
103. A Second Declaration of Independence (1879)

Source: Philip S. Foner, We the Other People (Urbana, 1976), pp. 117-19.

Not all Americans adhered to the Social Darwinist definition of liberty as frank acceptance of social inequality in an unregulated market. During the Gilded Age, the labor movement presented a very different understanding of freedom. It offered a wide array of programs, from public employment in hard times to currency reform, anarchism, socialism, and the creation of a vaguely defined "cooperative commonwealth." All these ideas arose from the conviction that social conditions in the 1870s and 1880s needed drastic change. One of the most popular demands was for legislation establishing eight hours as a legal day's work. In 1879, Ira Steward, a prominent union leader, drafted a revised version of the Declaration of Independence for a Fourth of July labor picnic in Chicago. He insisted that higher wages and greater leisure time would enable workers to develop new desires, thereby increasing demand for goods and benefiting manufacturers, laborers, and society at large. Steward's program illustrates how, in the aftermath of the Civil War, reformers of all kinds increasingly looked to the government to bring about social change. It also reveals a new sense of identification between American workers and their counterparts overseas.

RESOLVED, THAT THE practical question for an American Fourth of July is not between freedom and slavery, but between wealth and

poverty. For if it is true that laborers ought to have as little as possible of the wealth they produce, South Carolina slaveholders were right and the Massachusetts abolitionists were wrong. Because, when the working classes are denied everything but the barest necessities of life, they have no decent use for liberty. . . .

Slavery is . . . the child of poverty, instead of poverty the child of slavery: and freedom is the child of wealth, instead of wealth the child of freedom. The only road, therefore, to universal freedom is the road that leads to universal wealth.

Resolved, That while the Fourth of July was heralded a hundred years ago in the name of Liberty, we now herald this day in behalf of the great economic measure of Eight Hours, or shorter day's work for wageworkers everywhere . . . because more leisure, rest and thought will cultivate habits, customs, and expenditures that mean higher wages: and the world's highest paid laborers now furnish each other with vastly more occupations or days' work than the lowest paid workers can give to one another. . . . If the worker's power to buy increases with his power to do, granaries and warehouses will empty their pockets, and farms and factories fill up with producers. . . .

And we call to the workers of the whole civilized world, especially those of France, Germany, and Great Britain, to join hands with the laborers of the United States in this mighty movement. . . .

Thus shall eight hours prevail; earnings and days' work, wealth, and business prosperity increase, financial reverses be made impossible, and the whole human race emancipated . . . from the capitalist despotism which is made possible and necessary by the poverty of the most of mankind.

On the . . . issue of eight hours, therefore, or less hours, we join hands with all, regardless of politics, nationality, color, religion, or sex; knowing no friends or foes except as they aid or oppose this long-postponed and world-wide movement.

And for the soundness of our political economy, as well as the rectitude of our intentions, we confidently and gladly appeal to the wiser statesmanship of the civilized world.

Questions

1. Why does this declaration appeal to other countries for support?
 2. What benefits does the declaration claim will come from shortening the hours of work and increasing wages?
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104. Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (1879)

Source: Henry George, Progress and Poverty [1879] (New York, 1884), pp. 489–96.

Dissatisfaction with social conditions in the Gilded Age extended well beyond aggrieved workers. Alarmed by fear of class warfare and the growing power of concentrated wealth, social thinkers offered numerous plans for change. Among the most influential was Henry George, whose *Progress and Poverty* became one of the era's great best-sellers. Its extraordinary success testified to what George called "a wide-spread consciousness . . . that there is something *radically* wrong in the present social organization."

George's book began with a famous statement of "the problem" suggested by its title—the expansion of poverty alongside material progress. His solution was the "single tax," which would replace other taxes with a levy on increases in the value of real estate. The single tax would be so high that it would prevent speculation in both urban and rural land, and land would then become available to aspiring businessmen and urban working men seeking to become farmers. Whether or not they believed in George's solution, millions of readers responded to his clear explanation of economic relationships and his stirring account of how the "unjust and unequal distribution of wealth" long thought to be confined to the Old World had made its appearance in the New.

THE EVILS ARISING from the unjust and unequal distribution of wealth, which are becoming more and more apparent as modern

civilization goes on, are not incidents of progress, but tendencies which must bring progress to a halt; that they will not cure themselves, but, on the contrary, must, unless their cause is removed, grow greater and greater, until they sweep us back into barbarism by the road every previous civilization has trod. But it also shows that these evils are not imposed by natural laws; that they spring solely from social mal-adjustments which ignore natural laws, and that in removing their cause we shall be giving an enormous impetus to progress.

The poverty which in the midst of abundance, pinches and embrates men, and all the manifold evils which flow from it, spring from a denial of justice. In permitting the monopolization of the natural opportunities which nature freely offers to all, we have ignored the fundamental law of justice—for so far as we can see, when we view things upon a large scale, justice seems to be the supreme law of the universe. But by sweeping away this injustice and asserting the rights of all men to natural opportunities, we shall conform ourselves to the law—we shall remove the great cause of unnatural inequality in the distribution of wealth and power; we shall abolish poverty; tame the ruthless passions of greed; dry up the springs of vice and misery; light in dark places the lamp of knowledge; give new vigor to invention and a fresh impulse to discovery; substitute political strength for political weakness; and make tyranny and anarchy impossible.

The reform I have proposed accords with all that is politically, socially, or morally desirable. It has the qualities of a true reform, for it will make all other reforms easier. What is it but the carrying out in letter and spirit of the truth enunciated in the Declaration of Independence—the “self-evident” truth that is the heart and soul of the Declaration—*“That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness!”*

These rights are denied when the equal right to land—on which and by which men alone can live—is denied. Equality of political rights will not compensate for the denial of the equal right to the bounty of nature. Political liberty, when the equal right to land is

denied, becomes, as population increases and invention goes on, merely the liberty to compete for employment at starvation wages. This is the truth that we have ignored. And so there come beggars in our streets and tramps on our roads; and poverty enslaves men whom we boast are political sovereigns; and want breeds ignorance that our schools cannot enlighten; and citizens vote as their masters dictate; and the demagogue usurps the part of the statesman; and gold weighs in the scales of justice; and in high places sit those who do not pay to civic virtue even the compliment of hypocrisy; and the pillars of the republic that we thought so strong already bend under an increasing strain.

We honor Liberty in name and in form. We set up her statues and sound her praises. But we have not fully trusted her. And with our growth so grow her demands. She will have no half service!

Liberty! it is a word to conjure with, not to vex the ear in empty boastings. For Liberty means Justice, and Justice is the natural law—the law of health and symmetry and strength, of fraternity and co-operation.

They who look upon Liberty as having accomplished her mission when she has abolished hereditary privileges and given men the ballot, who think of her as having no further relations to the every-day affairs of life, have not seen her real grandeur—to them the poets who have sung of her must seem rhapsodists, and her martyrs fools! As the sun is the lord of life, as well as of light; as his beams not merely pierce the clouds, but support all growth, supply all motion, and call forth from what would otherwise be a cold and inert mass, all the infinite diversities of being and beauty, so is liberty to mankind. It is not for an abstraction that men have toiled and died; that in every age the witnesses of Liberty have stood forth, and the martyrs of Liberty have suffered.

We speak of Liberty as one thing, and virtue, wealth, knowledge, invention, national strength and national independence as other things. But, of all these, Liberty is the source, the mother, the necessary condition. She is to virtue what light is to color; to wealth what

sunshine is to grain; to knowledge what eyes are to sight. She is the genius of invention, the brawn of national strength, the spirit of national independence. Where Liberty rises, there virtue grows, wealth increases, knowledge expands, invention multiplies human powers, and in strength and spirit the freer nation rises among her neighbors as Saul amid his brethren—taller and fairer. Where Liberty sinks, there virtue fades, wealth diminishes, knowledge is forgotten, invention ceases, and empires once mighty in arms and arts become a helpless prey to freer barbarians!

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The fiat has gone forth! With steam and electricity, and the new powers born of progress, forces have entered the world that will either compel us to a higher plane or overwhelm us, as nation after nation, as civilization after civilization, have been overwhelmed before. It is the delusion which precedes destruction that sees in the popular unrest with which the civilized world is feverishly pulsing, only the passing effect of ephemeral causes. Between democratic ideas and the aristocratic adjustments of society there is an irreconcilable conflict. Here in the United States, as there in Europe, it may be seen arising. We cannot go on permitting men to vote and forcing them to tramp. We cannot go on educating boys and girls in our public schools and then refusing them the right to earn an honest living. We cannot go on prating of the inalienable rights of man and then denying the inalienable right to the bounty of the Creator.

Questions

1. Why does George write that Americans have not “fully trusted” Liberty?
2. What does he see as the major threats to American freedom?

105. Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1888)

Source: Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000–1887* (Boston, 1888), pp. 42–55, 262–63.

Even more influential than *Progress and Poverty* was *Looking Backward*, a novel by Edward Bellamy published in 1888. The book recounts the experiences of Julian West, who falls asleep in the late nineteenth century only to awaken in the year 2000, in a world where cooperation has replaced class strife and cutthroat competition. Inequality has been banished and with it the idea of liberty as a condition to be achieved through individual striving free of governmental restraint. Freedom, Bellamy insisted, was a social condition, resting on interdependence, not autonomy.

From today's vantage point, Bellamy's utopia—with citizens required to labor for years in an Industrial Army controlled by a single Great Trust—seems a chilling social blueprint. Yet the book not only inspired the creation of hundreds of Nationalist clubs devoted to bringing into existence the world of 2000 but left a profound mark on a generation of reformers and intellectuals. For Bellamy held out the hope of retaining the material abundance made possible by industrial capitalism while eliminating inequality. In proposing that the state guarantee economic security to all, Bellamy proposed a far-reaching expansion of the idea of freedom.

"IN GENERAL," I said, "what impresses me most about the city is the material prosperity on the part of the people which its magnificence implies."

"I would give a great deal for just one glimpse of the Boston of your day," replied Dr. Leete. "No doubt, as you imply, the cities of that period were rather shabby affairs. If you had the taste to make them splendid, which I would not be so rude as to question, the general poverty resulting from your extraordinary industrial system would not have given you the means. Moreover, the excessive individualism which then prevailed was inconsistent with much pub-

lic spirit. What little wealth you had seems almost wholly to have been lavished in private luxury. Nowadays, on the contrary, there is no destination of the surplus wealth so popular as the adornment of the city, which all enjoy in equal degree."

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"What solution, if any, have you found for the labor question? It was the Sphinx's riddle of the nineteenth century, and when I dropped out the Sphinx was threatening to devour society, because the answer was not forthcoming. It is well worth sleeping a hundred years to learn what the right answer was, if, indeed, you have found it yet."

"As no such thing as the labor question is known nowadays," replied Dr. Leete, "and there is no way in which it could arise, I suppose we may claim to have solved it. Society would indeed have fully deserved being devoured if it had failed to answer a riddle so entirely simple. In fact, to speak by the book, it was not necessary for society to solve the riddle at all. It may be said to have solved itself. The solution came as the result of a process of industrial evolution which could not have terminated otherwise. All that society had to do was to recognize and coöperate with that evolution, when its tendency had become unmistakable."

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"The fact that the desperate popular opposition to the consolidation of business in a few powerful hands had no effect to check it proves that there must have been a strong economical reason for it. The small capitalists, with their innumerable petty concerns, had in fact yielded the field to the great aggregations of capital, because they belonged to a day of small things and were totally incompetent to the demands of an age of steam and telegraphs and the gigantic scale of its enterprises. To restore the former order of things, even if possible, would have involved returning to the day of stage-coaches. Oppressive and intolerable as was the régime of the great consolidations of capital, even its victims, while they cursed it, were forced to admit the prodigious increase of efficiency which had been imparted to the national industries, the vast economies effected by concentration of management and unity of organization,

and to confess that since the new system had taken the place of the old the wealth of the world had increased at a rate before undreamed of. To be sure this vast increase had gone chiefly to make the rich richer, increasing the gap between them and the poor; but the fact remained that, as a means merely of producing wealth, capital had been proved efficient in proportion to its consolidation. The restoration of the old system with the subdivision of capital, if it were possible, might indeed bring back a greater equality of conditions, with more individual dignity and freedom, but it would be at the price of general poverty and the arrest of material progress."

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"It would seem to follow, from what you have said, that wives are in no way dependent on their husbands for maintenance."

"Of course they are not," replied Dr. Leete, "nor children on their parents either, that is, for means of support, though of course they are for the offices of affection. The child's labor, when he grows up, will go to increase the common stock, not his parents', who will be dead, and therefore he is properly nurtured out of the common stock. The account of every person, man, woman, and child, you must understand, is always with the nation directly, and never through any intermediary, except, of course, that parents, to a certain extent, act for children as their guardians. You see that it is by virtue of the relation of individuals to the nation, of their membership in it, that they are entitled to support; and this title is in no way connected with or affected by their relations to other individuals who are fellow members of the nation with them. That any person should be dependent for the means of support upon another would be shocking to the moral sense as well as indefensible on any rational social theory. What would become of personal liberty and dignity under such an arrangement? I am aware that you called yourselves free in the nineteenth century. The meaning of the word could not then, however, have been at all what it is at present, or you certainly would not have applied it to a society of which nearly every member was in a position of galling personal dependence upon others as to the very

means of life, the poor upon the rich, or employed upon employer, women upon men, children upon parents.

Questions

1. Why does Bellamy's character Dr. Leete state that the meaning of the word "free" could not have meant the same thing in the nineteenth century as it does in 2000?
 2. How does Bellamy suggest that the transition to a society of harmony and equality will take place?
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106. Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel (1912)

Source: Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (New York, 1912), pp. 41-44.

The Baptist clergyman Walter Rauschenbusch, who began preaching in New York City in 1886, was a bridge between the Gilded Age and the Progressive era of the early twentieth century. Appalled by the low wages and dire living conditions of his poor parishioners, Rauschenbusch rejected the idea, common among the era's Protestant preachers, that poverty arose from individual sins like drinking and sabbath breaking. In sermons and, in the early twentieth century, in widely read books, he developed what came to be called the Social Gospel. Rauschenbusch insisted that devout Christians rediscover the "social wealth of the Bible," and especially Jesus' concern for the poor. Freedom and spiritual self-development, he argued, required an equalization of wealth and power and unbridled competition mocked the Christian ideal of brotherhood.

The Social Gospel movement originated as an effort to reform Protestant churches by expanding their appeal in poor urban neighborhoods and making them more attentive to the era's social ills. Its adherents

wavering devotion will maintain and defend them on all occasions, and this warning is defiantly thrown to the world.

NORTHERN WORKERS

Source 10 from James C. Sylvis, *The Life, Speeches, Labors & Essays of William H. Sylvis* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1968), pp. 296, 316-318.

10. National Labor Union, Letter to the *Evening Advocate* from William Sylvis (1868).

WHAT WE WANT.

We now want:

1. A new department at Washington, to be called THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, the head of said department to be called the Secretary of Labor, and to be chosen directly from the ranks of workingmen. To this department should be referred all questions of wages and the hours of labor in the navy-yards and all other government workshops, the registry and regulation of trades-unions and co-operative associations, the disposition of public lands, and all other questions directly connected with and affecting labor.
2. The unconditional repeal of all laws bearing upon the disposition of the public domain.
3. The adoption of a plain, unvarnished law for the giving away of the public lands to actual settlers in parcels of not less than forty nor more than one hundred acres, no man being allowed to hold in his own name, the name of his wife, nor any other name, more than one tract.
4. Every man taking up land to be required to proceed to live upon, improve, and cultivate it within one year, or forfeit his claim.
5. Appropriations to be made from the United States Treasury to assist workingmen who desire to locate upon the public domain, but who are destitute of the means to do so.
6. No grants of public land to be made to railroad companies or to other corporations, nor to individuals, except actual settlers, under any circumstances, nor for any purpose.
7. All lands granted to railroad companies or other corporations, or individuals, remaining unoccupied and uncultivated at the end of five years from the date of said grant, to revert back to the government, and be sold at government price (\$1.25 per acre), the proceeds to go to the person or persons to whom the grant was made. This provision should apply to *all* grants that have been made.

◆ CHAPTER 11

The Reconstruction
Era: Farmers and
Workers in the West
and North,
1866-1877

8. All uncultivated lands held by grant of Congress, by any person or persons, shall pay a tax of *ten cents per acre* into the treasury of the United States until said lands are cultivated, or have reverted to the government.

9. All uncultivated lands now held by grant of Congress, by any person or persons, shall be immediately placed in the market at one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre.

Anticipating the opposition that will be made to the proposition to give the public lands away, and pay the expenses of the poor workingmen who desire to move upon and cultivate these lands, upon the ground that they cost the government something, I will answer, that whatever these lands did cost for surveys, etc., came out of the public treasury; and all the money that is or ever was in said treasury was put there by *the labor of the country*. The lands belong to the people, were paid for by the people, and the people have a right to enjoy them without paying for them a second time. And, all things considered, the proposition to assist the very poor in getting to these lands is a very modest one. We only ask that a very little of the taxes paid by labor be returned to those who paid it, while hundreds of millions are being appropriated for other purposes.

Source 11 from Terence V. Powderly, *Thirty Years of Labor, 1859-1889* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967), pp. 64-65.

11. Excerpts from the Preamble of the Knights of Labor (1870).

"The recent alarming development and aggression of aggregated wealth, which, unless checked, will inevitably lead to the pauperization and hopeless degradation of the toiling masses, render it imperative, if we desire to enjoy the blessings of the government bequeathed to us by the founders of the Republic, that a check should be placed upon its power and unjust accumulation, and a system adopted which will secure to the laborer the fruits of his toil; and as this much-desired object can only be accomplished by the thorough unification of labor, and the united efforts of those who obey the divine injunction, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,' we have formed the INDUSTRIAL BROTHERHOOD, with a view of securing the organization and direction, by co-operative effort, of the power of the industrial classes; and we submit to the people of the United States the objects sought to be accomplished by our organization, calling upon all who believe in securing 'the greatest good to the greatest number' to aid and assist us:

"I. To bring within the folds of organization every department of productive

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"I. To bring within the folds of organization every department of productive

industry, making knowledge a standpoint for action, and industrial, moral and social worth—not wealth—the true standard of individual and national greatness.

“II. To secure to the toilers a proper share of the wealth that they create; more of the leisure that rightly belongs to them; more societary advantages; more of the benefits, privileges and emoluments of the world; in a word, all those rights and privileges necessary to make them capable of enjoying, appreciating, defending and perpetuating the blessings of republican institutions.

“III. To arrive at the true condition of the producing masses in their educational, moral and financial condition, we demand from the several States and from the national government the establishment of bureaus of labor statistics.

“IV. The establishment of co-operative institutions, productive and distributive.

“V. The reserving of the public lands, the heritage of the people, for the actual settler—not another acre for railroads or speculators.

“VI. The abrogation of all laws that do not bear equally upon capital and labor, the removal of unjust technicalities, delays and discriminations in the administration of justice, and the adoption of measures providing for the health and safety of those engaged in mining, manufacturing or building pursuits.

“VII. The enactment of a law to compel chartered corporations to pay their employes at least once in every month in full for labor performed during the preceding month in the lawful money of the country.

“VIII. The enactment of a law giving mechanics and other laborers a first lien on their work.

“IX. The abolishment of the contract system on national, State and municipal work.

“X. To inaugurate a system of public markets, to facilitate the exchange of the productions of farmers and mechanics, tending to do away with middlemen and speculators.

“XI. To inaugurate systems of cheap transportation to facilitate the exchange of commodities.

“XII. The substitution of arbitration for strikes, whenever and wherever employers and employes are willing to meet on equitable grounds.

“XIII. The prohibition of the importation of all servile races, the discontinuance of all subsidies granted to national vessels bringing them to our shores, and the abrogation of the Burlingame Treaty.

“XIV. To advance the standard of American mechanics by the enactment and enforcement of equitable apprentice laws.

“XV. To abolish the system of contracting the labor of convicts in our prisons and reformatory institutions.

“XVI. To secure for both sexes equal pay for equal work.

“XVII. The reduction of the hours of labor to eight per day, so that laborers may have more time for social enjoyment and intellectual improvement, and be enabled to reap the advantages conferred by labor-saving machinery, which their brains have created.

“XVIII. To prevail upon the government to establish a just standard of distribution between capital and labor by providing a purely national circulating medium based upon the faith and resources of the nation, issued directly to the people, without the intervention of any system of banking corporations, which money shall be a legal tender in the payment of all debts, public or private, and interchangeable at the option of the holder for government bonds, bearing a rate of interest not to exceed three and sixty-five hundredths per cent., subject to future legislation of Congress.”

Source 12 from John Garraty, ed., *The Transformation of American Society, 1870–1890* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 88–96.

12. Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor Report (1878).

From a Carpet-Mill Operative.—I am satisfied with sixty hours a week: it is plenty time for any man, although there are some employed in the same place over that time, and get nothing extra for it. . . .

From a Shoemaker.—I think there ought to be an eight-hour law all over the country. There is not enough work to last the year round, and work over eight hours a day, or forty-eight hours a week. There can be only about so much work to do any way: and, when that is done, business has got to stop, or keep dragging the year round, so that a man has to work for almost any price offered. . . .

From a Carpenter.—I think that eight hours a day is enough for a man to work at his trade. Then I think there would be more work; and he would have time to make his house and garden look more tidy, if he has one, or to study and improve the mind. I think that a man would do more work at home when he is at work than he would when unemployed; for he is down-hearted, and does not feel like working at home. I find too, that, the lower wages are, the more work they expect a man to do. . . .

From a Carpenter.—In regard to the number of hours a day's work should consist of, I think ten hours is a fair day's work, and do not think an eight-

DOCUMENT 17.7

Eugene V. Debs | On Radicalism, 1902

American Railway Union leader Eugene Debs served six months in jail after leading the Pullman strike. This experience moved him in more radical directions politically, and he established the Socialist Party. He ran as the party's presidential candidate five times, and in 1905 Debs helped form the Industrial Workers of the World, an organization interested in uniting all workers and challenging the capitalist system. In 1902 he described to the readers of the *Comrade*, a New York socialist newspaper, his thoughts on the Pullman strike and how he became a socialist.

In 1894 the American Railway Union was organized and a braver body of men never fought the battle of the working class.

Up to this time I had heard but little of Socialism, knew practically nothing about the movement, and what little I did know was not calculated to impress me in its favor. I was bent on thorough and complete organization of the railroad men and ultimately the whole working class, and all my time and energy were given to that end. My supreme conviction was that if they were only organized in every branch of the service and all acted together in concert they could redress their wrongs and regulate the conditions of their employment. The stockholders of the corporation acted as one, why not the men? It was such a plain proposition—simply to follow the example set before their eyes by their masters—surely they could not fail to see it, act as one, and solve the problem. . . .

Next followed the final shock—the Pullman strike—and the American Railway Union again won, clear and complete. The combined corporations were paralyzed and helpless. At this juncture there [was] delivered, from wholly unexpected quarters, a swift succession of blows that blinded me for an instant and then opened wide my eyes—and in the gleam of every bayonet and the flash of every rifle *the class struggle was revealed*. This was my first practical lesson

in Socialism, though wholly unaware that it was called by that name.

An army of detectives, thugs, and murderers [was] equipped with badge and beer and bludgeon and turned loose; old hulks of cars were fired; the alarm bells tolled; the people were terrified; the most startling rumors were set afloat; the press volleyed and thundered, and over all the wires sped the news that Chicago's white throat was in the clutch of a red mob; injunctions flew thick and fast, arrests followed, and our office and headquarters, the heart of the strike, was sacked, torn out, and nailed up by the "lawful" authorities of the federal government; and when in company with my loyal comrades I found myself in Cook county jail at Chicago, with the whole press screaming conspiracy, treason, and murder. . . .

Acting upon the advice of friends we sought to employ John Harlan, son of the Supreme Justice, to assist in our defense—a defense memorable to me chiefly because of the skill and fidelity of our lawyers, among whom were the brilliant Clarence Darrow and the venerable Judge Lyman Trumbull, author of the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery in the United States.

Mr. Harlan wanted to think of the matter over night; and the next morning gravely informed us that he could not afford to be identified with the case, "for," said he, "you will be tried upon

the same theory as were the anarchists, with probably the same result." That day, I remember, the jailer, by way of consolation, I suppose, showed us the blood-stained rope used at the last execution and explained in minutest detail, as he exhibited the gruesome relic, just how the monstrous crime of lawful murder is committed.

But the tempest gradually subsided and with it the blood-thirstiness of the press and "public sentiment." We were not sentenced to the gallows, nor even to the penitentiary—though put on trial for conspiracy—for reasons that will make another story.

The Chicago jail sentences were followed by six months at Woodstock [the Illinois jail where Debs was imprisoned] and it was here that Socialism gradually laid hold of me in its own irresistible fashion. Books and pamphlets and letters from socialists came by every mail and I began to read and think and dissect the anatomy of the system in which workingmen, however organized, could be shattered and battered and splintered at a single stroke. . . .

The American Railway Union was defeated but not conquered—overwhelmed but not destroyed. It lives and pulsates in the Socialist movement, and its defeat but blazed the way to economic freedom and hastened the dawn of human brotherhood.