

WILLMAR TRIBUNE.

SOCIALISM vs. POPULISM: A Debate...

Carl D. Thompson for Socialism; Aug. O. Forsberg for Populism.

QUESTION: "Resolved, That the economic interests of the working and producing classes of America, agricultural and industrial, now demand that they unite for Socialism and in support of the Socialist party as the only logical and rational principle and program for their future struggle against the combined powers of capitalism and only effective method for the attainment of their full social and industrial rights."

Thompson's Reply To Forsberg.

In my first paper for Socialism were presented three main arguments to show that the farmer class should unite with the industrial class for socialism. These were, (1) That only Socialism would relieve these two classes: (2) that only by uniting for Socialism could either class secure the needed reforms: (3) that the Populist movement had never been more than a national movement while the only final solution of our social problems lay in an international program; and that even as a national movement Populism had almost entirely disappeared, while on the other hand the Socialist movement being international from the start, and having fifty years of history as well as throughout the world until today it numbers at least 400,000 voters in this country alone.

These are my main lines of argument. In his reply Mr. Forsberg has practically disregarded these points and instead of answering them has taken a new line of argument. I wish therefore to reiterate these arguments. I insist that Socialism will relieve the farmer class from the oppression of railway monopolies, from the exorbitant prices charged by the private corporations that manufacture farm machinery; that it will destroy foreign land holding and landlordism, will remove the evil of railway land grants, of the land speculator and shark as well as of the private irrigation companies; that it would protect the farmer from exorbitant trust charges on all the necessities of life and free him forever from the money lender and the mortgager.

If, now, it is conceded, as I believe it must be, that Socialism will thus relieve the farmer class; and if it cannot secure such relief without uniting with the wage-earning class, as I have positively proven in my former paper; and if there is every promise of his securing such relief through the Socialist movement; and if the Populist movement has almost if not quite disappeared,—if these points are indisputable, as I believe they are, then our case is won. For I submit that these considerations tower in importance far above every other that has been mentioned during this discussion. I cannot allow my opponent, nor my readers to escape from the tyranny of this logic. In these main propositions lie the argument. If these things are true,—if these are unanswerable facts then the case is won for Socialism.

However, although apparently conceding the above arguments Mr. Forsberg goes on to raise certain objections to Socialism. I propose in this paper to examine these objections.

OBJECTIONS TO SOCIALISM.

I. The first objection raised by Mr. Forsberg is that it is impossible to get it. This is the usual objection raised to every effort for human betterment that has ever been made. The reply to this argument is this,—That in the first place this is not the question at issue in this debate. It is not whether Socialism would be easy, or hard, or impossible to get, but whether or not the economic interests of the working classes demand it. And the final reply to this objection is this,—that in the very nature of the case it cannot be proven to be true that Socialism is impossible. It cannot be counted an argument against a proposed line of action that some one should raise the worn out cry of "impossible." Every achievement of human history has been previously thus shown to be the satisfaction of some minds to be "impossible." And every invention, every discovery, the achievements of modern science, and the history of every nation on earth has refuted a thousand times and silenced forever this feeble objection.

Moreover, the reasons which Mr. Forsberg mentions as ground for his belief that Socialism is impossible are not good. He assumes that the wage-earner who owns a home and the farmer who owns a farm can be counted upon to oppose Socialism. This is not proven. For as I have shown in my former paper the farmer will not be required to surrender his farm. And certainly the wage-earner will not be asked to give up his home. The very purpose of Socialism is to guarantee to every one private property not only in homes, but in all things needed for the personal life,

or to use a more accurate expression—the wealth of consumption. And furthermore to guarantee to every worker access to and the use of all the material means of production necessary to enable him to freely produce. Thus Socialism would secure to the wage-earner and the farmer alike exactly that which they most need and most desire. They cannot therefore be counted against Socialism but quite the contrary.

Again, friend Forsberg assumes that the church is opposed to Socialism. This also is not proven. Certain sections of the church and certain individuals may be opposed to it but as an organization it cannot be said to be so. There are hundreds of ministers, and thousands of church members, and to my personal knowledge, several church organizations that are already avowed Socialists. In one class in the Chicago Theological Seminary, 12 out of 36 of the young ministers were Socialists. In ten different states last fall candidates, organizers, lecturers and other prominent officials of the party were ministers of the gospel. And besides all this, there is the distinct organization which calls itself Christian Socialists which works directly for the Socialist party. It is therefore quite premature and unwarranted to say that the church is opposed to Socialism. And as a matter of fact every true effort that is being put forth in the world for a real and practical Christianity is a direct contribution to the cause of Socialism, and many of us believe that the logic of Christianity will throw the influence of the church finally upon the side of Socialism. At any rate this objection that the church can be counted against Socialism cannot stand.

II. Mr. Forsberg's second objection to Socialism is that it would be unsatisfactory if we should get it. Let us examine the reasons for this objection. One reason stated is that he supposes that all the burden of taxation would fall upon the farmers. This is quite untrue. For, in the first place, under Socialism there would be no such thing as taxation. It will be abolished. The Socialist party may make use of the power of taxation in the process of transition, but when fully established there will be no taxation. Each individual will pay or allow to the state his just proportion for the service which the state renders him, whatever that service may be. If, for example, one uses land which belongs to the state, he will pay the annual rental value. If he uses a factory or a tool, a telegraph or a railroad line he will pay or allow to the state exactly what it costs for the state to render him that service and no more. Each class and each individual will thus make full and free use of the means of production and distribution and these will be sustained by the public by incomes derived from charges apportioned to the cost of operation. The farmer will therefore have to pay for only that which he uses and instead of being burdened with all taxation he will be relieved of all taxation.

INDUSTRIAL CRISIS.—THEIR CAUSE AND CURE.

The weakness of the Populist philosophy is nowhere more clearly shown than in Mr. Forsberg's discussion of the panic or crisis. He rightly estimates the seriousness of these unfortunate occurrences. Indeed, it would perhaps be impossible to overestimate the waste, the suffering and the degradation resulting from each recurring industrial crisis. But the fatal error of Populism is its failure to discover the real cause. It does not go to the roots of the matter. And thus mistaking an effect for a cause it would exhaust itself fighting symptoms and would leave the social disease still as work.

"The People's Party," says Mr. Forsberg, "has placed as its fundamental principle the establishment of a monetary system that shall not be under the control of any individual or corporation. That is the key to the situation." And again after discussing at length the panic or crisis.—"The People's Party believes it has found the remedy for this condition. Government money issued without the intervention of banks, sufficient in quantity to carry on the legitimate business of the country, not subject to sudden and violent contractions, legal tender for all debts, public and private, and postal savings banks to

safeguard the savings of the common people—that is the solution we advocate."

Now we Socialists are quite aware of the injustice of the present monetary system, and we can assure our Populist friends that under Socialism it will be completely swept away along with all the other capitalistic devices. But, however bad the monetary system it is not the cause of the crisis or panic. Mr. Forsberg is quite right when he says that a crop failure does not cause a crisis; but when he says that "in each and every instance the trouble starts in the financial or speculative circles," he is quite wrong, we think.

The industrial crisis is an inherent and inevitable part of the present social system, or rather lack of system. It is the direct result of three features in our modern economic life, viz.—(1) the planlessness of production, (2) the competitive system, and (3) the exploitation of labor. There is no system or plan in modern production. Every one produces and no one knows how much the market needs nor how much the other competitors are producing. For example, farmer A notices that prices of corn are good and decides to raise more corn. Meanwhile farmer B and C and a thousand others have noted the same and have also gone into corn raising. The inevitable result of this planlessness is that frequently there is an over production and hence a glut in the market. But this condition is greatly aggravated by another, viz, the exploitation of labor which operates to further restrict the market. Under our present system those who toil get only about one sixth of what they produce. (See Census Bulletin No. 150.) Imagine now a nation of millions of workers engaged in production in which each one is producing from two to six times as much as he is able to buy. The inevitable result is that more is produced than can possibly be sold, and thus conditions are aggravated.

The real condition is concealed, however, for a long time by credits, by recourse to foreign markets in one way and another and each firm goes on producing keeping the others in ignorance of its own condition and remaining in ignorance of the conditions of the others. Finally, a demand is made somewhere that cannot be met. There is a failure. Suspicion arises. The money men "become frightened." At this point the manipulation of the monetary system enters, of course with its damaging influence. And thus a panic is on, and the industrial crisis drags its demoralizing effects through the weeks and months entailing almost endless loss and waste and human suffering.

What, now, is the cause? We have only to retrace our steps. It cannot be the monetary system, for during the last 150 years there has been a more or less periodical crisis every ten years or so. And they have occurred under silver standard, gold standard, under suspension of cash payment, in times of plenty and of want, in peace and in war. (See Palgrave Dictionary of Pol. Econ.) As a matter of fact the crisis is a part and parcel of the competitive system of industry and can only be abolished or prevented when this system is abolished. Socialism will abolish the crisis because it will abolish the three features of our social system which produce it. In the first place there will be a regular, orderly and systematic production. We propose to ascertain beforehand the approximate need or demand and then to organize the forces of production to meet this demand, but to produce no more than is needed. In the second place, with the abolition of the competitive system the necessity of secrecy disappears; knowledge of the market and of the forces of production will be accessible to all and all will direct their energies upon the basis of certainty instead of caprice and chance. And finally, every laborer being protected from exploitation and thus receiving practically wealth equivalent to that which he produces, the market will be always firm and steady, because all will be able to purchase as much as their labor produces. And thus an oversupply, a panic and a crisis become absolutely impossible under Socialism.

Whatever the monetary system, if the present planless, unsystematic and competitive method of production continues the pain and passion, the disaster and distress of the panic and the crisis are inevitable. Populism would not avert it nor remedy the wrong. Friend FORSBERG objects to Socialism because it is too radical. But a remedy that does not go to the roots of a disease, and is therefore truly radical, is worse than none, and may result disastrously. True radicalism that goes deep until it finds the root cause and strikes there, this after all is the

only true remedy, the only merciful hand. And he who advocates a remedy that will not heal holds out false hopes, betrays himself and humanity besides.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

And finally Mr. FORSBERG asks a number of presumably hard questions in regard to the detailed application of the principles of Socialism.

Before attempting to answer these it should be said that Socialists cannot be reasonably expected to answer all possible questions of this nature. It would be impossible. The very fact that under Socialism every policy is to be decided by vote of the people makes it impossible to say just how each detail will be worked out. If when the revolutionary fathers were signing the declaration of independence one had asked them how they proposed to adjust the question of states rights or of slavery, they doubtless would have replied, let us get our independence first. We will settle those questions afterwards. So with Socialism. We do not offer a cut and dried program with all the details worked out. We offer a set of principles which we show in their application to social and civic affairs will emancipate humanity from the wrongs of private capitalism. The detailed application of these principles must be left to the future and many questions cannot be answered.

With these remarks it is perhaps permissible for me to offer the answers which suggest themselves to my mind to the questions asked.

(1) I should say that the labor check, or some form of money based upon labor values would be interchangeable and pass as current money. However I can conceive that even under Socialism there may be, and for some time probably will be some form of money issued by the government. Possibly such as Mr. FORSBERG advocates.

(2) There would be nothing to prevent from saving up his checks and getting capital to start a bank and loaning money,—except this, that no one would want to borrow. For under Socialism by working one could get the full products of his toil while if he should borrow he would have to work and get only a part of the products, the balance going to pay interest on his loan.

(3) Under Socialism the value of the service of a physician, a musician, actor, sculptor, painter, inventor, etc will have to be determined by the consensus of opinion of the community employing them. [For interesting and careful discussion of this point see Vandervelde, "Collectivism", pp 137-150.]

(4) It will be just as easy to determine the value of each workers service in a large establishment under Socialism as it is now. And under a cooperative and centralized system I should estimate that not more than one third as many book keepers would be required as now. Under a competitive regime every unnecessary store or factory requires at least from two to a dozen bookkeepers which can be dispensed with as soon as a consolidation is made.

(5) As to the return to farmers, if the farmer had chosen to put his farm into the hands of the government and thus completely socialize his farming then that farmer would receive as his return an income equal to the average income of the workers in average years whether crops failed or not. This could be done for in large undertakings the risk from loss disappears. It is thus that Socialism becomes the best possible kind of insurance. If on the other hand the farmer chose to retain his farm and run it independently, then he would get the value of what he produces. And if he is allowed the full value of his products he will get an average of say about six times what he gets now. Under such conditions he would be quite able to bear the occasional loss that results from crop failures.

(6) Those who could not work would have to be taken care of under Socialism by the collectivity. However if the relatives cared to provide for them, they would be much better prepared to do so under Socialism than now. And again, all who will have been able to work during their middle life will have produced enough to take care of themselves during old age. Others will be cared for by the government the same as now, only, it is to be hoped that it will be much better done.

In conclusion let me say to friend FORSBERG and to all my readers that these papers for Socialism have been written out of the very deepest convictions: From me straight to your hearts these words are my most eager personal appeal. I honor those who have made the stand for Populism. I hope no word I have written has been susceptible of any interpretation

other than that of respect for all. But I too am dead in earnest. To my mind we are facing the master opportunity of human history. It is also a crisis. The struggle is on. We are impatient for the better day. We plead, we argue, entreat, perhaps we seem to upbraid. But if so, it is because the life of the people, their freedom, their joy, their unfoldment—theirs and ours all seems involved. But whether we see alike or not now, we sometime shall. And meanwhile we all must struggle towards the light of that "divine far off event towards which the whole creation moves."

CARL D. THOMPSON.

To Wed Soon.

Wedding bells will soon ring out their glad tidings in the First ward, the occasion being the approaching wedding of Emma Josephine Anderson, a daughter of Hans Anderson, to August S. Berg, of Minneapolis. The wedding will take place next Saturday evening at half past seven o'clock, in the Swedish Baptist church, where Rev. Robert Larson will say the words that will unite them for life. After the ceremony a reception will be given at the home of the bride's parents in the First ward.

The couple will leave shortly after on a wedding trip, after which they will make their future home at Minneapolis, where Mr. Berg is employed as coach inspector for the Willmar and Sioux Falls Railway Company. Both the young people are well and favorably known among a great number of friends and they all join in wishing the couple a happy and prosperous married life. The TRIBUNE extends congratulations.

What is Going Next?

In our last issue we called attention to the fact that some of our finely kept lawns had been deprived of their flowers by some parties who evidently were very much infatuated with them and thought that our flower-loving citizens raised them for public use. We have since heard that garden-truck is also being moved away. This is certainly a very sad case, but we hope that the price on garden-truck will soon be reduced so that there will be no need of anybody helping himself to a fine lunch at somebody else's expense. We believe in a full dinner pail and all that, but we advise everybody to be careful where they fill it.

We very naturally wonder what is going next. We suppose it wont be long before some born genius will invent something whereby it may be possible to carry away our gardens. So far, however, no reports to this effect have been heard.

Two New Threshing Rigs.

Two new threshing outfits left this city on Thursday for the field of golden grain. One was a "New Huber," bought from Meltn & Ekander by Halvorson, Thorson & Johnson, of Lake Andrew, the other an "Advance" purchased from G. P. Karwand by Erickson & Bengtson, of New London. Quite a difficulty was encountered in getting over the crossings in the city, but after some trouble both rigs were safely "launched." It was thought some time ago, that the chinch bugs and the continued wet weather would thresh the grain for the farmers, but to judge by the number of fine rigs pulling out from here, there must be some left somewhere.

Goes to St. Paul.

Magnus Thorson who has made Boyd his home the past two and a half years and who has been the assistant cashier at the state bank the past year has resigned his late position and accepted a more lucrative one in a bank at St. Paul. He expects to leave for his new location the early part of next week. We regret greatly to have Mr. Thorson leave, as he is a desirable companion—gentle and of good deportment—and being a first class musician has also always added much to the pleasure of our social functions.—Boyd Bulletin.

Mr. Thorson's many friends in this county will be glad to hear of his promotion. Magnus is a faithful worker and deserves success.

A Libel Suit.

A case that promises to become very interesting has been brought by N. P. Nelson, of this city, against Jens B. Olson, also a resident here, for slander.

The complaint sets forth that vile and obscene language has been used by defendant and that thereby plaintiffs social standing and reputation has been considerably lowered and he asks for \$5,000 damages.

Olson in his answer denies all the charges made. Attorneys Olson & Johnson will conduct the case for the plaintiff, and Atty C. D. Benschel, of Montevideo will appear for the defendant.

ARRESTED FOR VAGRANCY

Two Persons Arrested for Vagrancy and One for Carrying Fire-Arms.

Yesterday was a busy day in justice court. T. K. Earlight, a Great Northern detective appeared in the morning and swore out warrants for the apprehension and arrest of Henry Heidrick, John Smith and Frank Davis, three sojourners, who made a stay here on their way to the wild and woolly west. The charge preferred against Henry Heidrick was that of carrying a concealed weapon, a thirty-two caliber revolver, and the case was heard before Judge Otterness at three o'clock yesterday. The defendant pleaded guilty of the charge and he was fined \$10 or free board in the county jail for the time of eight days. Not being in possession of so much of this worldly goods he was committed to jail.

The charge preferred against the other two was that of vagrancy, the plaintiff alleging that they were loitering about without any visible sign of self support and that they had tried to make their living by begging food, etc., from our citizens. The defendants asked for a trial by jury but it was not granted. The case was tried this forenoon and the defendants were found guilty of the charge preferred and were sent to jail for three days.

This case will undoubtedly be a lesson to other "free country" and "free lunch" sojourners and they will most likely try to make an easy living somewhere else.

SUES FOR DAMAGES

Lars Halvorson Institutes Case Against J. Downs and W. W. Knight for Unlawful Detention.

Some time ago Albert Berg instituted case against Lars Halvorson, charging him with running over his son, Ole with his gasoline bicycle and asking for damages to the amount of \$1,000.75. Halvorson has now filed his answer to the complaint, therein denying each and all statements in the complaint and alleging that it was the boy that by carelessness run into the bicycle and not the bicycle that ran into the boy. This case will be heard at the next term of court and also a second one, instituted by Halvorson, against J. Downs and W. W. Knight, alleging that after the accident occurred the persons above mentioned held him and would not let him go until the doctor could be called to ascertain the nature of the injuries received by Ole Berg. He therefore charges them with his unlawful detention against the laws of the state and asks \$1,000 damages. This case will also be heard at the next term of court and it will undoubtedly be a very interesting one.

Overcome by the Heat.

Mr. Harvey, brakeman on the Willmar & St. Cloud line was overcome by the intense heat that reigned here on Thursday. He was working on top of a freight car when he suddenly fell over. Luckily he did not fall down from the car, and being right in the yard at the time of the accident, he was hurried to a shady place and Dr. McLaughlin was sent for. Upon the doctors arrival, however, he expressed himself as very much improved and it was not found necessary to prescribe anything but plenty of rest and shade.

Receives Pension.

Mrs. Katherine Dougherty, who lives in Kandiyohi and is quite generally known throughout the county, received the first payment last Thursday on a pension granted her some time ago. Her husband, who was one of the veterans who fought for the Stars and the Stripes in the civil war, died in February, and she then applied for a widow's pension, which Uncle Sam granted her as a token of appreciation of the services rendered him by her husband.

Canfield Again at Fergus.

L. A. Canfield, who while deranged attempted suicide in St. Cloud two years ago, has been committed to the Fergus Falls hospital for the insane. He felt his old trouble returning and asked to be sent to the hospital. There was no probate proceeding. The family now resides at Brainerd and the commitment was from that county.—St. Cloud Journal Press.

Seen to Organize.

During the summer, bowling has been quite out of question on account of the hot weather. But fall is coming and some of the bowling enthusiasts have decided to organize a team. It will not be, however, before about the middle of September, as the hunting season will have to be taken in also.