

# The People.

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EDITORIAL

## Utopia and Practice.

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If fire touches water, it is extinguished; if it touches gunpowder it produces an explosion. In both cases it is the same fire. The result of contact depends upon the thing touched.

The deepening want produced by the capitalist system, the increasing dependence it inflicts on the people, the instances of public wretchedness that it multiplies, fall upon a variety of minds and produce effects as different as the economic classes and the solidity of the minds upon which it falls. An instructive illustration of this fact are two contemporaneous utterances in sight of the great modern phenomenon, the Unemployed.

One is a plank of the platform of one of the numerous political parties that have sprung up in this country during the last six months—the Progressive party. It says:

“Progress and Humanity both demand the enactment of a National Government Employment Law, which shall become a permanent and an integral part of the Constitutional Law of these United States.

“Said law to guarantee to the citizens of this Republic the opportunity to sell their labor to the government and to insure in payment therefor a sum not less than One Dollar and Fifty Cents per day of eight hours.”

The other is the resolution presented by the Gas Workers’ Union at the Trade Union Congress that just convened in Birmingham, England:

“Believing that the unemployed problem can only be permanently solved when production for use is substituted for the present method of production for profit, this congress considers it is essential for the prosperity of the whole community to socialise the land and the whole of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and instructs the Parliamentary Committee to promote and support legislation with that object in view.”

The fire of the Social Revolution, coming in contact with the bourgeois-controlled mind of the element that constitutes the Progressive party, goes out with a fizzle and a splutter that guarantees to the producers of all wealth a pittance of \$1.50 and insures to the sponging class all the rest of the workers' products; it compromises, by leaving the robber class in possession and with the power to keep up its depredations, while shielding the workers against utter annihilation.

On the other hand, that same fire of the Social Revolution, coming in contact with the fervid brain of the class-conscious proletariat, kindles a light by which Civilization can tread her path, and lead mankind out of the present slough.

The wildest utopian is the capitalist class which lulls itself into security with the belief that its infamous system, ripping up at all its seams, can be patched up, and is good for anything but the garbage barrel of history.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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