

The Co-operative News

In Things Essential, UNITY—In Things Doubtful, LIBERTY—In All Things, FRATERNITY

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IS GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP SOCIALISM?

(By Luella Twining)

"Well, you Socialists ought to be satisfied, you've got the railroads, anyway," said a young woman to me when Railroad Director General McAdoo took over the control of the railroads. "That means government ownership finally," she added, "and I don't think it'll be a success, either," the latter delivered with a flash of the eye and a vigorous nod of the head. She continued, "Why, weren't the people glad enough to have the corporations build the railroads, and haven't they made the country?" She sank back in her chair and began at her knitting with the air of having settled the question for all time.

"Yes," I said, "it's true." In an early day the people were glad to have the railroads, and they have made the country, no doubt of that."

It was an undertaking to build the early railroads and the people, most of them thought nothing of the land given them in grants. There was so much of it. I have often heard my grandfather say, however, that he knew it was a mistake to give the land to the railroads and the day would come when the people would regret it. He lived to see that day.

But that is past and gone, the question now is government ownership socialism?

It is not. It is not even socialistic. Government ownership is a step toward Socialism, just as is the trust which carried us much nearer the Socialist republic.

Socialism stands for the abolition of the profit system and the exploitation of the workers by unpaid labor. The worker is now robbed of over half of his product. Socialism involves giving to the producer the equivalent of the full value of his product.

Government Control Enriches Stockholders

Mr. McAdoo expects to reimburse stockholders of the railroads he has taken over on the basis of average profits of the last three years, three very full years by the way. The result will be that stockholders will receive in profits exactly the amount they got before the government took over the roads. These profits are guaranteed.

The stockholders sit around the fire (they still have fires even tho coal is scarce) and eat up the profits derived from the unpaid labor of the railroad employees, just as they did under private control. And too, the entire nation is behind the stock for security, which is better than Mr. Morgan.

As for the employees, their position is less advantageous than before. They may not be permitted to go on strike, perhaps not to organize. You are acquainted with the intimidating measures directed against postal employees. They cannot take part in politics or belong to a political



GEORGE KIRKPATRICK

who will speak in

Everett, Sunday, March 10th, at 2 P. M.

Gather at the Forum,

1612 CALIFORNIA STREET

party. A postal employee sang in a chorus of a political meeting up North. He was dismissed for delving into politics, tho he participated merely as an entertainer. You might as well arrest the pianist at a Pacifist meeting.

I was in France during the general strike of the railway employees. The strike was won when Premier Briand mobilized the strikers as soldiers and ordered them back to work. If they had refused they would have been shot for treason. The railroads were under the control of the government at that. It is well to understand that the strategic position of workers under government ownership is weak.

Well, is government ownership a failure and are Socialists to oppose it? By no means.

Government Ownership Step Toward Socialism

Frederick Engels in his "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific," says government ownership is a step toward Socialism.

It's a forward step to wrest the industries from private hands. That step taken it will be comparatively easy to introduce Socialism. And too, the psychological effect is good. The people become accustomed to change, each change making the next one easier. The old cry that "things always have been this way and always will be" breaks down in the light of experience. "We have advanced from private ownership to government ownership, why not stand for Socialism?" the people will logically think.

Conditions Under Government Ownership

But the fact that government ownership is not Socialism must be plain. Why, they have had government ownership of rail-

roads and many other utilities. Government ownership is more general in the British Isles than anywhere else, where poverty is so terrible. We are acquainted with the advancement of government ownership in Germany, where most of the expenses of the state are met from profits from the railroads. They have government ownership in China where the workers can live from the smell of rat tails, we are told. No, government ownership exists where the workers are most exploited and has nothing to do with Socialism.

Do not understand me to say that these people are exploited because of government ownership. Not at all. They suffer because the means of life are in the hands of the few for whom they must slave for a bare existence.

The people of this country are not as well off under the trusts as they were under competition and the hand tool. But we are better off in that Socialism has been brought nearer to us by the trust. The trust has organized industry ready for the workers to elbow the boss out and take possession. Government ownership brings the day of emancipation nearer therefore we hail it with acclaim, not its immediate but its ultimate effect.

Government ownership is not Socialism but rather points the way to the day when the workers shall receive the full value of the product of their toil.

So to answer the little lady I began with, "Yes, on the whole we Socialists are fairly well satisfied."

We ought to be, everything is coming our way.

Bargreen's Golden Drip Coffee, Imperial Tea Co., 1407 Hewitt Ave.

KIRKPATRICK AT EAST STANDWOOD

To the Comrades and readers of the Co-operative News of Northern Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom counties: You will have a chance to hear Geo. R. Kirkpatrick at East Stanwood, Monday night at 8:30 p. m., March 11th, at the P. U. Hall.

JACOB SETTRE,
Secretary East Stanwood Local.

LABOR NEWS

8-HOUR SYSTEM PAYS

DALLAS, Tex.—An increased efficiency of the Dallas police department is a result of the eight-hour system, inaugurated the first of the year, is the opinion of officials of this city. It is planned to extend the system to other employes of the department.

BOYCOTT THE TOWN

SPOKANE.—The I. W. W. have boycotted St. Marys, Ida. and will spend no money there because a member of the I. W. W. is held in jail there according to the local headquarters of the organization. St. Marys is a lumber town. It recently closed the I. W. W. hall there.

STATE WILL NOT RELAX

WOMEN'S 8-HOUR LAW

OLYMPIA—Almost every day Labor Commissioner Younger is appealed to by employers of one industry or another to permit the women to work for more than eight hours a day, the limit fixed by law, declaring an emergency of some kind exists.

The latest plea is to permit women to work nine hours instead of the eight fixed by law so they can invest the earnings from the extra hour in thrift stamps, but the government has declared there is no occasion for any letting down of the bars around women and child workers and state refuses to permit any relaxation.

Commissioner Younger says at the present time there is no shortage of women workers or of common laborers. There are plenty of men and women to work but there is a shortage of skilled labor in certain lines.

THE 8-HOUR DAY

The eight-hour day was the principal demand made by the I. W. W. in their fight against the lumber barons of Oregon and Washington. Now the government has stepped in over the heads of the employers and granted the Wobblly demands. The order of the government, however, affects only the fir and spruce logging camps and mills—no other industry. At best, it will be for the duration of the war. There should be no let up in the campaign for the eight-hour initiative measure on account of this "order." That which is voluntarily given may be withdrawn at the convenience or whim of the giver.

The employers will no doubt point to the granting of the

MOONEY MEETING IN EVERETT

W. D. Patterson, of San Francisco, spoke last Sunday at a meeting in the Redmen's Hall, that filled every available seat. Comrade W. J. Fortson presided while Patterson gave an elucidating sketch of the frame-up cases in Frisco, in which the profiteering employes attempted, and are still attempting, to throttle organized labor and to put out of the way such labor leaders as they cannot make tools of.

A collection was taken for the fund of the International Workers' Defense League, which netted the sum of \$87.93.

The last appeal that can be taken in the courts has been decided adversely to Mooney; and the only hope left for Mooney's life is executive clemency. A general strike may be called to force the California Oligarchy to come to terms. They seem to have no respect for justice or humanity; but they DO have some respect for Force, which is one of their own Lesser Dieties.

CO-OPS IN CLEVELAND

CLEVELAND—Co-operation is making great progress in Cleveland, Ohio. At present there are four co-operative organizations, The Workingmen's Co-operative Co., with two stores; The Slovenian Co-operative Co.; The Cleveland Co-operative Bakery Co.; and the Co-operators Co. The first organization started business in 1912 and has been paying 4 per cent rebate to its stockholders on their purchases since that time, as well as 4 per cent interest on the stock issued. The Slovenian Co-operative Co. has been doing business for four years. It has allowed its earnings to accumulate during that period, adding the profits to the value of the stock. The stock which was sold at \$20 per share is now worth \$59.00, which shows a profit of nearly 200 per cent on its capital during the four years of operation. The co-operative bakery began business early in November. It is turning out five thousand loaves of bread and 20,000 biscuits weekly. It has 2,500 stockholders. The Co-operators Co. has no store, but has an automobile delivery which makes the circuit of the city once a week and sells direct to its stockholders. Its sales amount to about \$1,200 per month. All of the societies are offshoots of the Socialist Party.

There can be no real democracy so long as one class owns the means whereby another class lives. —Maynard Shipley.

Socialism will remove exploitation and increase opportunity.

shorter work day by the government and try to induce people to lay down on the general eight-hour agitation. To make the shorter day sure in the lumber industry, and to extend it to other employments where it is just as badly needed, it will be necessary to put it into law. Agitate for the Eight-Hour Day Initiative Measure, No. 30.