yet suffered final defeat," one would naturally conclude that the Virginia-Carolina Chemical company, along with the others named, is a great law-breaking corporation, but the United States district attorney had failed to prove criminality at the time Mr. Roosevelt wrote his letter.

Mr. Roosevelt, therefore, should have been more careful; he should have put the modifying adjective "alleged" before great law-breaking corporations. In fact, he should not have called any of them law-breaking until they had been so proven. No person is safe from criminal prosecution who classes with "great law-breaking corporations" one which the circuit court could not find guilty.

Of course, Mr. Roosevelt says it does not mean final defeat, but it is supposed to be much more difficult to convince the Supreme court of law-breaking, so in all probability the attorney general will have heavy work for some time. The Sherman law may be constitutional, but it is yet to be proven adequate, and it is our opinion that subsequent verdicts will show that corporations cannot be found guilty of criminal acts under it.

The attorney general will have some work to show that trusts are organized to restrain trade, when the fact is they

SOCIALIST SAM TO FARMER DAD

Dear Father:— I've got something kind a queer to tell you in this letter, and I don't know just how to begin. I am in about the same box as that old miner who had to break the news of his wife's death to the poor old mother back east. He knew that the old lady had a weak heart, and that he mustn't give her a shock by telling about her son's death too bluntly.

So, after trying a half dozen times, he finally got up a letter, which broke the news quite gently to the poor old woman. The letter read like this:

Dear Madam:— Your son John, feeling slightly indisposed this morning, has asked me to write and tell you that he is well and hopes you are the same.

For my part, Madam, I believe your son John should see a doctor, as I believe he is a sicker man than he makes out.

Madam, I believe your son John to be a very sick man. The doctor says there are serious complications.

Prepare, Madam, to receive a shock. Your son John is not well. The doctor says that he can't hold out another forty-eight hours.

Madam, your son John is dead. He passed away half an hour ago.

Madam, we buried your son John a week ago. It was a lovely funeral.

Well, my case ain't quite as bad as all that. I ain't sick. I haven't got married (I wish I could afford to), and I ain't in jail, but I've gone and become a Socialist.

Now, I hope you'll not go and get right off. You know a Socialist ain't an anarchist or a nihilist, as we used to think. I've learned a lot about Socialism since I left the farm and came to work in Chicago. And I did lots of mighty hard thinking and reading, too, before I made up my mind about it. And there is just one thing you can bet this year's crop on, and that is that a farmer and a Socialist ain't really any more different than two drops of water. Why, half the boys in the shop here who are Socialists were raised on the farm like me, and of course all the rest have folks some distance back who lived on the farm.

Anyway, I know that becoming a So-

HOW THE FARMER "DIVIDES UP"

BY FRED FREEMAN

This great prosperity of the American farmer we read about reminds one of the fable of the Spider and the Fly. Farmers have been praised until some of them can see nothing but their own superior condition. They do not see the web that has tangled up the farmer even more than the town worker.

A little plain statement of statistical fact concerning the value of production of farm and other labor should be of great benefit to the farmer. Until we know about conditions comparatively we have no knowledge of any value concerning our own condition.

The total value of products sold from farms in any year does not exceed \$4 billion dollars.

That means to the ordinary working farmer and family not more than \$600 a year. That does not mean \$600 a year for the living expenses of the average family, but the gross sales. From that must be deducted all that is paid for rent, or interest on investment, or on the mortgage, and the wear and tear of horses, harness and tools, and all of the profits paid on everything used on the farm and the taxes.

Rent, when paid in share of the crop, ranges from one to two-thirds of the crop, but on good lands near markets is about one-half of the crop. So to begin with, the farmer does not receive and enjoy his full production, for they are divided in the middle by rent or interest on land value. As over 80 per cent of farmers do not own the land they work not over 25 per cent have the land paid for. It is evident that the products are divided by those who contribute nothing to the production.

That the machinery trust and the railroads and express companies fatten by extortion of profits from farmers, and that the farmer has no voice in fixing the price of a thing he buys or sells will not be disputed.

After all of this dividing up there is left to the farmer for his luxurious living—well, brother farmer, it is not six or three hundred dollars a year. And if the good wife had not sold poultry and eggs and berries, and if the children had not worked when they should have been in school, the living on many farms would have been very poor.

To earn this living, farmers work not six days in the week, but 365 days in the year. The wife and children take no vacations, nor are books and pianos very numerous in the houses of working farmers.

While the value of the average farmer's production is about six hundred dollars a year the value of the product of each worker in other essential callings is \$2,457, of which the worker receives 34.7 as his share.

These figures are all furnished by our masters who spin the webs and suck the life from our wives and children that profits may go on.

It may be a dream, but it seems that I have often heard farmers say "these workers need humbling, they have gone too far, they ask too much, they are Socialists who want to make us farmers divide up."

I hope it proves a dream, for I am proud to be a farmer and proud of the farmers who earn a living in a manner that no man can condemn.

If he produces a value of \$600 and gets for himself almost nothing, and if other workers produce four times as much as he and hold less than one-fifth of it, such sayings as I have dreamed would seem much out of place.

In a later article I will explain why the value of the farmer's product is so much less than that of other workers, and also how he may increase the share that comes to him by combination; also how by just co-operation the exchange value of his year's product will equal that of any other worker.

For Socialism means that what one produces shall not be "divided up" by any form of profit.

YOU AND I AND THE OTHER FELLOW

BY CLYDE J. WRIGHT

When I was a boy they said I was a dreamer. When I became a Socialist my conservative relatives said I was a fool. So I came to Chicago.

I get letters from relatives in the country and they get letters from me. There's little difference between country folks and city folks.

I see father in the country raising oats, John in the city making plows. I see mother in the cellar skimming milk and her granddaughter in a sweat-shop spinning cotton. Tom, he's a blacksmith; Dick, he's a tailor; Harry, he's a farmer; Mary Ann, she's teaching school.

It seems to me we are just all working together to keep each other from starving to death.

When I was a barefooted boy driving the cows down the lane, and even after I got big enough to be awkward, I used to think how swell it would be to live in the city and be dressed up, and hear the band play, and only work ten hours a day instead of sixteen.

Today I hear city boys saying how swell it is to live in the country and have nothing to do but listen to the crops grow and to drink hard cider in the winter time.

They all get the poetry of imagination confounded with the prose of realities. I graduated in the changes of the seasons at nineteen. I've now graduated in the changes of the city.

The facts are the city bred know no more about country life than the country bred know about city life.

The thing to do is to clasp hands and say: "Brothers!"

Divided we fell upon the industrial field, United we rise upon the political field.

We have become so crazy to own something that only a mighty few own anything.

Owning is a scheme the rich have so they can live without having to work.

Do you know how it feels to be a stockholder? Well, first get your dad to die and leave you a million; buy a million's worth of the earth and then go to Europe and play golf. The directors of the trust will hire a manager (with brains) and tell him if he doesn't make another million for the trusts that they'll fire him. Then, don't you see, you'll have two millions to leave to your kids, even if your kids ain't smart.

Here's another plan: If you farm, live on wind, wear rag leaves and beat the tax collector it will only take you about five thousand years to save your first million. Then you are ready to start. If you are the one who gets the million first you can soon have two millions and then you have knocked some other farmer out of his chance—see?—you've got his million and your own, too.

Then he will have to raise 'taters and haul them on your railroads and pay freight, so's you can buy golfsticks. He will have to pay profits on the re-

sort of thing for several years, but at last decided to put a stop to it.

Then see what you would be up against. The window glass makers of America would hold a meeting and declare that you were ruining their business, that you were ruining their business, that you were ruining their business.

The Thornton Junction Stone masons' association would have a procession through the streets and march to a mass meeting in the village hall, where they would have speeches about personal liberty and the good old constitution and the star spangled banner, and they would tell how George Washington once threw a stone across the bottom of the Chesapeake in which he said, "When the American citizen is no longer allowed the God given right to throw stones, then will the government of the people, by the people, and for the people perish from the earth."

Then it would be just like them to drag in the American farmer. They would show that the stones that came crashing into your dining rooms are picked up by farmer boys (God bless 'em) on the stony h. sides of rural America. "And shall the farmer boy be denied his rights for the sake of a few cranks who don't want to eat broken glass with their meat and potatoes? No! A thousand times, no! Perish the thought forever."

You see the fellows who own these shops are "doing us," they are "skinning us," and getting rich at the expense. So, naturally, when we say we want a square deal—the full product of our labor—they know that that means less of dishonest profits for them. Just ask the boss of these business men (who really are Socialists) what they think what they are so fussy about, and they will tell you "profits." That's the meat of the whole matter. "Profits" means that they can pocket their millions and go off in Newport or Europe. "Profits" may be unobtainable, but they are mighty comfortable.

Well, I guess I have written enough for this time. In my next letter I am going to try to tell you just why I became a Socialist. Give my regards to all the boys, and tell the "kids" that I am going to come home soon to tell them all about the big town.

Your son, SAM.

THE FARMERS' VOTE AND THE PANIC

BY THOS. FREEMAN

Some of the farmers' union papers were so incensed at the gamblers in cotton futures on Wall street that they boldly asserted that the panic, which began last year, was created especially by the cotton speculators to lower the price. They could not understand that the panic was a product of the capitalist system and that the price not only of cotton but all wages and its product sold by the producer, must fall before the depression was over.

Twelve months ago the panic was over, and the suffering of the working class, including the farmer, is increasing. The wage worker can't sell his labor when the capitalist can't sell the product of the factory. The farmer can't sell cotton unless the factory can sell cloth. The price of labor is lower today than for years.

The price of cotton is lower now than for several years. The producer cannot get enough money for his labor to buy back the product. That is because a few rich men own all the mines, mills and factories. Now as to your vote, brother farmer, what will that have to do with the prices and the panic? You believe that if it were possible for every worker and farmer to get the full product of his toil that there would be no more panics, forever, and all would be well. You cannot get around believing that. Does Taft and the Republicans believe in establishing a system that would do that? Does Bryan and his millitary labor supporters believe in the Governor Comer of Alabama believe in giving the workers the full value of their labor? Then you must vote for Debs.

The Socialist party is but the expression of the workers in class conscious political action, seeking to conduct the government of the country so that the working class will own what they produce.

If you think that the people who live on your labor know more about your vote than you do yourself, then you will throw away your vote on Bryan or Taft. But if you know your own class has wisdom enough to handle the wealth their hands produce then you will make your vote count by helping build up the workers' party, the Socialist party. You will vote for Eugene Debs.