

TWO TALKS ON SOCIALISM

BY

JAMES P. CANNON

[In the view of many, James P. Cannon (1890-1974) was the greatest socialist workers' leader that the United States has yet produced. He was an organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies) in his youth, and was involved in the left-wing regroupment that led to the formation of the American Communist movement following the Russian Revolution. A leading Communist in the 1920s, he was the central organizer of the International Labor Defense, which led campaigns to free class-war prisoners such as the anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti. He was expelled from the Communist Party in 1928 after declaring his support for Trotsky's struggle against the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state and the Communist International. He and his followers subsequently undertook the difficult tasks of constructing a public "left opposition" to the CP (the Communist League of America) and finally a new party – the Socialist Workers Party – as the U.S. section of Trotsky's Fourth International, founded in 1938. He remained the central leader of the SWP until the 1950s. The political legacy of Cannon is claimed by a number of ostensibly Trotskyist groups today, though not by what remains of the SWP, which formally renounced Trotskyism in the early 1980s. Cannon is the subject of a superb biography by Canadian labor historian Bryan Palmer, the first volume of which was published in 2007 by the University of Illinois Press under the title *James P. Cannon and the Origins of the American Revolutionary Left*.]

America Under The Workers' Rule

This talk was delivered at the Friday Night Forum of the Socialist Workers Party in Los Angeles on January 16, 1953. It was the fifth in a series of lectures by Cannon on "America's Road to Socialism".

Last week we discussed the coming struggle for power which will decide the question: Who shall be master in the American house? Our analysis showed that the advantages in this coming struggle lie on the side of the workers, and that their victory can be expected. This victory of the workers in the showdown struggle with the capitalists and their fascist gangs will culminate, at a certain point, in the establishment of a workers' government to rule the country.

Differences with anarchists

Right at this point our differences with the anarchists are brought out most sharply. We don't hear so much about anarchism now as we did in my early days in the movement. Anarchism was then taken more seriously as a revolutionary tendency, but it made a miserable showing under the actual tests of war and revolution. Anarchism, in essence, is nothing but opportunism turned inside out, but it sometimes appears to be its opposite; and impatient workers, recoiling violently against a pusillanimous and compromising leadership, are often attracted to the high-sounding verbal radicalism of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists and mistake it for the real thing. It is possible, therefore, that in the course of coming developments in America, anarchism could experience a certain revival. That could cause a great deal of confusion just when clarity of program will be supremely important.

The differences between Marxists and anarchists are very serious and caused many polemical disputes and splits in the past, ever since the days of Marx and Bakunin in the First International. There were many points at issue in this great

historic controversy, but the central point was the question of the state. The anarchist theory was that capitalism and the state would be abolished at the same time, in one operation. For them the revolutionary victory was synonymous with the abolition of the state.

The Marxists said, no, you are running ahead of yourselves. Marxism also envisages a society in which there will be no classes and no state, but does not agree with the contention that the state can be abolished in one step at the moment of the workers' victory. A transition period will follow when the workers will need a state for their own historic class purposes. Marxism regards the state as the instrument of class rule. It is not the general, impartial representative of all the people, as it is represented to be and as, unfortunately, many people think it is. The state, in its essential features, is the instrument of one class for the suppression of another.

That's the character of the present state in this country. Marxism gives the same basic definition to the state that will be set up following the workers' victory. The workers' state—in the transition period between capitalism and socialism—will have the same characteristics, in some respects, as the one that exists today. It will be a class instrument; its chief purpose will be to suppress one class in the interests of another. So far, it's the same thing as the Eisenhower state, with this slight difference: The state we envisage after the victory of the workers will be a governmental instrument of coercion in the hands of the working-class majority to suppress any attempt of the capitalist minority to re-establish their system of exploitation. The workers' state will be like the present state only turned upside down and put to the service of a different class.

The main features and role of this new state in the transition period are not for us a subject of imaginative speculation. The nature of society in the transition period between capitalism and socialism, and the kind of state, of government, it would require, were clearly foreseen and elaborated theoretically by Marx and Engels a long time ago; and the theory was applied in practice in the Russian Revolution of 1917 by Lenin and Trotsky. We have both Marxist theory and serious experience to go by in stating confidently what the general characteristics of the new state will be and what its tasks will be.

In drawing up their conclusions from the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871, the first attempt of the workers to set up a state of their own, Marx and Engels stated their theoretical conclusions on the nature of the state in the

transition period with absolute clarity. Between the capitalist society of the present and the communist society of the future—they said—there lies a transition period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. During this period the corresponding political state can only be the rule of the workers, the dictatorship of the workers, as every state is, in essence, the dictatorship of one class over another.

That is precisely the way Lenin and Trotsky, who were orthodox disciples of Marx and Engels, understood the question and proceeded resolutely to apply it in practice in the Russian Revolution of November 1917. The theory of Marx and Engels on the question of the state and revolution has been powerfully reinforced by the experience of the great Russian Revolution.

So we can sum up this point by saying with absolute certainty that the working class, victorious in the showdown struggle with the capitalists and their fascist gangs, will not disband all government forms. On the contrary, it will take hold of society and set up its own government, its own state, and use all the concentrated power of this state to suppress any attempt at counterrevolution by the capitalists. At the same time it will use the power of the new state to reorganize the economy and direct it into new channels and new forms.

Workers' government

Certain things have been demonstrated in the Russian Revolution which prior to that time were maintained, and could be maintained, only theoretically.

On the positive side of that great historical experience, we can put down first, the demonstration that it is possible—as previously asserted by Marxism, but unproved—for the working class not only to remove the capitalists from power, but to set up a governmental machine to serve their own purposes and to maintain their power. Today, if anyone says, “It can't be done”, the answer is: “It has already been done, and done successfully even under the most unfavorable conditions.”

If anyone says: “This idea of a workers' government sounds good but it wouldn't work. The 62 million workers in this country wouldn't be strong enough to supersede the capitalists in power and set up a government of their own; they wouldn't know how to run a government; they have never been to school in statesmanship; they didn't study civics in college.” If anyone says that, the

answer is: Only four or five million workers—that's all the industrial proletariat amounted to in tsarist Russia—four or five million workers were sufficient, at the time of social crisis, to overthrow the whole edifice of tsarism and capitalism and set up a government of their own. Moreover, they were able to maintain their power, not only against all the capitalists and landlords of Russia, but against the entire capitalist world which blockaded them and tried to overthrow them by military force.

Our programmatic statement that the workers will set up a government of their own in this country can hardly be dismissed as a utopian speculation—not after the demonstration of the Russian Revolution. Our confident assertion has the verification of practical experience as well as the scientific theory of Marxism behind it.

The second fact on the positive side of the Russian experience is the colossal achievement in the field of production. Tsarist Russia was the most backward of the big capitalist countries. Capitalist large-scale industry was only feebly developed there; it was far behind that of America, England, France, and Germany. But even with such a poor foundation to build on, it was demonstrated that production can not only be kept going without capitalists and landlords, but can be increased and multiplied. In the brief space of 35 years since the Russian Revolution, the most backward land of great capitalism has become the second industrial power in the world. That is attributed, and can only be attributed, to the elimination of capitalist private ownership, the nationalization of industry, and construction of planned economy.

In these two achievements of the Russian Revolution we have the practical demonstration, first, that the workers can rule; and second, that nationalized industry and planned economy can increase the productivity of the people. That is the touchstone of all social systems. The social system which can raise the productivity of labour, so that more things are produced with less expenditure of labour power, is the more progressive system. It is bound to prevail and to displace any less productive social system.

The negative sides of the evolution of the Soviet Union since 1917 have been the product of specific Russian conditions. We have no reason whatever to minimize or ignore the deformations of the Soviet state under Stalinism, truly monstrous and revolting as they are. But we should try to understand the causes

of these excrescences before jumping to the conclusion that a workers' state in America would necessarily suffer the same degeneration.

There are great differences between the Russia of 1917 and the America of the present day, and these differences will all work in favor of the American workers when they come to power. In Russia the greatest difficulties began after the revolution. The overthrown minority of capitalists and landlords didn't submit. They organized a counterrevolutionary struggle which developed into a civil war, before the new state had a chance to consolidate. While Lenin was reading those great history-making decrees in the first Soviet assembly after the Bolsheviks had taken power, the counterrevolutionists were already mobilizing their armies, with the money and military support of the outside capitalist world. For five years—from 1917 until 1922—the main efforts of the new workers' government in this backward country, further impoverished and ruined by the world war, had to be devoted to a military struggle to maintain the new regime.

The *immediate* result was not a development of the productive forces but a further disorganization and disruption. Everything had to be subordinated to the demands of the war for survival against a world of enemies. There was a scarcity of the barest essentials of life. Daily life became a scramble for an extra piece of bread. Out of this economic circumstance, a bureaucracy arose, took shape, and crystallized into a privileged caste—as is always the case when there is scarcity. This bureaucracy, after a long internal struggle, eventually gained the domination of the country.

That is the negative side of the Russian experience, based on the economic backwardness of the country and its isolation in a hostile capitalist world. The attempt to march forward progressively and harmoniously, from the proletarian revolution to a socialist society, in a backward country surrounded and isolated in a hostile capitalist world, proved to be a rather difficult undertaking. It culminated, for an historical period, in the deformation of the workers' state into a bureaucratic police state.

But even under these adverse circumstances—and this is the point to remember—the new system of nationalized industry and planned economy could not be destroyed. Over a period of 35 years the new system of economy—the greatest achievement of the revolution—has proved its viability and its capacity to develop and expand the productive forces at a rate and on a scale never equaled by capitalism even in its heyday. That is the touchstone.

Things will go differently in this country, and there will be both difficulties and advantages in the difference. The difficulties will come first. The capitalist class in this country is stronger than it was in Russia; it has more resources: and it will fight with the desperate fury of an outlived class in its last stronghold. But once the power has been taken by the workers in this country, everything will be changed in their favor. And for the same reason.

Where Russia was poor and industrially backward, America is rich and highly developed. Capitalism has done its historic work in this country, and for that we should be duly appreciative. You see, we're not anti-capitalist 100%; we're procapitalist as against feudalism, and chattel slavery, and industrial backwardness in general. We are procapitalist in recognizing the progressive historic role capitalism played in developing the forces of production, as illustrated to the highest degree in this country.

But in making this acknowledgement, we add a postscript: Capitalism has exhausted its progressive role; now it must leave the stage to a higher system. Capitalism has done its work here, so that when the workers come to power they will fall heir not to a ruined, backward, hungry country, but to the richest country with the most highly developed productive plant in the whole world. That's what the new government of the workers in America will have to start with.

Form of government

What will be the form of the new workers' government? I wouldn't undertake to say positively, any more than I would undertake to say positively just how the transfer of the governmental power from the capitalists to the workers will take place. The two questions are connected, to a certain extent. Many variants are possible, depending on the strength of each side at the time of the showdown, and the disposition of the capitalists in particular.

If somebody says: "I would prefer to see the change effected by the workers' getting the majority in a fair election and taking power peacefully"—well, I wouldn't say I'm opposed to that. I would say, if it can be done, if the democratic forms are maintained and it can be done peacefully, that would probably be the most economical way of transforming the government.

Of course, even in such a case, you would have to do a very serious job of fixing up the constitution to make it fit the new needs. But that could all be done,

provided the capitalists, contrary to the disposition of all ruling classes in the past, will agree peacefully to submit to the will of the majority.

But if history tells us anything, it is doubtful, to say the least, that they would agree to that. As the workers approach a position of political strength, where their majority in a fair election becomes a threatening prospect, it is possible, and even probable, that the capitalists will disregard democratic processes, organize fascist gangs and try to settle the question with armed force. The workers then will be obliged to set up their own defense battalions. In such circumstances it is quite possible, due to the stupidity, arrogance, unfairness, and historic blindness of the capitalists, that there will be some scuffling before the government is changed.

But it will be changed just the same, and however it may be changed, the new government will probably approximate the occupational or workers' council form; or will eventually be remodeled along that line. The present form of representation in the government by territorial units will probably be replaced by representation of occupational units. The delegates in the congress will directly represent the workers in the shops, the factories, the farms and so on; not to omit the military units, which will also have a hand in the new regime as long as they continue to exist.

The workers' council form of government will be preferred because it is more representative and more democratic than the present form of American government. The new government will be primarily concerned with the problems of economy. The workers will have a means of exerting direct pressure and influence through their own delegates in the occupational councils all the way up from the local to the regional and to the federal assemblies.

The council form is more representative than the present form of government. For example, I don't think there are many sitting in this room who ever saw the congressman from their district, or even know his name. But there are very few of you who don't know the name of your shop steward in the factory where you work, and the delegates in the central bodies of your unions. They have something to do with your daily work and welfare and you have to see them almost every day. They are not something remote, like the government in Washington, but directly connected with the workers whom they represent. You can visualise the council form of government as just that sort of thing on an expanded scale.

The workers in factories elect their delegates to a local council, the local units combine in a regional body; the regional councils elect their delegates to the federal body. Control comes directly back, not to an election that takes place every two or four years, but to a shop council whose members can meet every day if they want to, right on the ground, and let their representative know what they want. Certainly the council form of government is more representative, more flexible and more democratic than the present form of government could ever be imagined to be. That's why I think it is reasonable to assume that the workers' government in this country will take this form.

Nationalize banks and industry

What will be the first tasks of this new workers' government? Again, this is not speculative; it is not a mystery. The Marxists face this problem with an answer which was first theoretically outlined by our great masters; which has been demonstrated already in practice; and is now incorporated into the program of every revolutionary party in the world. The first task of the new government, once it has established its authority and its power, will be to abolish private property in the means of production. This will be done by one law, or by one decree, declaring that the banking system and all the key industries—all the big factories, mines, and factory farms; all the means of communication and transportation, public utilities, etc. are henceforth public property.

I don't mean every little shop, corner store, and small farm. I mean the great industries which have already been organized on a colossal scale. They will be maintained and operated just as they are, with one small difference. Instead of a clique of non-producers directing them for private profit, as at present, they will be nationalized and made the property of the workers' government, to be operated for public use and need, and not for anybody's personal profit.

Will these industries be acquired by compensation to the present owners, or by confiscation? This question used to be debated very heatedly in the socialist movement in the old days, but it is not really a question of principle; not in this country, at any rate. We say today: "It all depends." It is not necessarily more radical to say: "We won't give them a cent, we'll just confiscate." It is not necessarily wiser to say: "It would be better to compensate." I take a position in the middle and say that whether the capitalists receive any compensation for the industries they claim to own—but which in reality they stole from the people—

whether they get compensation or an order of expropriation without compensation—will depend on how they behave themselves.

If they want to submit to the majority and be reasonable, I think the government could easily agree to give them a certain compensation to avoid further trouble. America is rich enough. The workers' government could afford to hand out a few million, even a few billion, in order to prevent the development of a civil war. The government could do that, and might do it. It depends on the capitalists.

If they get nasty and continue fighting against the sovereign will of the majority, then they won't get anything. I take it for granted that once the workers have been victorious in a revolution and have set up their own government, they aren't going to be fooling any more. Everything is going to be serious and decisions will have to be carried out.

The next day after the nationalization of industry, or maybe on the same day, the new workers' government will lay official hands on all the gold buried in the ground at Fort Knox, and use this gold as the basis for American money. This will be the ironic paradox of history: that it took the workers' government to establish a sound dollar in the United States, based on gold reserves, of which, thank God, we have plenty in Fort Knox and other depositories. We can also thank the present rulers for accumulating them for us. Eventually, money will be dispensed with altogether. The fully developed socialist society will have no use for it. But in the meantime, the workers' government will have a sound dollar regulating the national economy, and no inflation.

Industry will be nationalized and operated according to a plan. Will that apply to all kinds of private property, to small farms, to small businesses, little stores? We don't think so. We don't think the new government would have any interest whatever in expropriating all the little corners of American industry and production. It would be wiser to let the small farmer keep his farm and continue to work on his own hook, and to let the little shops continue to operate.

The government will be busy with the great problem of nationalizing coal and steel and auto and rubber and all the rest of the big industries and the railroads. The small farms and businesses can fit into the new scheme and supplement it; fill in the crevices of the national economy. The new government would have every interest, not only in permitting it, but in encouraging it and helping out with credits, etc., until the small farmers and small businessmen decide of their own

account that they can do better and live better by participating in the uniform national scheme and sharing in its benefits. It won't take them long.

But there are farmers and farmers. What about the factory farms such as those we have here in California—the great mass-production ranches, where hundreds and even thousands of agricultural workers are exploited in virtual slavery? They won't be left in the hands of parasitical bankers and absentee owners. They will be taken over by the state and developed as models of the new type of agriculture—the factory in the field.

The future belongs to this type of agriculture. In time, the historical anachronism of isolated, privately operated small farms will be preserved only here and there as relics of a backward age. Agriculture will be developed just as all other industry has developed, on the factory system with modern labour-saving machinery, with the scientific methods of soil culture, fertilizing, and so on. The aim will be to produce the greatest amount of food with the minimum of labour. The people, including the present farmers and agricultural workers, will get the benefit of it in the form of a higher standard of living, less hours of labour, and more leisure for living, for culture, and just to fool around and have a little fun.

Must 'deliver the goods'

The aim of the workers' government from the very start will be to increase production, eliminate waste, and improve the living standards of the people. And it will have to make good on this solid, practical ground. It will not be enough to say in government bulletins: "The new regime is morally superior to the old one. The new officials are more honest than the others." All this will be perfectly true, but, by itself, will not suffice. The new regime will stand or fall, like all social systems in history, by this basic criterion: Does it raise and improve the productivity of labour, or does it turn it backward? The new regime will have to "deliver the goods".

The American people will not be satisfied with official propaganda. They are from Missouri and they will say: "Show me". They will want better homes and furniture; more and better food and clothes; more tickets to good shows and circuses. Every citizen will want his own automobile and a good five-cent cigar; maybe also, for all I know, a better supply of fine wines and liquors. The new government will have to produce and deliver all that; that will be its first aim.

And that's why it will nationalize industry, and reorganize production according to a unified economic plan.

Will this be superior to the present system? Will production be increased with less waste? That's for sure. After the Russian experience there can't be the slightest doubt about it. Today American industry operates blindly, without a general plan. The sole incentive for the operation of each and every factory in this country is the private profit of the owners. There's no general coordination. There's no concern about what's going on in other industries or in other parts of the same industry. There's no concern about whether the people need this or that, or don't need it. The sole driving motive for the operation of each and every individual corporation is the private profit of the owners.

The decisions on production are made, not by consumers, what the people need and want; not by the workers, what the workers would like to make; not by scientists and technicians who know best of all, perhaps. The main decisions on production under capitalism—what shall be produced, how, where, and when—are made by financial magnates remote from the factories, remote from the people, whose sole motive is profit in each case.

What are the results of this system, which Marxists call the anarchy of capitalist production? One result is wasteful competition. Another result is the preservation of obsolete machinery and methods and the suppression of new patents. Twenty years ago the technocrats exposed the shocking fact that some of the most important patents for labour-saving methods and new processes are locked up in the safes of corporations. They bought the patents and suppressed them in order to prevent the development of more efficient methods by competitors which would render some present methods and products obsolete and reduce the profits they now make.

Consider the waste represented by the conspicuous consumption of the capitalist social parasites. That is absolute waste. The huge share of the product of American labour that goes to these non-producers is all pure waste.

That's not all. Consider the waste of militarism and war. Just think of it! Sixty billion dollars a year wasted on the military budget at the present time, under the present system, which they say is the best in the world and the best that can ever be. Sixty billion dollars a year, wasted on military apparatus and preparation for war.

There is the waste of advertising, which is not only direct waste, but also irritation, which is another form of waste. You get so mad listening to the phony commercials that it makes you nervous, sets you to quarrelling with your wife, and undermines your efficiency on the job. That's waste of human energy. I would say, only 10% of advertising is useful—that 10% which comprises announcements, explanations of new processes and so on, which will be used under the new society. The other 90% of advertising is devoted to lying, ballyhoo, faking and conning the people, and trying to get them to favour one identical product over another, or to buy something they don't need and that won't do them any good, and then buy something else to overcome the effects. That is pure waste.

And then, there's another waste connected with advertising, as with so many other non-productive occupations—the waste of human material, which really shouldn't be squandered. Just think of all the people prostituting their personalities in the advertising racket. Writers concoct slick copy, artists draw false illustrations, and radio announcers wheedle, deceive, and lie to promote crooked advertising campaigns. That is a waste of human personality, causing neuroses based upon the justified conviction of the individual that he is an absolutely useless person.

There are millions of such people, engaged in all kinds of useless, non-productive occupations in this present society. Advertising is only one of them. Look at all the lawyers in this country. What are they good for? Look at all the landlords, lobbyists, salesmen, promoters, ward-heelers, thieves, and swindlers—the million-headed horde of non-productive people in all kinds of rackets, legitimate and illegitimate. What are they good for? What do they produce? All that is economic waste, inseparable from the present system.

Costliest of all the results of the anarchy of capitalist production is the waste of economic crises—the periodic shutting down of production because the market has been saturated and products cannot be sold at a profit. This is what they euphemistically call a “depression”—an unavoidable cyclical occurrence under capitalism.

I wonder what the future man, the really civilized man, will think when he reads in his history books that there was once a society, long ago, where the people might be hungry for the products of farms and factories. And the workers in the factory might be eager to produce and needing the work so that they could

live. But because the hungry people couldn't buy the products, the workers weren't allowed to work and produce them, and the factories were shut down, and agricultural production was artificially restricted.

What will the people of the future think of a society where the workers lived in constant fear of unemployment? There is hardly one sitting in this room tonight, I venture to say—there is hardly a worker anywhere who knows for sure whether he will have a job six months from now or not. He can work all his mature life, 40 or 50 years, and he's never free from that fear. His having a job depends, not on his willingness to work, nor on the need of the people for the products of his labour; it depends on whether the owners of the factories can find a market for the products and make a profit at a given time. If they can't, they shut down the factory, and that's all there is to it.

The workers' government will put a stop to this monstrous squandering of the people's energies and resources, which is the direct result of the anarchy of capitalist production. Just by cutting out all this colossal waste—to say nothing of a stepped-up rate of productivity which would soon follow—the socialist reorganization of the economy will bring about a startling improvement of the people's living standards.

The first condition will be to eliminate all private profits of non-producers; to eliminate all conflicting interests of private owners of separate industries; to stop production for sale and profit and organise planned production for use.

When Marxists used to adumbrate the future along these lines, there was always some wise guy to say: "Ha! Blueprint! Utopia! It can't be done!" But that's precisely what was done in Russia, which had been the most backward of the capitalist countries. First they nationalized industry. Then they set up a central plan, and by means of planned economy they eliminated the wastes of capitalism and developed production faster than any other country in the world, until they became the second industrial power. And now the same thing is being done in China and in Eastern Europe. It is no longer a speculative prospect. What has already been done in other countries, can and will be done in our own country.

Planned economy

As one of its first acts, the new workers' government will appoint a central planning board to organise and regulate the entire economy of America according

to one general comprehensive plan. What will be the composition of this planning board? Certainly no loudmouthed politicians, no bankers, no lawyers; I doubt whether there will be any preachers. But I would say, representatives of the unions, farm cooperatives, economists and statisticians, scientists, technicians, and consumers will be appointed as a matter of course.

What will be the aims of the plan? The central planning board will concern itself with the problem of the maximum utilization of all the resources and productive capacities in the country for one single purpose, according to one single criterion: what the people want and need.

The new workers' government, no doubt, will call in the atomic scientists and ask them to develop this new power for useful productive purposes. The prospect staggers the imagination. But from what has already been demonstrated in the field of destruction with the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb, we can easily recognise not only the possibility, but the probability that the atomic scientists will show the economic planning board how to take this new discovery and put it to work for the production of power for peaceful uses. It is easily conceivable that the whole problem of power will be revolutionized. We can visualize a great system of power stations generated by atomic energy, taking the burden of labour from the shoulders of half a million coal miners and transferring it to atomic-powered machines.

All science will be pooled and directed to a single aim: production for the benefit of all—in agriculture as well as in industry. There will be a revolution in the production of food when the economic side of it is lifted out of this terrible backwardness of private ownership and operation for profit and handed over to the direction of agricultural scientists, seed specialists, soil experts, and so on. They will go to work in earnest, unfettered by any private interest, and learn how to refertilise soil, and increase its yields. An army of chemists will be mobilized to attack all problems of economical and abundant food production. They will solve the problem of converting salt water into fresh water cheaply, and make the deserts bloom. One thing is absolutely certain, from what one can read of the scientific advances already made in this field and experiments in progress: The productivity of the farms, of the land, can be increased many times and there can be food in abundance for all.

There will be a great expansion of scientific and technical schools in this country where every talented youth will be entitled to go, free of charge, at the

expense of the state. The opportunity to acquire a scientific or technical education will not be simply a privilege of one whose father is well-to-do, but will be the natural inheritance of any talented young person who wants to pursue a line of science to serve the people.

Vast sums will be set aside for medical education, research and experiment. Not the grudging donations, here and there, from conscience-stricken philanthropists; not the present stingy appropriations from dollar-conscious legislatures. Just take all the money we spend on militarism and wars, and try to imagine what could be done if we spent only a small part of it on a program for health; a program to educate more doctors, and to make the doctors better; to enable them to live better and to get out of the moneymaking “business”, which most doctors are in, and attend to the business of healing the sick alone. The workers’ government, in its earliest period, will put a stop to this monstrous social crime of a shortage of doctors, while millions of ailing people go without proper medical attention.

The workers’ government will open up new medical schools and research laboratories and put vast sums at their disposal. No shaking of tin cans and asking people to “give a dime” to fight infantile paralysis. The government will appropriate billions and send an army of eager and devoted scientists into battle against polio, cancer, heart disease, and other enemies of the human race. A comprehensive program for public health will come under the head, not only of humanity and of morality, but also of economy. When the people’s health is taken care of better they will be more productive at work, and more goods of all kinds will roll out of the factories and farms.

We can say positively, on the basis of experience already accumulated under unfavorable conditions in the Soviet Union, that the early, the first, results of planned economy—eliminating all private profits and other waste, consciously employing more scientific methods, safeguarding the people’s health—will be to double the present income of the workers, if they want to take it all. Or they may, and probably will, elect to take part of it to make a 50% improvement in their living standards and devote the other 50% to rebuilding and modernizing the factories and expanding the productive plant.

I’m not speaking now of the socialist society. I’m speaking of the first years, maybe of the first five-year plan of the workers’ government. The first five-year plan will work such miracles in the field of production as to raise the problem of

“superabundance”, and what to do about it. The result of superabundance, or overproduction, as it is called, under the present system, is “depression”: idle plants, and idle men; hunger; misery; homes broken up; children’s education arrested; hopelessness for millions of people. The superabundant production resulting from the operation of planned economy, very likely in the period of the first five-year plan, will appear to the people as a blessing, rather than a threat. They certainly will not even think of shutting down the factories and throwing people out of work.

The “problem” can be dealt with in various ways. The first and most natural reaction of the workers will be formulated in a question: “If we’re all doing well and living good, producing more than we really need in an eight-hour day—then why the hell should we work so long?” This question will arise in the councils of the workers in the shops at the bottom, and will be carried up through their delegates all the way to the top of the government.

And the logical answer will go along with the question: “Let’s shorten the working day. Why should we work eight hours when we can produce all we need in four?” That may appear to be a simple answer to a complicated question, but many things will be simplified when the anarchy of capitalist production for profit is replaced by planned production for use.

'Missionaries'

That’s only the beginning. You can count on a shorter work day, and there will still be abundance and superabundance. Then another question will logically arise in the minds of the enlightened citizens of free and prosperous socialist America. They will not be narrow-minded, ignorant, and selfish isolationists, but will regard themselves as citizens of the world, concerned with all the affairs of the world and all its peoples, and will seek fraternal association with them on the basis of equality.

It goes without saying that they will grant immediate independence or statehood to the Puerto Rican people, whichever they prefer, and renounce all imperialist privileges and concessions extorted from other peoples by the deposed capitalist regime. They will go farther and say: “We’ve got human kinfolk in South America and Central America and in foreign lands, who haven’t had the benefit of the great capitalist development of industry before they came to power. They’re still working with inadequate machinery, tools, and implements. Why

shouldn't we help them to rise to our standards, not only as a simple act of human solidarity, but also to put a firmer foundation under the world system of socialist cooperation?"

The American workers will so decide, freely and voluntarily. I can see them doing that out of the generosity of spirit and the world outlook which the vision of socialism has given to them. I can see them deciding, freely and voluntarily, to work, say, an extra hour or two a day, for a certain period, to produce agricultural machinery, fertilizers, automobiles, trucks, machines to make machines, and other things to speed up the industrialization of the undeveloped countries. And this will not be a loan or a piddling "Point Four" with strings attached. They will simply say to their kinfolk in less-favored lands:

"This is a little donation from the workers of the Socialist United States of America to help you catch up with us, and put a firmer foundation under the Socialist United States of the World."

"Missionaries" will be sent along with the machinery; not sky pilots this time, flanked by soldiers, but scientists and technicians accompanied by doctors. Such a gesture of solidarity, manifested practically in the voluntary labour of the workers for an extra hour or two a day, for a certain period, as a free donation to help industrialize Central and South America, Africa and Asia, will be one of the means whereby the workers in this country will take care of their "superabundance" during the early period of the new workers' government.

The American way of life, which we hear a great deal about, will certainly begin to change under the workers' government. The people will not occupy themselves only with the economic side of things. The government will consider the welfare of the people in all other respects too. Again, I'm not talking of socialism. I'm talking of the first period of the workers' government in this country.

Guarantee security

The government will enact a program of social legislation which will make the Roosevelt reforms appear as mere handouts in comparison. The new government will not offer a miserable pension to a worn-out work horse, if and when he reaches the age of 65, if he has worked steady all his life up to then. It will not offer the worker a small dole against absolute starvation when his factory shuts

down without asking him what he thinks about it. No, the workers' government will have nothing to do with such mockeries of social welfare. In workers' America—from the beginning of the workers' government, without waiting for the full development of socialism—no child, not one, will be born under a cloud of fear as to whether he is going to have enough to eat or not; or dependent upon whether his parents are in good health; or if they have some accident; or if the old man falls out of work.

By the law and the constitution the workers' government will guarantee economic security to every child from the moment of birth. The right to live securely; to have his health taken care of; to be removed from all fears of unemployment, of poverty, and of old age—will be automatically assured to every child by virtue of the fact that he was born in this country under a workers' government. Not only a right to live and to have food and clothes and a snug roof provided; but to have education. Education, as much as he wants, and as much as his talent calls for. Each and every person, without any exception.

That will be a very simple and natural and easy thing to do, because socialist America will have the means, the abundance, the booming productivity—and all this will be produced for use, for the benefit of all. The system of planned economy under the workers' government will provide the people with abundance, and what is no less important, the time to enjoy it and get the full good out of it. I have spoken of the four-hour day, but that would be only the beginning, the first step, which is more than possible with the productive machinery as it is today. But the productivity of labour under the new, more efficient system will be expanded all the time.

And since there will be no need to pile up profits for the benefit of non-producers; since there will be no need to find ways of wasting the surplus—the natural, logical, and inevitable conclusion will simply be to cut down the hours of labour progressively to the time actually needed to produce what is needed. The greatest boon, and the precondition for changing the American way of life into a truly humane, cultured, and civilized way of life, will accrue from the progressive shortening of the working day.

When the workers first began to fight for the 10-hour day in this country—I read in my histories of the American labour movement—the employers put on a tremendous campaign against it. They argued on moral grounds—“morality” of the capitalists is always happily married to their profit interests. They said: “If

you cut down the hours of labour, if the worker doesn't work 12 hours a day, he will spend all his spare time getting drunk. The workers need to be working from dawn to dusk in order to keep sober and keep out of trouble." That's what they said. We won't hear such arguments in the future. When people get accustomed to leisure, they soon learn what to do with it.

The citizen of socialist America will gradually move into a new state of affairs where his main preoccupation is no longer his struggle for individual existence—as it is today—but what he is going to do with that wonderful gift of leisure, the greatest gift, I think, of all. Leisure is the premise for all cultural development. Without leisure you have no rights. What's the use of being told you should do this, and you should do that, you should develop your mind and let your soul expand—when you're so preoccupied with work and trying to make a living and keep your family out of the poorhouse that you have no time for anything else? What you need is time! And for that you need an efficient system of planned economy to shorten the hours of necessary labour and give everyone the time and the leisure to think and reflect and loaf and invite his soul, as the poet said. A big start in this direction will be made already in the early period of the workers' government.

Democratic through and through

The regime of the workers' government in this country will be a democratic regime—democratic through and through. The abundance which the planned economy will provide for all, plus the time for leisure, for education and cultural development in general, will be the surest safeguards against a usurping bureaucracy, infringing on the rights and liberties of the people as in the case today in the Soviet Union.

When there is plenty for all, there is no material basis for a privileged bureaucracy and the danger, therefore, is largely eliminated. That will be the situation in rich and highly developed America under the workers' rule. From the very beginning, we will go in for real workers' democracy in this country; because, among other things, democracy is not only better for ourselves, for our minds, and for our souls, but is also better for production. Democracy will call out the creative energy of the masses. When all the workers participate eagerly in the decisions, and bring together their criticisms and proposals based upon their experience in the shops, higher production will result. Faults in the plans will be corrected right away by the experience of the workers; misfits and incompetents

in the leading bodies will be recalled by the democratic process; officious “bosses” will be given the boot.

An educated and conscious working class will insist on democracy. And not the narrowly limited and largely fictitious democracy of voting every four years for some big-mouthed political faker picked for you by a political machine, but democracy in your work. That’s where it really counts. Every day you will have something to say about the work you’re doing, how it should be done and who should be in charge of it, and whether he’s directing it properly or not. Democracy in all cultural activities. Democracy in all spheres of communal life from A to Z.

I say, an educated American working class that has made a revolution will not tolerate bureaucratic tyrants of any kind. Another thing. The tradition of frontier democracy is deep in the blood of the American worker. He thinks he was born with certain inalienable rights and, by God, no brass hat, fascist gangster, or Stalinist bureaucrat is going to take them away from him. That sentiment will be another powerful point of resistance to any infringements on democracy.

The monstrosity of Stalinism arouses fears of the same thing in this country. These fears, in my opinion, are progressive, provided they don’t lead to prostration before capitalism; because if you have capitalism you are going to have fascism, and that means a police state in its worst and most reactionary form. But that will not be a great danger, either—when the showdown comes. The American workers will take care of the fascists as well as the Stalinists. There will be no police state. There will be democracy, flowering as never before in the history of the world. But that does not mean that there will not be some repressions, if they are necessary. This workers’ state, while it lasts, will still be a state; and the state is an instrument of force, used by one class to repress another. The workers’ government must rule, and it is not going to promise anybody that it is something to fool with. Counterrevolution will not be tolerated. But outside that, the new workers’ regime will be easygoing and tolerant, make itself scarce and keep its nose out of people’s private affairs.

The scientists and technicians will easily be won over to enthusiastic participation in the great work of the new regime. For the first time they will be really free men, not only well rewarded in a material way, but respected and given their heads; not subjected to distrust and suspicion and not required to sign loyalty oaths; not regarded as second-rate citizens, mere hirelings at the command

of some ignorant moneybag. The scientists will be honored as servants of the people, heroes whom the youth will strive to emulate. The scientists and technicians will come over with great enthusiasm to the new regime. There can be no doubt about it.

I don't think the new regime will have any serious trouble with religion. There may be some opposition from organized religion as an institution; the church bigwigs, especially the reactionary, fascist-minded Catholic hierarchy, will probably try to play a counterrevolutionary role in the actual struggle for power. But it won't do them any good. The workers will know where their real interest lies and act accordingly. People have a way of reconciling their religious convictions with their class interests. Besides, if they want texts, they can find plenty of sanction in the Bible for revolutionary action against moneychangers who profane the temple and exploiters who grind the faces of the poor.

Bill Haywood used to say: "No matter what the priest says about turning the other cheek, an Irish Catholic is a handy man on a picket line. When he's on strike fighting for his job and for his union, he finds a way of reconciling it with his religion." That's the way it will be in the revolution, and after. The communicants of the churches will find no difficulty in lining up with the mass of their fellow workers when it comes to a showdown fight for their own interests, for their own future.

And after the revolution, what interest will the workers' government have in suppressing religion, in persecuting people for their religious beliefs? None whatever, as far as I can see. Of course, the churches, as institutions, will be deprived of the support of the capitalist interests. They will have to get out of the real estate business and the charity racket; nobody will need charity. Each church, each religion will have to stand or fall on its appeal to its communicants. It will have to defend its dogmas against scientific criticism, which will also be free. But the new society will have no interest whatever in any kind of persecution of religious sentiments.

Pension off capitalists

Counterrevolution can hardly be a serious threat to the workers' government in America. The workers are an overwhelming majority in this country, and their strength is multiplied by their strategic position in the centres of production everywhere. How is there going to be any kind of a counterrevolution against a

government with such a broad and solid social base? I don't think the American capitalists will try it. The real exploiters are a very small minority. They couldn't get enough fools to do their fighting for them, and they are opposed in principle to doing their own fighting. The defeated capitalists will benefit from their own helplessness, and Trotsky thought it would not be necessary or wise to treat them harshly.

The little handful of recalcitrant capitalists who don't like what is happening will not have to stay and watch if they don't want to. The workers' government of rich America could easily afford to give them an island or two, for their exclusive habitation, and pension them off and get them out of the way. How big is Catalina Island here? That might be just the place for them. It will not be necessary to kill them off. Just send them to Catalina. Let them take their bonds and stock certificates with them—as mementos of bygone days—and give them enough caviar and champagne to finish out their useless lives, while the workers go on with their work of constructing a new and better social order. That's what Trotsky said.

War, and the threat of war, which made Soviet Russia's path so difficult, will be no problem for the American workers' government. Where would the danger come from? In Russia the danger of war was real and actual. But what country could attack the United States? If we are not the last capitalist nation to join the march toward socialism, our coming in will seal the doom of capitalism everywhere. The remnants of the whole world system will fall like a house of cards. The world victory of socialism will put an end to all national rivalries and antagonisms and, therewith, to all national wars.

The victorious American revolution will not stop very long with the 48 states. All the countries north and south of our borders will follow the United States in revolution, if they have not preceded it. In a matter of months, the new workers' government in the United States will join with Canada, with Central America, and with South America, in one great hemispheric federation—the Socialist United States of all the Americas. This new All-American Federation will work out a single economic plan for the entire hemisphere. This cooperative hemispheric plan will bring modern industrialization and scientific agriculture to all the countries south of the border, and raise up all the hungry people to full participation in a new and more abundant life in a better, more humane, and more plentiful society.

These tremendous developments—beginning with increased production and plenty of material goods for all, and then spreading into all fields of human concern and endeavor, will bring the people, by progressive steps, to the threshold of a new stage of society, without classes and without a state, and without any form of compulsion.

As the victorious people approach that new and higher stage of society, all the repressive features of the state will wither away and die out for lack of function. There will be no class to repress. All will be free and equal. The state itself will wither away. The government of men will be replaced by the administration of things. The transition period between capitalism and socialism will merge—without another revolution and without social convulsions of any kind, but simply by an inexorable process of development—into the socialist society.

That is the indicated line of social evolution in the United States, my friends—speeded up, as it will be, by a timely third American revolution. That is America's predestined road. We who see that, and strive to help it along, feel power and victory on our side, for we are in league with the future. In my opinion, to work for that future—with the sure knowledge that social evolution is working with us—is the most important, the most inspiring and the most satisfying occupation of all. The goal we strive for is worthy of anything we do for it or pay for serving it.

What Socialist America Will Look Like

This was the final lecture in a six-part series by Cannon on "America's Road to Socialism". It was given at the SWP's Friday Night Forum in Los Angeles, January 23, 1953.

We Marxists conceive of socialism, not as an arbitrary scheme of society to be constructed from a preconceived plan, but as the next stage of social evolution. The preceding lectures dealt with the struggle for socialism, which develops in succeeding stages foreseen, understood, and consciously organized by the revolutionary party on the basis of a program. The subject of this lecture—"What Socialist America Will Look Like"—carries us beyond our formal program.

Our discussion tonight deals with the socialist society itself, which will grow out of the new conditions when the class struggle will have been carried to its conclusion—that is, to the abolition of classes and consequently of all class struggles. Our preview of the socialist society, therefore, is not a program for struggle, but a forecast of the lines of future development already indicated in the present.

The architects and builders of the socialist society of the future will be the socialist generations themselves. The great Marxists were quite sure of this and refrained from offering these future generations any instructions or blueprints. Their writings, however, do contain some marvelous flashes of insight which light up the whole magnificent perspective. The insights of these men of transcendent genius will be the guiding line of my exposition tonight.

Auguste Blanqui, the great French revolutionist, said: "Tomorrow does not belong to us." We ought to admit that, and recognize at the same time that it is better so. The people in the future society will be wiser than we are. We must assume that they will be superior to us, in every way, and that they will know what to do far better than we can tell them. We can only anticipate and point out

the general direction of development, and we should not try to do more. But that much we are duty bound to do; for the prospect of socialism—what the future socialist society will look like—is a question of fascinating interest and has a great importance in modern propaganda.

The new generation of youth who will come to our movement and dedicate their lives to it will not be willing to squander their young courage and idealism on little things and little aims. They will be governed by nothing less than the inspiration of a great ideal, the vision of a new world. We are quite justified, therefore, in tracing some of the broad outlines of probable future development; all the more so since the general direction, if not the details, can already be foreseen.

In attempting an approximate estimate of what life will be like under socialism, we run up against the inadequacy of present-day society as a measuring rod or basis of comparison with the future. One must project himself into a different world, where the main incentives and compulsions of present-day society will no longer be operative; where in time they will be completely forgotten, and have merely a puzzling interest to students of an outlived age.

Material premise of socialism

Socialism will undoubtedly bring about a revolutionary transformation of human activity and association in all fields previously conditioned by the division of society into classes—in work, in education, in sports and amusements, in manners and morals, and in incentives and rewards.

But all these changes, which can be anticipated and predicted, will begin with and proceed from the revolutionary transformation of the system of production and the consequent augmentation and multiplication of the productivity of labour. This is the necessary material premise for a society of shared abundance. The revolutionary reorganization the labour process—of the manner of working and of regulating, measuring, and compensating the labour time of the individual—will take place first and should be considered first, because it will clear the way for all the other changes.

Here at the start we lack an adequate standard of comparison. The necessary amount of productive labour time which will be required of each individual in the new society cannot be calculated on the basis of the present stage of industrial

development. The advances in science and technology which can be anticipated, plus the elimination of waste caused by competition, parasitism, etc., will render any such calculation obsolete. Our thought about the future must be fitted into the frame of the future.

Even at the present stage of economic development, if everybody worked and there was no waste, a universal four-hour day would undoubtedly be enough to provide abundance for all in the advanced countries. And once the whole thought and energy of society is concentrated on the problem of increasing productivity, it is easily conceivable that a new scientific-technological-industrial revolution would soon render a compulsory productive working day of four hours, throughout the normal lifetime of an individual, so absurdly unnecessary that it would be recognized as an impossibility.

All concepts of the amount of necessary labour required from each individual, based on present conditions and practices, must be abandoned in any serious attempt to approach a realistic estimate of future prospects and possibilities in this basic field. The labour necessary to produce food, clothing, shelter, and all the conveniences and refinements of material life in the new society will be operative, social labour—with an ever-increasing emphasis on labour-saving and automatic, labour-eliminating machinery, inventions and scientific discoveries, designed to increase the rate of productivity.

Withering away of labour and money

This labour will be highly organized and therefore disciplined in the interests of efficiency in production. There can be no anarchy in the cooperative labour process; but only freedom *from* labour, to an ever-increasing extent as science and technology advance productivity and automatically reduce the amount of labour time required from the individual.

The progressive reduction of this labour time required of each individual will, in my opinion, soon render it impractical to compute this labour time on a daily, weekly, or even yearly basis. It is reasonable to assume—this is my opinion, but only my opinion, and not a program—that the amount of labour time required of the individual by society during his whole life expectancy, will be approximately computed, and that he will be allowed to elect when to make this contribution. I incline strongly to the idea that the great majority will elect to get their required labour time over with in their early youth, working a full day for a year or two.

Thereafter, they would be free for the rest of their lives to devote themselves, with freedom in their labour, to any scientific pursuit, to any creative work or play or study which might interest them. The necessary productive labour they have contributed in a few years of their youth will pay for their entire lifetime maintenance, on the same principle that the workers today pay for their own paltry “social security” in advance.

On the road to that, or some similar arrangement, beginning already in the transition period which we discussed last week, there will be an evolutionary change of labour regulations, calculations, and payments. Emerging from capitalism, the transitional society, will carry over some capitalist methods of accounting, incentives, and rewards. People first will work for wages. They will be paid in money, backed by the gold in Fort Knox, for the amount of work performed. But after a certain period, where there is abundance and even superabundance, the absurdity of strict wage regulation will become apparent. Then the gold will be taken out of Fort Knox and put to some more useful purpose, if such can be found.

When people will have no further use for money, they will wonder what to do with all this gold, which has cost so much human labour and agony. Lenin had a theory that under socialism gold could be used, maybe, to make doorknobs for public lavatories, and things like that. But no Marxist authority would admit that in the socialist future men will dig in the earth for such a useless metal.

The accounting arrangements automatically registered by money wages based on gold will at a certain stage be replaced by labour certificates or coupons, like tickets to the theatre. But even that, eventually, will pass away. Even that kind of accounting, which would take up useless labour and be absolutely purposeless, will be eliminated. There will be no money, and there will not even be any bookkeeping transactions or coupons to regulate how much one works and how much he gets. When labour has ceased to be a mere means of life and becomes life's prime necessity, people will work without any compulsion and take what they need. So said Marx.

Does that sound “visionary”? Here again, one must make an effort to lift himself out of the framework of the present society, and not consider this conception absurd or “impractical”. The contrary would be absurd. For in the socialist society, when there is plenty and abundance for all, what will be the point in keeping account of each one's share, any more than in the distribution of

food at a well-supplied family table? You don't keep books as to who eats how many pancakes for breakfast or how many pieces of bread for dinner. Nobody grabs when the table is laden. If you have a guest, you don't seize the first piece of meat for yourself; you pass the plate and ask him to help himself first.

When you visualize society as a "groaning board" on which there is plenty for all, what purpose would be served in keeping accounts of what each one gets to eat and to wear? There would be no need for compulsion or forcible allotment of material means. "Wages" will become a term of obsolete significance, which only students of ancient history will know about. "Speaking frankly"—said Trotsky—"I think it would be pretty dull-witted to consider such a really modest perspective 'utopian'."

The ethic of capitalism and its normal procedure, of course, are quite different. But don't ever, dear comrades, make the mistake of thinking that anything contrary to its rules and its ethics is utopian, or visionary, or absurd. No, what's absurd is to think that this madhouse is permanent and for all time. The ethic of capitalism is: "From each whatever you can get out of him—to each whatever he can grab." The socialist society of universal abundance will be regulated by a different standard. It will "inscribe on its banners"—said Marx—"From each according to his ability—to each according to his needs." I speak now of the higher phase of socialist society, which some Marxist authorities prefer to call communism.

Removal of insecurity

In the present society people are haunted by insecurity. Their mental health is undermined by fear for their future and the future of their children. They are never free from fear that if something happens, if they have a sickness or an accident for which they are not responsible, the punishment will be visited upon their children; that their children will be deprived of an education and proper food and clothing.

Under such conditions this "human nature", which we hear so much about, is like a plant trying to flower in a dark cellar; it really doesn't get much chance to show its true nature, its boundless potentialities. In the socialist society of shared abundance, this nightmare will be lifted from the minds of the people. They will be secure and free from fear; and this will work a revolution in their attitude

toward life and their enjoyment of it. Human nature will get a chance to show what it is really made of.

The present division of society into classes, under which the few have all the privileges and the many are condemned to poverty and insecurity, carries with it a number of artificial and unnatural divisions which deform the individual and prevent the all-around development of his personality and his harmonious association with his kind. There is the division between men's work and women's work, to say nothing of men's rights and women's rights. There is the division of race prejudice between the Negroes and the whites, which is cruelly unjust to the former and degrading to the latter. There is the division between manual and intellectual labour, which produces half-men on each side. There is the division between the city and the country, which is harmful to the inhabitants of both.

These divisions are not ordained for all time, as some people may think. They are the artificial product of class society and will fall with it. And a great fall it will be.

Emancipation of women

The emancipation of women will begin in the very first days of the workers' government, and very probably will be fully completed before the socialist society emerges from the transition period. The first condition for the real emancipation of women is their economic emancipation. That must presuppose the scientific organization of housework, like all other work, so that women too can have time and leisure for cultural activity and the free choice of occupation. That will imperatively require the establishment of communal kitchens, housekeeping services, nurseries and kindergartens.

The average poor housewife in this country is made to think that she was born into this glorious world for the chief purpose of fighting dust and wrestling pots and pans. That's not true. Women are capable of participating in all avenues of activity, in all trades, in all sciences, in all arts. Enough have already broken through to demonstrate that.

One thing I'm absolutely sure is going to happen early in the period of the workers' government, maybe during the first five-year plan. Under the slogan of more efficiency in production, reinforced by moral arguments which are powerful in the case—the rights of women to leisure and freedom for cultural and spiritual

growth—there will be a tremendous popular movement of women to bust up this medieval institution of 40 million separate kitchens and 40 million different housewives cooking, cleaning, scrubbing, and fighting dust.

Thirty or 40 million women every day of the year trudging to the market, each one loading her separate basket and lugging it home to cook 30 or 40 million different meals for 30 or 40 million different families. What a terrible waste of energy, waste of productivity; to say nothing of the cultural waste; to say nothing of the imposition upon the women victims. The enlightened socialist women will knock the hell out of this inefficient, unjust and antiquated system. The mass emergence of the socialist women from the confining walls of their individual kitchens will be the greatest jail break in history—and the most beneficent. Women, liberated from the prison of the kitchen, will become the free companions of free men.

The drudgery of housework will be organized like any other division of labour, on an efficient communal basis, so that women can begin to have some leisure too. Cooking and house cleaning, like any other work, can be done much better, much quicker, in an organized, scientific manner. Proper air-conditioning and dust-catching “precipitrons”—which will be standard equipment for every home—will take care of most of the house cleaning automatically.

I cannot see why the average housewife, who isn't specially trained for it or specially adapted to it, should want to bother with it. I cannot see why cooking, house cleaning, and janitor work shouldn't be one of the national divisions of labour, for which various people take their turns in the process for a certain number of hours a day, a certain number of weeks in a year, however it may be allocated. Or if some people prefer to live communally, as many have found it advantageous, they'll do that and simplify things still more.

By this forecast I do not mean to draw a picture of regimentation. Just the opposite, for any kind of regimentation such as that imposed by the present social order will be utterly repugnant to the free and independent citizens of the socialist future. They will live the way they want to live, and each individual—within the limits of his general obligation to society—will decide for himself. Better, in this case, say “herself”—for old-fashioned reactionaries who ignorantly think they know what “woman's place” is, will run up against the hard fact—for the first time since class society began—that women will have something to say about that, and what they will say will be plenty.

What kind of homes will the people have under socialism, what kind of home life? I don't know, and neither does anyone else. But they will have the material means and the freedom of choice to work out their own patterns. These two conditions, which are unknown to the great majority today, will open up limitless vistas for converting the "home" from a problem and a burden into a self-chosen way of life for the joy of living.

Homes will not be designed by real-estate promoters building for profit—which is what the great bulk of "home building" amounts to today. The people will have what they want. They can afford to have it any way they want it. If some of them want a house of their own in the country, and if they want to have their cooking and their house cleaning done on the present basis, nobody will stop them. But I imagine they will evoke public curiosity and quizzical glances. People will say: "They've got a perfect right to do that but they don't have to."

Every man can have his little house as he has it now, and his little wife spending her whole time cooking and cleaning for him—providing he can find that kind of a wife. But he will not be able to buy such service, and he'll be rather stupid to ask for it. Most likely his enlightened sweetheart will tell him: "Wake up, Bud; we're living under socialism. You've been reading that ancient history again and you've a nostalgia for the past. You've got to break yourself of that habit. I'm studying medicine, and I have no time to be sweeping up dust. Call up the Community Housecleaning Service."

Eradication of racism

I must also break the news to the Southern crackers and their Northern cousins, and other members of the Jim Crow fraternity, that under socialism America will no longer be "a white man's country". It will belong to the colored people too. They will own as much of it as anyone else and share to the full, without let or hindrance, all its bountiful prosperity and abundance, all its freedoms, rights and privileges—without any exceptions whatever.

The socialist society based on human solidarity will have no use for such unscientific and degrading inhuman notions as the idea that one man is superior to another because, many thousands of years ago, the ancestors of the first lived in an environment that produced in the course of time a lighter skin color than was produced by the environment of the ancestors of the second.

The Jim Crow gangsters who strut around in self-satisfied ignorance as representatives of the “superior” race may have to learn their mistake the hard way, but they will learn—or “be learned”—just the same. The Negroes will play a great and decisive role in the revolution, in alliance with the trade unions and the revolutionary party; and in that grand alliance they will demonstrate and conquer their right to full equality.

The Negroes will very probably be among the best revolutionists. And why shouldn't they be? They have nothing to lose but their poverty and discrimination, and a whole world of prosperity, freedom, and equality to gain. You can bet your boots the Negroes will join the revolution to fight for that—once it becomes clear to them that it cannot be gained except by revolution. The black battalions of the revolution will be a mighty power—and great will be their reward in the victory.

As in the emancipation of women, the emancipation of the Negroes will begin with the absolute and unconditional abolition of every form of economic discrimination and disadvantage, and proceed from that to full equality in all domains. Race prejudice will vanish with the ending of the social system that produced and nourished it. Then the human family will live together in peace and harmony, each of its sons and daughters free at last to make the full contribution of his or her talents to the benefit of all.

Revolution in cultural life

The present big and crowded, ugly, unhealthy cities—I was asked at a previous lecture—what will happen to them? They will be no more. Once the transition period has been passed through, once all the problems of abundance and plenty have been solved, the people will want also to live right in the larger sense—to provide for their cultural and aesthetic aspirations. They will have a great hunger and thirst for beauty and harmony in all the surroundings of their lives. These monster cities we live in today are blights of modern society. They will certainly give way to planned cities interlinked to the countryside. Everybody will live with the natural advantages of the country and the cultural associations of the town. All the Marxist authorities were emphatic on this point. The crowded slums and the isolated, godforsaken farm houses will be demolished at about the same time.

A new science and new art will flower—the science and art of city planning. There is such a profession today, but the private ownership of industry and real estate deprives it of any real scope. Under socialism some of the best and most eager students in the universities will take up the study of city planning, not for the profitable juxtaposition of slums and factory smokestacks, but for the construction of cities fit to live in. Art in the new society will undoubtedly be more cooperative, more social. The city planners will organize landscapers, architects, sculptors, and mural painters to work as a team in the construction of new cities which will be a delight to live in and a joy to behold.

Communal centers of all kinds will arise to serve the people's interests and needs. Centers of art and centers of science. Jack London in the *Iron Heel*, speaking in the name of an inhabitant of the future socialist society, referred as a matter of course to the numerous "Wonder Cities" which had been given poetic names—"Ardis", "Asgard" and so on; wonder cities designed for beauty, for ease of living, for attractiveness to the eye and to the whole being.

Farming, of course, will be reorganized like industry on a large scale. The factory farm is already in existence to a large extent in the West. Tens of thousands of acres in single units are operated with modern machine methods and scientific utilization of the soil, for the private profit of absentee owners. These factory farms will not be broken up. They will be taken over and developed on a vaster scale. Eventually the whole of agricultural production be conducted on the basis of factory farms. The agricultural workers will not live in cultural backwardness, in lonely, isolated farm houses. They will live in the town and work in the country, just as the factory worker will live in the country and work in the town.

The separation between manual and intellectual labour will be broken down. The division between specialized knowledge of single subjects and ignorance on the rest, which is a characteristic feature of capitalism, will be eliminated. The half-men, produced by these artificial divisions, who know only one thing and can do only one thing, will give way to the whole men who can do many things and know something about everything.

There will be a revolution in art. The class society, which splits the population into separate and antagonistic groups of the privileged and the deprived, splits the personality of the artist, too. A few selected people have the opportunity to study and practice art, remote from the life of the people. At the same time, not

thousands, but millions of children have the spark of talent, or even of genius, snuffed out before it has a chance to become a flame. Children of the poor, who like to draw already in school, soon have to put all those ideas out of their minds. They can't afford to be drawing pictures. They have to learn some trade where they can make a living, and forget about their artistic aspirations.

In the new society everybody will be an artist of some sort or other and every artist will be a worker. Education will be for intellectual pursuits and manual occupations simultaneously, from childhood to old age. Marx was of the emphatic opinion that children should engage in productive labour from the age of nine, not at the expense of their "education" but as an essential part of it. From an early age, children will learn to use tools and to make something useful to the people. The child will have the satisfaction of learning by doing, and the satisfaction of being useful and productive even when he's a child.

Then older people will begin to treat him more respectfully. They will regard him, also, from an early age, as a human being, as a citizen, as a producer who shouldn't be treated as a baby any longer. He will be reasoned with and talked to and treated as an equal, not beaten or scolded or shouted at, or pushed into a corner. Marx said: "Children must educate their parents." And in some respects they will do that, too, when they get a fair chance.

There will be such a revolution in the relations of children and parents as we can hardly conceive of in this monstrous class society of the present. Parents often think they have been endowed by some mysterious supernatural power with the right to abuse and mistreat children. Primitive man never had such rights, never dreamed of such things. It is only due to the degeneration which followed the introduction of private property that the mistreatment of children and the double mistreatment of women became the rule. Primitive man in his natural state never knew such things. And the future society will know them still less.

Every child who has a talent for music or drawing or sculpting or moulding or writing—and there is no such thing as a child without some talent—can become an artist of one sort or another. One who has an instinct and feeling for words can become a writer. There will be poets who will glorify the great theme of human solidarity, and they will not be starved and ridiculed as they are in this ignorant society. The poets will be honored, perhaps above all, because they have more insight than any others.

All-sided cultural development under socialism will not be some special gift or opportunity for favored individuals, but the heritage of all. The socialist man will have the most priceless of all possessions. He will have time. He will have leisure. He will have time and the means to live, to play, to grow, to travel, to realize to the full the expression of his human personality. And that will not be the exception, but the rule. There will be a whole race of people enjoying and expressing all those things.

I have a theory—again a personal opinion and not a program—that there will be two kinds of labour under socialism. All, without exception, will participate in the organized productive process, the source of the people's maintenance and abundance. But that will take up only a small amount of time, as already indicated. Then, I visualize another form of purely voluntary labour, unorganized, anarchistic, practiced as a means of artistic self-expression, and freely given for the general good or as a service of friendship.

Resurgence of handicrafts

Handicrafts, once the basic form of production, were virtually wiped out by the development of capitalism because of their comparative inefficiency, and many of the old skills of the artisans have been lost. The cooperative machine process, which produced more things faster and easier, eliminated handicraft as a serious factor in the productive process, and this progressive historical development can never be reversed.

But under socialism, where machine industry will be developed to the highest degree, producing even more abundantly many times over than at the present stage of its development, I can foresee a revival, a new flowering of handicrafts on a new basis. If this is theoretically inadmissible as a form of labour in the socialist society, perhaps my speculative suggestion can be considered under the heading of art.

I spoke before of the artificial division between intellectual and manual labour, and the half-men this division produces. The whole man of the socialist future will not be content merely to know what he reads in books, or to write books, or to confine himself exclusively to any other purely intellectual occupation. He will be trained from childhood to use his hands productively and creatively, and he will have plenty of time to exercise his skills in any way he sees fit; to do what he wants to do, what he likes to do.

I should imagine that under such conditions man, the tool-using animal, will assert himself once again. There will be a resurgence of freelance cabinetmakers, shoemakers, hand tailors, bookbinders, etc. These artisans of the future won't compete with machine industry—that would be anachronistically absurd—but will ply their crafts as a special form of recreation and artistic self-expression, and to make gifts for friends. If they want to do it that way, who is going to stop them?

In the present society very few get a chance to do the work they really want to do, and thereby they are deprived of life's most solid satisfaction. "Blessed is he who has found his work", said Carlyle. But how many are so blessed? Most people do what seems best to make a living. Those who are able to choose their work, and to persist in it at all costs, are very rare.

Taking the present society as it is, I personally have had the work I wanted, that I thought the time required, the occupation I was made for—that of a professional revolutionist. But in a socialist society, where there will be no need and no room for social struggles or revolution, the likes of me would have to find another trade. I have thought that under such circumstances I would be a cabinetmaker, as my grandfather was, a man who took pride in his fine work with wood and tools. Another would be a bookbinder, another shoemaker, another a tailor—there are a lot of fine old crafts which will challenge the ingenious and the tool minded.

Under socialism people will not fear to love their neighbor lest they be taken advantage of, nor be ashamed of disinterested friendship, free from all self-interest and calculation. There will be powerful impulses to give things to each other, and the only possible way of giving will be by doing, by making. There will be no chance to "buy" a present for anybody—because nothing will be for sale; and besides, everybody will be free to take anything he needs from the superabundant general store of material things rolling from the assembly lines. Presents, to mean anything, will have to be *made*, outside the general process. I think they will be, and such gifts will be really treasured and displayed on special occasions.

I imagine that when a man goes to his wedding, he'll wear a coat of many colors, like Joseph in the Bible, handmade for him by a friend who is an expert tailor, who has made it for him as a service of love. On holidays, he'll wear a handmade shoe, moulded to his own foot by a friend who is a craftsman, who

takes pride in his perfect work. And when he, in turn, wants to present a gift to a friend, he will make it for him.

Your house, the house of the well-regulated family, will have as the things it is proudest of, certain things specially made for you by people who like you. This easy chair made to your own measure by your friend so-and-so. This hand-mortised hardwood bookcase made for you by a cabinetmaker, as a gift. And those pictures and decorations on the walls—they were not machine stamped at the factory, but hand painted especially for you by an artist friend. And your important and most treasured books, which came well-bound from the print shops of the socialist society, have been rebound in fancy leather, by an old-fashioned bookbinder, a real craftsman. He does this outside his general contribution to the cooperative labour process, as a form of creative self-expression and as an act of friendship. I think it will be a great joy and satisfaction to be an expert craftsman in the coming time.

Transformation of morality

Morality, which in class society is either a hypocritical cover for material self-interest, or an escapist withdrawal from the harsh realities of the class struggle, will be changed inside out. The advancement of individual special interests at the expense of others—the highest standard of capitalist society—is summed up in the slogan: “Getting Ahead”—which means, getting ahead of others. It is the root cause of lying, demagoguery, and deception, which are the central features in every election campaign, in advertising, and in all mediums of information and communication. The people are bombarded with lies every day of their lives. Capitalist morality itself is a lie.

There can be no doubt whatever that the new society will have a different morality. It will be a social morality based on human solidarity, having no need of lies, deception, demagoguery, and hypocrisy. Those who cannot conceive of any human relationship without the “getting ahead” philosophy of capitalism say socialism would not “work” because people would have no incentives. They really have a low opinion of the human race. Incentives will not be lacking. But they will be different.

For one thing public opinion, uncontaminated by phony propaganda, will be a powerful force, as it was in the unspoiled primitive societies before people knew anything about private property and special class interests. The desire to be

approved by one's associates will be a powerful incentive. In the new society the most useful people will be acclaimed, not the most "successful" in the business of getting ahead of others; not the rich exploiters, the slick fakers, the lying politicians, and the generals famed for slaughter.

The youth will venerate heroes of a new type—the scientist, the artist, the poet; the inventor who discovers a means of shortening the labour time necessary in this or that occupation; the agricultural expert who discovers a new way of breeding seed and making bigger crops. The applause and approval of the people will be the highest incentive and the highest reward of the socialist man.

Scope for ambition will not be lacking either. The socialist people will be completely alive and animated by driving ambitions. But their ambitions will have a different motivation and a different direction. Struggle is the law of life, and so it will be under socialism. But under socialism the struggle of men against each other for personal gain will give way to the struggle for ideas; to competition and rivalry in serving and advancing the general good of all; and to their cooperative struggle to complete the conquest of nature.

The people will struggle cooperatively—and through the competition of alternate plans—to move mountains, to change the course of rivers, to control climate, and to get the full benefit of all its changes. They will organize huge migrations with the seasons. Why should only the birds have the right to move south when it gets cold in the north? The rich have already claimed this right. The people who own New York, for example, don't live there much of the time. They spend their summers in Bar Harbor, Maine, where it's cool and breezy, and their winters in Florida, on the sunny beach. Some of them travel to other countries with the changing seasons. They stop over in New York only in the spring and fall when the New York weather is better than that of Maine or Florida. That, it seems to me, is a very sensible way to live—if you can afford it.

A world without violence

Under socialism, everybody will be able to afford to live comfortably and to travel freely, without passports. Can you imagine people living in Chicago in the wintertime, when they might be in California on a six-month vacation? Nobody ever saw the sun in Chicago from Labour Day to the Fourth of July; but here—I am told—it shines every day in the year—even when it's raining.

Some people who have lived in a frost-bound place all their lives may continue for some years, even under the new society, just from tradition, habit, and ignorance. But once you get them to come to the Land of the Sundown Sea on a trial journey, and see what California is like on the 23rd day of January, they will never be the same again. And the daring souls, the pioneers who will find this out, will write letters back and the word will pass, and the idea will grow up amongst the people in the frozen north: “Why shouldn’t we, with all our abundance—we can afford it, we have plenty—why shouldn’t we travel around and enjoy climate with the seasons—just like the birds.”

The people will have ambition, under socialism, to explore the great universe and to unlock its secrets, and to extract from their knowledge new resources for the betterment of all the people. They will organize an all-out war against sickness and disease and there will be a flowering of the great science of medicine. They will look back with indignation, when they read in their history books that at one time people had to live in a society where there was a shortage of doctors, artificially maintained. I believe it can be said with certainty that among the heroes of the new society, whom the youth will venerate, will be the doctors of all kinds who will really be at the service of man in the struggle for the conquest of those diseases which lay him low. Man’s health will be a major concern, and sickness and disease a disgrace, not to the victim, but to the society which permits it.

Having conquered nature, having solved the problems of material existence, having taken care of the problem of health, the socialist man will begin finally—as Trotsky forecast in his brilliant work *Literature and Revolution*—to study, to know, and to conquer himself. The study and mastery of the body and the mind will bring the socialist man to physical and mental harmony and perfection, to the realization in life of the old aspiring motto: “a sound mind in a sound body”—producing a new race, the first worthy of the name of man.

Under socialism there will be no more private property, except for personal use. Consequently there can be no more crimes against private property—which are 90% or more of all the crimes committed today—and no need of all this huge apparatus for the prevention, detection, prosecution, and punishment of crimes against property. No need of jails and prisons, policemen, judges, probation officers, lawyers, bondsmen, social workers, bureaucrats; no need for guards, bailiffs, wardens, prosecutors, stool pigeons, informers, and professional perjurers. No need for this whole mass of parasitical human rubbish which

represents the present-day state and which devours so much of the substance of the people.

With the end of classes and their conflicting interests there will be no more “politics”, because politics is essentially an expression of the class struggle; and no more parties, as they are now known, for parties are the political representatives of classes. That is not to say there won’t be differences and heated debates. Groupings, we must assume, will arise in the course of these disputes. But they will not be based on separate class interests.

They will be “parties” based on differences of opinion as to what kind of an economic plan we should have; what great scheme of highways should be developed; what system of education; what type of architecture for the wonder cities. Differences on these, and numerous other questions of public interest and general concern, will give the competitive instincts of the people all kinds of room for free expression. Groupings will be formed and contend with each other for popular support without “politics” or parties in the old sense of class struggle and the conflict of material interests.

In the classless society of the future there will be no state. The Marxist formula that the state will wither away and die out has a profound ultimate meaning, for the state is the most concentrated expression of violence. Where there is violence, there is no freedom. The society of the free and equal will have no need and no room for violence and will not tolerate it in any form. This was the profound conception of the great Marxists.

I recall that when I was very young, I read Jack London’s *Iron Heel* and got from there for the first time, in one single reference, a glimpse of the socialist future wherein violence will be unknown. In a footnote to the manuscript in this great book about the ruthless class war in capitalist society, ostensibly written by an editor in the socialist society, the author calls attention to an enigmatic expression in the story. One of the characters is described as having the build of a prizefighter, and the editor thought it was necessary to explain to the citizens of the socialist society what prizefighting meant. This footnote reads: “In that day it was the custom of men to compete for purses of money. They fought with their hands. When one was beaten into insensibility, or killed, the survivor took the money.” That had to be explained in the socialist society because they wouldn’t know it otherwise.

Trotsky, in his last testament, written in anticipation of death, said: “Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence and enjoy it to the full.”⁴⁸ Just ponder those words—Trotsky was a writer who weighed every word. His last injunction to the people who would follow him was: “Cleanse life of all violence.”

In a talk with Gorky, Lenin said the same thing in almost the same words: “Our ideal is not to use force against anyone.”

It is difficult for us to comprehend such a possibility, living in a society where even the smallest children are taught that they have to fight and scramble to protect themselves in a hostile world. We can hardly visualize a world without violence. But that’s what socialism means. That was the ultimate meaning of our farseeing teachers when they said that the state will wither away and eventually die out. They meant that eventually all violence of people against each other will wither away and cease to be.

The people will turn their attention then to that most important problem of all—the problem of the free development of the human personality. Then human nature will begin to change, or rather, to assert its real self. People will recover some of the virtues of primitive society, which was based on solidarity and cooperation, and improve them and develop them to a higher degree.

The Golden Future

Leisure is the condition for all cultural development. “The glory that was Greece”, justly celebrated in song and story, was the first great confirmation of this law. Ancient Greece, borrowing from other civilizations, produced the first truly cultured class. In some important respects it touched the highest peaks our race has yet known; and in the Golden Age of Pericles it came to its fullest flower. Its attainments in literature, the drama, sculpture, architecture, philosophy; in the beginnings of science and in the graces and amenities of civilized intercourse—are the original pattern from which Western civilization stems.

But that glorious Greece had a fatal flaw. Its leisure—and therefore its culture—were limited to a very narrow stratum of privileged aristocrats. It lacked the technological basis for *universal* leisure and culture. The society of ancient Greece rested on a base of dehumanized slave labour. It was surrounded by a

world of barbarism. It was constantly embroiled in wars and eventually went down in ruins, and nothing was left of it but what is scratched on stone and preserved on parchment. A few ruins of the marvelous sculpture and architecture still stand to give an intimation of what was known and done 2500 years ago.

Socialist society will stand immeasurably higher than that of ancient Greece, even in its Golden Age. Machines and science will be the slaves, and they will be far more productive, a thousand, 10,000 times more productive, than the human slaves of ancient Greece. Under socialism, all will share in the benefits of abundance, not merely a favored few at the top. All the people will have time and be secure for an ever higher development.

All will be artists. All will be workers and students, builders and creators. All will be free and equal. Human solidarity will encircle the globe and conquer it and subordinate it to the uses of man.

That, my friends, is not an idle speculation. That is the realistic perspective of our great movement. We ourselves are not privileged to live in the socialist society of the future, which Jack London, in his far-reaching aspiration, called the Golden Future. It is our destiny, here and now, to live in the time of the decay and death agony of capitalism. It is our task to wade through the blood and filth of this outmoded, dying system. Our mission is to clear it away. That is our struggle, our law of life.

We cannot be citizens of the socialist future, except by anticipation. But it is precisely this anticipation, this vision of the future, that fits us for our role as soldiers of the revolution, soldiers of the liberation war of humanity. And that, I think, is the highest privilege today, the occupation most worthy of a civilized man. No matter whether we personally see the dawn of socialism or not, no matter what our personal fate may be, the cause for which we fight has social evolution on its side and is therefore invincible. It will conquer and bring all mankind a new day.

It is enough for us, I think, if we do our part to hasten on the day. That's what we're here for. That's all the incentive we need. And the confidence that we are right and that our cause will prevail is all the reward we need.