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EDITORIAL

Just the Reverse

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Lyman Gage, the Chicago banker, gives very clear utterance to a complaint often heard from capitalist sources. He says:

“It is unfortunate for the permanency of our industrial well-being that our great economic questions, which truly be in the domain of science, are obliged to find their solution in the field of politics.”

It goes without saying that the fit are the fittest to judge. The industrial question is certainly one of deep scientific import. Hence the conclusion is drawn that it were better for the nation if the subject were taken from the hands of the people and entrusted exclusively to scientists. The conclusion, wherever honestly meant, is rash, and proceeds from superficial observation.

The scientist is a being with a stomach to fill, a back to cover, and a head to shelter. Forced by want, or scared by the fear of want, the scientist may be as pliable as any human being, and his opinions or verdicts may be as untruthful as those that proceed from the least learned. Ignorance is not the only source of fallacy; destitution, or the fear of it, can be an equally fertile soil for falsehood. Under the existing social system, the man who does not own capital sufficiently large to hold other competitors down is himself held down—be he scientist or not. The capitalist class can profit only by industrial principles that enable it to keep the masses in subjection through poverty. These principles are dear to it; without them it falls, with them it stands and rules. To place to-day in the hands of scientists exclusively the power to decide and enforce the industrial principles that shall govern a nation, is, consequently, tantamount to placing that power exclusively in the hands of the capitalist class—a class notoriously unscientific. This indeed is the ideal government that the capitalist heart pants after, but it will only have the panting for its trouble. That shall never be.

The outlook for the nation were dark, indeed, if the future were to be determined either

by capitalist-dictated utterances of “scientists,” as Mr. Lyman Gage would have it, or by haphazard, spasmodic political mandates of unthinking mobs, as Mr. Lyman Gage implies is the result of our suffrage system. But the outlook is not dark; on the contrary, it is bright with the trusty promise of hope.

The rudder to correct conclusions is not the exclusive property of Science. It is the property also of Material Necessity. In the hands of the scientist, who manages it honestly, it will be steady from the start, and will lead the ship straight to the wished-for haven. In the hands of Material Necessity it may and certainly will be at first unsteady; experience, frequently dearly bought, must come to the aid, and will supply knowledge; with the time, the erratic course of the nation’s ship will grow steadier as the hand of Material Necessity at the helm grows experter; and the end will be the same, though more arduously reached.

Civilization demands the overthrow of Capitalist rule, and the establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth. Capitalism, like a monster navelstring coiled around the throat of a child to be born, is now threatening to throttle the social system with which it is pregnant. It has driven mankind from the narrow, pauper bounds of individual production; it has compelled co-operative labor and thereby made possible that abundance without which popular well-being is impossible; and yet, by adhering to the private system of ownership of the machinery of production, it palsies these possibilities of happiness, nay, aggravates the leading course of the old system of individual production—popular misery.

The material necessities of the trivially small capitalist class, compel its striving for, and would compel enslaved Science to decree, the continued existence of capitalism. The material necessities of the masses—the working class—compel its striving, knowingly or unknowingly, for the overthrow of Capitalism and the establishment of Socialism. Necessity ultimately furnishes the working class with the goal that free Science reaches directly by pure thought.

The very fact that our great economic questions are obliged to find their solution in the field of politics, where the masses can predominate, is a guarantee that civilization will not perish in America, and that our industrial well-being is assured.

[Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.](#)

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