

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 9, NO. 348.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JUNE 13, 1909.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

PREPARING FOR STATE SOCIALISM.

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WE have long prided ourselves that America blazoned the way of Capitalism. Our American bourgeois had better look out. France is step by step taking the lead, if not exactly in capitalist production, at any rate in the methods that Capitalism must adopt for the safety of "Law and Order."

The new law framed by the French Cabinet, framed by the light of recent experiences made with its postal employes, is an instance in point. The "functionaries," the name given by the new law to all persons occupying a permanent position in the civil service, are placed, in principle, on the same footing with regard to striking as soldiers and marines occupy. Although downright court martial with death is not the punishment provided, rebellious civilians are to be handled with {the same} iron glove that grips the State offender.

Of course, the new law is not an absolute "preventive." Even the more rigid treatment of soldiers in mutiny has not always prevented a military uprising against the State and the downfall of the Government that was attacked by its own soldiers. Nevertheless, military discipline makes the move harder; its extension and application to the "functionaries" can not choose but at least stretch a fresh and tall barrier between them, on the one side, and their fellow employes in private firms, on the other, together with the methods of Labor for defense, redress and eventual emancipation.

The step is timely.

The incapacity of private hands to administer vast concerns that serve the people has long suggested State ownership. The suggestion is made in ever louder tones. It is a suggestion that has its fascination for the capitalist.

On the one hand, State ownership would remove all elements of insecurity that now beset the individual capitalist: he could thenceforth look forward to and collect

his revenues with the mental composure of the holder of United States registered bonds.

On the other hand, the suggestion is just of the kind to take in the “reformer”: otherwise ever nagging at the capitalist, the “reformer” would gladly give a hand to a scheme that has all the molasses about it to catch just such flies as he.

So far the State ownership scheme has its fascinations for the capitalist. But that rose also carries its thorn.

State ownership makes the capitalist State an employer of workingmen. This is dangerous. A strike against a private employer may be a nuisance only. A strike against the Government may mean revolution. This thorn the French bourgeois Government, though it can not wholly saw it off, at any rate now attempts to blunt down to a minimum of “hurtfulness.”

The new law framed for the “functionaries” is a preparation for the State Socialism, which means Capitalism in concentrated form.

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Uploaded September 2010

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