HOW WE ARE GOUGED

A Few Remarks by

ARTHUR BROOKS BAKER

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How We Are Gouged
ARTHUR BROOKS BAKER

This lecture was given as the first of a series of five, under the management of the National Socialist Lyceum Bureau. It treats rather lightly the Capitalist System and leaves to other occasions the discussion of the Socialist Remedy.

The Basis of Life

You go to a funeral, and you hear it said that man is made of dust. You ask a chemist, and he'll tell you that you are nine-tenths water. You are not able to reconcile these contradictions until you try to make your six days' wages cover your seven days' expenses, and then you realize that they are both right and that your name is mud.

People ought not to speak disrespectfully of mud. It is the basis of existence. We require both land and water, and you and I are made of a mixture of the two—mud. Mud. If you were taken apart and reduced to the original mud from which you are made, you'd be surprised to find how cheap you are. A fellow could go out to Kansas and buy raw material to make people just as good in every way as you at ten cents for a million. He could go to the sea shore and get water enough to make a billion higher and wider people for the mere cost of pumping it.

People construct buildings of a kind of mud called concrete. They take crushed rock and water and put them into a big mixer, and when they mix up this stuff and get it smeared around in the right place they have a
house. Your stomach is the concrete mixer which prepares the building material from which your body is constructed. Now, if you were to pour ocean water into your own little mixer, and then dump in some Portland cement, what would happen? The cement going down would meet the salt water coming up. Before your stomach can use it ocean water must be prepared. Nature runs a great big distillery up in the sky, and when the rain water is all distilled and fixed up nice and clean the little angels kick the bottom out of the clouds and it falls down upon the just and the unjust.

Now, the doctor says you're nine-tenths water, so when you catch a barrel of rain water you have nine-tenths of a man, and a good, big man, too—a nice man with broad shoulders and side whiskers and a plug hat. Nine-tenths, remember. Yet women are so concerned about the remaining tenth that they go before a notary public or a clergyman and solemnly swear to love, honor and obey it clear to the jumping-off place. Don't do it, girls. When you feel as though you had a wedding coming on, go to the wash stand and open the faucet, and you can pour out nine-tenths of the best man that ever lived. You can have him warm or cold, and you don't need a funeral or a divorce when you are through with him—just pull the stopper and tell him good-bye as he leaks off down the pipe.

But the other tenth required to make a complete man is the source of all our troubles. We find a vast abundance of water for mixing that mud of which men are made. When we seek the solid part it is quite another matter. Man's mixer won't utilize ocean water, and it won't utilize ordinary dust. Only after this dust has been mixed in the mixer of some plant, or tree, or vegetable, can the human stomach absorb it and use it in building the bone and muscle and nerve and self-conceit of which men are constructed. Not only that, but of the thousands of
forms of plant life, the human stomach can make use of very few.

**The Struggle for Existence**

Man finds the earth teeming with vegetation. On every foot of ground where there's soil and warmth and moisture the plants are engaged in a vegetable law suit for the possession of that mud. So mankind (which is to say, Adam and Eve and Bill Smith and his wife) pitch into the grand scramble and help out the vegetables they like. Those they don't like they call weeds, and other hard names, and they kick 'em, and cuss 'em, and pull 'em up by the roots. Those they like they call onions, and cucumbers, and string beans; the family name is garden truck; and man is very nice to the garden truck family until the little onion children are about a foot high, and the little beans are just beginning to say "mamma" and "papa," and the poor little cucumbers are squirming around on the vines with the kind of stomach ache you'd have if you had nothing inside of you but cucumber juice. About that time man comes along and cuts off these unfortunate vegetables just above the shoe tops. He puts them into the pulverizing machine which he carries under his nose, and grinds them into pulp. He swallows this pulp, and then pours in some water, or coffee, or tea, or German lemonade. His stomach mixes it up into a kind of mortar, and then the animal machinery, with the heart as the central engine or power plant, carries that mortar through the arteries out where it is needed and uses it in building up the human body.

But this is not all. Man finds that he cannot eat grass, so he lets the sheep eat it, and he eats the sheep. He isn't particularly fond of bugs, so he lets the hen eat them, and he eats the hen's eggs. He can't digest clover blossoms, so he lets the bees gather the honey from them, and he eats the honey.

**Nature of Labor**

Now this is what we call labor. This great and never-ending fight to despoil nature of her own, to sand-bag the
fruit-tree, to "hold up" the grape vine, to murder the pig; to rob the hen of her eggs, the cow of her milk, the sheep of her playful little children; to swindle the fish with a baited hook, to burglarize the bee hive, to violate the confidence of a trusting watermelon vine; to slap the weeds in the face and pat the potatoes on the back—these are the first forms of labor. And all for what? Simply to get some digestible solids to mingle with fresh water and mix into the mud of which men are made.

Since "mud" is not a pleasant term, we need to use some other word which shall signify this universal building material. We might call it food, but when we find that the struggle for existence includes the making of this universal mortar into more than food—into clothing, houses, pianos, railway cars, music, education, art and literature, the towers and pinnacles of human culture as well as the foundation blocks of bread and meat, we need a word of broader meaning than "food." Therefore, I am going to use "goods."

The problem of the ages has been the problem of getting goods. It is a terrible problem. It has put wrinkles into the brow of youth and terror into the eyes of age. It has poured out the blood of manhood and wasted the tears of childhood. In solving that problem parents have sacrificed their children and children have abandoned their parents. Men have sold their honor and women their self respect. Father has shaved himself with a dull razor and bad language, and Mother has turned her last summer's hat upside down, put a new crimp in it and worn it all winter.

**Labor Creates All "Goods"**

There are two ways of getting the goods. One is to hustle for them. The other is to get somebody else to do the hustling. If there is a third method I am just as anxious to find it as you are.

Of all the myriad activities of the human race, all our jumping up and down, our fidgeting, fussing and wearing out our clothes—ninety per cent of all this concerns the
problem of making a living. And this hustling for a living is divided into two great classes. One we call producing. That is the direct method of hustling. Under its influence the perspiration oozes out of your own pores and runs down the back of your neck. That's producing. The other is gouging. It is the indirect method of hustling, by which some other fellow contributes the puffing and perspiration, while Number One gets the goods.

First, I want to introduce you to some of the producers. Here, a man puts a seed into some ground that he has scratched and agitated and pulverized. That seed germinates and brings forth a plant. The man stands guard over that plant day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. If weeds grow near it he kills them. If bugs attempt to feed upon it he takes a squirt gun and shoots them full of Paris green. If birds get familiar he makes a scare-crow. If the plant is not strong enough to stand alone he makes braces and wooden legs and crutches for it. After years of care that plant develops some clusters of grapes, and all who eat them say: "Good! good!" So this man is a producer of goods.

Another man takes a piece of steel with a wooden handle, and digs and digs deep into the earth; and bye and bye he brings up lumps of coal. You put the coal into the grate, and light it, and when the children come in shivering with cold they crowd around the fire and say: "Oo! ain't that good?" So the miner is a producer of goods.

Another man feeds the flocks, and carries the lambs in from the rain and cold, and when you sit down to the table and taste the roast mutton you say to your wife: "Pretty good, old lady!" So the herdsman is a producer of goods.

Another man takes a piece of wood, and some strings, and some horse hair. He makes a violin and bow, and when he scrapes the horse hair across the strings you step up to Mary Jane and ask her if you can have this dance with her. And you take her little hand in yours and put your arm around her waist and waltz down the room as happy as though you were a bumble bee and she a great,
sweet blossom full of honey. And as you turn the far corner of the room, away from the other dancers, she lifts her lovely face, and from a heart bursting full of trust and confidence she tells you something—something that has been said a million times, and yet is ever new and dear when young feet trip lightly and young hearts beat fast. Mary Jane says to you: “Floor’s awful slick tonight, ain’t it?” And as the fiddler drags a reluctant, screaming note from his instrument you giggle back at Mary Jane that masterpiece of ball-room wit and wisdom: “Good music, ain’t it?” So the musician is a producer of goods.

Another man takes a piece of canvas and some paint. He smears the paint over the canvas, and you stand with your mouth open a foot wide and say: “Well, isn’t that fine? Isn’t that grand? Isn’t that lovely? Say, Aunt Laura, do they wear ’em that tight in New York?” “Oh, Ma, hush! That ain’t her skirt. She’s a mermaid, and them’s her scales.” So the artist is a producer of goods.

And this also is what we call labor—this taking some raw material which is of no particular use to anybody except some obscure worm or bug, and working it over into a new form which renders it pleasing to a man’s stomach or a woman’s eye.

At the base of all human activity is the labor of the farmer. He takes some dirt and rain water and humps himself over it all summer, and in October it’s pumpkins. Or he takes some of that same raw material, dust and water, plain mud that you say “bah” to when you scrape it off your shoes, and he converts that mud into wheat, and the wheat is made into flour and the flour into bread. Then the bread itself assumes forms of infinite variety.

**Varying Forms of “Goods”**

You feed bread into a railroad engineer and you get speed. You feed it into a weaver and you get cloth. You feed it into a shoemaker and you get shoes. You feed it into a lawyer and you get advice; into a doctor, and you
get a warning; into a preacher, and you get a threat. You feed bread into a dog with a bad disposition, and you get bitten; you feed it to a Republican politician and that's twice you're bit; you feed it to a woman and you get kissed; to a soldier, and you get shot; to a judge, and you get hung.

This bread is the product of labor. These universal goods, in whatever form we find them, are created by the application of human labor to nature's material.

Some people deny this, and the most intelligent denial I ever read was that of an Englishman who declared that if a farmer could raise one bushel on poor land, and with the same labor could raise two bushels on good land, then the good land had itself created the other bushel. Which is quite equivalent to saying that when you kill two birds with a single stone you really have killed only one of them. The other one probably committed suicide.

Labor creates all goods.

How?

With tools.

What are the tools?

Well, for primitive man the tools were teeth and claws. Primitive man lived in trees and in caves. We don't pay as much respect to the lower animals as we might if we should remember that our own ancestors were as ignorant and helpless as they, and that at least in the matter of house-building they were far surpassed by the beaver and the bee, and by great numbers of spiders, bugs and birds.

Tools and Invention

When the first primitive man grabbed that first stone and threw it at his father-in-law, he was building an addition to himself. He lengthened his arm by the distance he could throw. He hardened his fist by using, in place of it, a stone. Then, when he learned to make a spear by fastening a sharp piece of shell at the end of a stick, he could bite and scratch at some distance. He had built an addition to his teeth and fingers.
So we have gone on and on building these additions. We have supplemented our legs with the horse and camel, the bicycle and railway car. As creatures without a single feather to our names we have built ourselves wings, and now we can fly. We have enlarged our hearing by the telegraph and telephone, until we have ears twelve thousand miles long. And if you think such length of ears is not justified by our conduct, just see how patiently we stand hitched while the trusts and masters of money load us with burdens that any self-respecting donkey would buck off his back.

And how we have enlarged and improved our eyes! We have telescopes with which we can almost see the holes in the socks which they hang on the clothes lines in the back yards of Mars. We have microscopes with which we can peek through the key-holes of creation’s secret workrooms and watch a million little citizens of the microbe world fighting Waterloo and Gettysburg on the point of a pin.

But perhaps the most remarkable and extensive development of invention has been by way of supplementing the work of our hands and fingers. The claws of the wild man and the simple tools of past ages have been largely displaced by machinery. We can produce in many industries twenty, fifty, a hundred times as much as by hand labor.

**Modern Machinofacture**

Your grandmother used to knit stockings. She could knit one pair in a day if they were for little Willie, but if they were for Grandpa she had to get an early start and work two days on one pair. Now, a girl in a factory, with machines, can knit a hundred and fifty pairs in a day.

Your grandfather hewed out logs for his house. With great labor he might cut and shape four or five in a day. Now, a gang of saws walk in at one end of a log and out at the other, cutting two thousand times as fast as Grandpa could.

Machine production is the fairy godmother of which
men dreamed in the childhood of the race. In those good old
days, according to the fairy books, all you had to do was
to say "eeny, meeny, miny, mo!" and stand on your head and
wiggle your ears with your fingers crossed, and Mrs. Fairy
would produce the goods. Compared with the hand method
of production, the machine becomes the fairy, and when we
open the throttle or switch on the current it works its magic
tricks and pours forth gifts in such variety and profusion
as would make the fairy philanthropists of the Arabian
Nights seem piker and tightwads.

We have harnessed the forces of nature, and they obey
our commands with a fidelity the fickle fairy never knew.
The question is not how much can we produce, but how
much shall we produce. The Socialists say: "Let's produce
enough for everybody."

But what is enough? What are the necessities of life?
Raise that question and you find another underneath it—
what is life?

Do you reply that life is blood and breath? Very well;
then the necessities of life are air, water and food. Not
air to fly in, but just to breathe. Not water to bathe in,
but just to drink. Not food to entertain with, but just to
eat. These are the only real necessities of life.

"Necessities" a Term of Variable Meaning

The fundamental difference between the savage and the
ridiculous animal who calls himself civilized man is largely
a matter of wants. The savage puts a brass ring in his
nose and calls it Wealth. He takes a woman with a face
like a hard-boiled boot heel and calls her Beauty. He ties
a bunch of grass on a pole and calls it Home. He fastens
a dozen feathers to a string and calls it an overcoat. He
hammers a wooden drum and calls it Music. He daubs his
face with red and yellow mud and calls it Art. He discovers
some peculiarly indigestible method of cooking his fellow
man and calls it Religion.

So there you are. To civilize a man you diversify and
multiply his wants. To civilize him some more you create
new wants and new necessities. A luxury is only a necessity in process of getting acquainted with us.

So when shall we say to the machines: "Stop! there is plenty"?

When one woman at the looms can weave two hundred yards of cloth in a day, shall the weaving cease before every human being is well clothed? When one baker at his machine can mix and mold a thousand loaves of bread in a day, shall the bake-shops close before the hungry are fed? When houses are built by superhuman arms of steel, athrob with steam and athrill with electricity, shall building cease while in all the world there remains shelterless one human mother and her child?

The answer is brutal and absurd, but it is the answer of Modern Industry, and Modern Industry says: "Yes, stop the machines or there will be overproduction! We are sorry for the poor—here's a nickel to prove it—here's a dollar to prove it—but stop the machines, for the love of Mike, stop them!"

The Workers Lack Necessities

So we find that although every human activity is based upon taking the crude materials of earth and converting them into new substances and molding them to new forms, and though this converting and molding process is now aided by machinery which multiplies ten and twenty and fifty and five thousand times the unaided powers of the human worker—still, millions are in want.

Who are they? They are doubtless the poor heathen, living in some benighted country, where the gospel of mechanics, the evangel of steam and steel, has never penetrated. Let us send missionaries to carry them the glad tidings of the electric motor and the gas engine, the stamping mill and the printing press, of shoe-making machinery and hat-making machinery, of looms and factories and foundries. Let us tell them of the paper mill, throwing out its
web faster than a man can run. Let us tell them of the railroad engine, carrying at the speed of a scared wolf the load of sixty thousand burden bearers. Let us tell them of the oil-burning engine pulling a gang plow, and digging the ground for the planting—working faster and better than five thousand men with spades.

Don't you think, after we tell them all this, they will want to come to America? No. They are already here.

Well, if people need things in this country with all these wealth-producing machines, it can be only because they don't know how to make the machines run. Why doesn't some good kind philanthropist endow a big school to teach these people how to run the machines? But the fact is that the people who build these great machines, and run 'em, and create all this wealth—they are the poor people.

If the workers create wealth and don't get it, who does? Simple question, simple answer—the gouger gets it. The capitalist.

There have not always been capitalists, but there have always been gougers. So long as men simply rob the other animals and kill the vegetables, we don't call it gouging—we call that labor. It is when they rob and kill each other that we call it gouging.

**Ancient Forms of the “Gouge”**

It used to be very simple. People gouged it off one another's ribs. If one wild man grew prosperous and accumulated some fat, another wild man would see it, and there would be trouble. At the end of the trouble the lean man would thump the fat man with a club and then sit down to eat him. This was not because he had any ill feeling toward the fat man—he rather liked him, in fact. But fat people are so sensitive and peculiar that way, you can hardly eat them at all without clubbing them.

Cannibalism was wasteful. It was also dangerous. When you started out to attend a cannibal feast you were
never sure whether you’d appear at the side of the table with a napkin under your chin or on top of it with a bouquet of celery on your right and a bottle of ketchup on your left.

However, in the course of time some great inventor discovered that you can make a man yield food without eating him. That was a wonderful step in human progress. We call it slavery. When you captured a man, instead of running for the carving knife and horseradish, you put a hobble skirt on him and turned him loose in the garden to pull weeds and fight potato bugs. By just so much as this slave gentleman increased the production of your garden, he could be said to yield food to you. That was better than taking it off his ribs because it would last longer.

But slavery had its inconveniences for the master as well as for the slave. Perhaps the gravest inconvenience was the difficulty of keeping the slave in motion. The incentive to labor was the whip, and you had to stand over him with the incentive or he’d lose interest in his work and stop waiting for the whistle.

So the next great discovery was that you can make a man yield food without even owning him directly. All you need to do is to get possession of something he is compelled to have, and freeze to it. The lion learned that years ago, when even the hills were young. He finds that the antelope must have water, so he hides near the pool and patiently waits until his supper comes to him, and then he jumps out on his poor little four-footed meal-ticket and gets written up by the nature fakers as a noble beast.

Now, the lions among men, the masters of their kind, did not become lords of the water, because water is not easily monopolized. They became lords of the land, and instead of owning slaves they owned the land, without which the slaves could not live. So the slaves were called serfs, or freemen, but their freedom consisted in the liberty to work sixteen or eighteen hours a day and turn over most of what they produced to the lord of the land.

And today the places of power are occupied by the lords
of the machine. To get something out of a man you no longer have to chew him, with the accompanying risk of being chewed in return. You no longer have to spend as much energy in whipping him as he spends in doing the work. And being a landlord is just plain, old-fashioned hard labor compared with being a machine lord.

Independence Under Individualism

There was a time, of course, when every individual did most of his own work. He kept his own garden, raised his own vegetables, beat his own wife, and did as he pleased when he was not climbing a tree to escape some country cousin who was doing as he pleased. That pleasant state we call savagery. If you wanted a suit of clothes you went out and looked for bear tracks. You were quite certain that at the other end of the bear tracks you'd find a ready-made suit of clothes. If the bear was of a bashful and retiring disposition you might find it necessary to follow him for days before you could come to an understanding with him. If you convinced him that you were right the bear went home with you. If he got the better of the argument you went home with the bear. But in any case it was a more or less private, personal matter. It was just a little business deal between yourself and the bear.

Interdependence in Machine Society

Nowadays, the clothes you wear represent the work of thousands of men, operating a great machine with a sheep at one end and you at the other. When the sheep gives up his wool he is said to be fleeced; and when you buy it you are said to be skinned, and you are.

When you eat so simple a thing as a cracker you are consuming the labor of millions of hands. Not only of the farmer who produced the wheat, but of the people who made his farm implements, his clothing and his books. Not only
of the miller who made the flour, but of the men who built the mill-house and made the machinery. Not only of the man who baked the cracker, but of the miners who dug the coal for the fires, of the men who built the furnaces, of the paper makers who manufactured the wrapper and the box, the printers who put the label on it. Not only of the grocer's boy, who delivers it at your door, but of the railroad president, the train dispatchers, and of the man who tamped the dirt underneath the railroad ties over which that cracker was hauled—and the woman who cooked his dinner.

How We Produce the "Goods"

The industries of the world constitute a vast machine, consisting of the mines and factories and farms and railroads, and the brains and hands which are a part of this machine. This machine feeds you when you are hungry. It clothes you when you are naked. It warms you when you are cold. It waters you when you are thirsty. It amuses you when you are tired. It cares for you when you are sick. It buries you when you are dead.

You are interested in this machine, for in its perfect operation only can you be supplied the wants of a civilized man.

Now let's see how it works. As the sunrise sweeps 'round the world on the wings of morning, the whistles blow, the steam is turned on, and the wheels begin to move, under the direction and care of men and women and children whom we call workers. As the sunset fades the whistles blow again, the steam is shut off and the wheels cease to move, except in those industries which, in defiance of nature, run night and day.

Now what has been accomplished? A vast quantity of nature's raw material has been transformed into goods, into the things which satisfy human needs, fulfil human desires and preserve and enlarge human life. Millions of people
have co-operated in producing these goods. *How shall they be divided?*

We found that the primitive methods of *production* were not good enough. But we still employ the primitive method of *dividing the goods*. That is, we fight for them. We don’t fight in the primitive way—I don’t chew your ear and you don’t kick my shins, nor do we both sit on Bill Thompson’s neck and eat supper off his T-bone. But we fight.

**How We Divide Labor’s Product**

One of the principal quarreling places is the labor market. You come into the labor market and say:

“Here, I’ve helped to create this vast quantity of goods and I want my share.”

“What did you do?”

“I’m a miner and I dug the coal you burned.”

“Well, how much is your share?”

“Sixty cents a ton.”

“You can’t have it!”

“I can.”

“You won’t!”

“I will.”

“You’re a liar!”

“You’re another!”

Then biff, bang! The coal miners strike, and when they strike the blow is felt by every man, woman and child in the nation, but it falls heaviest on their own wives and children.

Whenever there is a strike the wheels of the big machine stop, or they turn slowly, and if another man steps up to run them the strikers cry “Scab! scab!” and some of them vent their feelings in bad language, while others express their regards with a piece of brick.

Isn’t it a peculiar situation when the only way for men to get more is to produce less? Isn’t there something wrong with the social machine? Hadn’t we better order some repairs?
But only the organized workers strike. The unorganized worker is more meek and lowly. He doesn’t say how much he wants. He’s willing to take what’s handed out to him.

How We Are Gouged

Now, here’s the gouge of the whole affair, for it is a gouge and a big gouge on the working people. After they have all received their share of the day’s goods, the labor product, there remains more than half of the whole pile. Some people say that the productive workers get only one seventh of what they produce, but nobody even pretends that they get as much as half of it. What becomes of the rest?

Don’t forget the gouger. He toils not, neither does he spin, and yet when the labor product is to be consumed he arrives in the trough with four feet and helps himself with remarkable generosity.

How does he get it?

In the bully days of savagery, he got it because his teeth were sharper or his fist harder. In the golden age of chivalry, he got it because he was handy with his hardware and could slip a foot of steel through your gizzard while you were wondering where you had mislaid your cast-iron pajamas. He swaggered about the earth carrying a ten-pound meat axe and wearing a tin shirt and brass pants, and when his hat blew off the whole world ran to pick it up. He got what he wanted because if he didn’t get it he could be Johnny on the spot with a job lot of surgical operations. He got it because he was lord of creation and backed up his lordship with a sword.

The modern gouger gets his because he is lord of the machines. But he couldn’t bite the eye-brows off a house cat, and if you asked him to take his grand-daddy’s butcher-knife and defend his lordship of the machines he’d run like Sam Hill, or he’d hire a gang of patriots to do it for him at thirteen dollars a month and board.
Now, we’re all more or less that way. We don’t like to fight. People get so mussed up. So when the lords of the machines control the government and the government says to the workers: “Here, you don’t own those machines, and you can touch them only by the consent and terms offered you by the capitalists. No matter how hungry you are, you must not turn the wheels of the machinery which makes bread; no matter how cold you are, you mustn’t turn the wheels of the machinery which helps dig coal; no matter how much you may need clothing, you must not turn the wheels which make it. Keep away! If you touch the machines you’ll be arrested.” When the government says these things to us, we obey.

The Socialist knows that there is a big fight in this country, and that fight is for the possession of the machines, the right to turn the wheels and make goods whenever we need them, and to possess the full product when we have created it. And in the prosecution of that fight the Socialist proposes to use the very biggest and best weapon there is—the farthest shooting and the hardest hitting. That weapon is the government of the United States, and the working class can have it to help them fight their battles whenever they go to the polls and take possession of it.

But so long as we workers do not agree among ourselves, so long as we leave the government in the possession of the capitalist class, and the government forbids us to turn the wheels of the goods-producing machinery without giving to the capitalists more than half of the goods, we obey, for the sake of peace.

Then some of us obey because we think the Capitalists really have a right to what we produce. One of the smoothest little tricks ever invented for making men toe the mark is that of telling them something so often they believe it. The land lords used to say that they got their land from God, that they held it by divine right; and they said it so often, and they hired so many other people to say it for them, that folks believed it. They claimed they had a sacred right
to what God created, and now they claim that they have an equally sacred right to what we working people create. Your American capitalist would hire the almighty God of the Universe at fourteen dollars a week to create a new world, and if he rested on the seventh day would dock his pay two dollars. And his newspapers and hired men talk so much about sacred property rights that you actually believe there are such things. There are not, but if there were, don’t you think it’s about time for you to talk about your own sacred rights to take what property you create and use it for your own benefit?

**The Socialist Remedy for Gouging**

That’s the kernel of the Socialist philosophy—that the workers create the machines and are therefore entitled to own them. That they work the machines and are therefore entitled to all they produce, instead of a minor fraction of it, as represented in their wages. As to the land, it is nature’s common gift to all creatures, but human beings disinherit the other animals wherever it suits their purpose and they have the power; and there can be peace among men only when the land is publicly controlled and every human being is guaranteed the right to its use and occupancy in so far as that use and occupancy does not interfere with the common good.

**How the Gougers Waste the Goods**

Now if the gougers take most of what the workers produce, you may naturally and properly ask what they do with it, for there are ten workers to one capitalist, and while the capitalist might wear ten times as many clothes as the worker he obviously could not eat ten times as much bread and meat. How do they get rid of this vast surplus? They take their surplus bread and feed it into some machinists and start them turning out automobiles, and pri-
vate cars, and steam yachts; they take their surplus clothing and put it on some stoneworkers and painters, decorators and plumbers, and have them construct private houses which make the Bible account of King Solomon's palace read like the description of a barn for rent. Five million dollars for a house! Think of it! The price of a university. A respectable endowment for a dozen colleges.

The wife and daughters of the millionaire help consume what we workers create by drafting working-girls from useful labor to act as their personal servants. Some wives carry on their bodies trinkets representing the entire working lives of a dozen people, while it is a very poor rich family where the wife's dresses are not each worth a year's work for some girl. Not only do they employ an army of girls to make their clothes, but they employ another army to button and unbutton them; an army to crimp their hair and care for their nails; and there is quite a regiment of American young women whose high and dignified duty is to bathe and dress Fido, and comb his hair, and keep his little tail in curl, and lead him out for his morning walk.

The wives and daughters of the rich employ great numbers of people to rebuild them in accordance with the latest plans and specifications of fashion—to paper, paint and decorate 'em, and equip 'em with steam heat, electric lights and all modern conveniences.

People talk to you about the Greeks having such a high degree of culture, so fine a sense of the beautiful. It's true that you'll find here and there a Greek statue that will make a man open his eyes, but where you see one of these I'll show you a thousand productions of the American dressmaker that will make him open his arms, his heart and his employer's cash drawer.

That's all right about the Greeks, but we have effected improvements in the design and workmanship of woman which make Nature ashamed of herself. We have accepted the general outline as being quite commendable, but we have made very important changes and correc-
tions in certain details. There is quite a feeling among our leading artists in favor of the removal of the digestive and a few other organs, but it is pointed out that so long as eating and drinking are so important a part of our social life, digestive organs are almost a necessity. So the matter has been compromised by a very artistic eclipse of these objectionable details.

The result is extremely gratifying. You go and look at that old Greek statue of which people brag so much, the Venus of Milo, and you not only see at a glance that this woman had a stomach, but you can tell right where it was. Where the fashionable American woman keeps hers is a mystery known only to her dressmaker and surgeon.

Perhaps I can make this clearer by a comparison. Suppose that the geographers should become dissatisfied with the shape of North America, and should put a strait jacket around it, hook it in the Atlantic and lace it in the Pacific. Then they hammer and pull and push and pucker until they get California so far west the Japanese are scared out of a year's growth; Seattle consolidates with Minneapolis and St. Paul; the Gulf of St. Lawrence is filled with excelsior and sawdust, and they get the state of Georgia so far north that it elects a Republican governor.

And the women of the leisure class draft great armies of men from the ranks of productive labor and set them to dig dirt and scratch gravel in search of pretty pieces of stone to hang on the ladies' necks. They tell you this is done because the pebbles are beautiful. It is not true. You can put two cents' worth of colored water into a glass bottle in a drug store window with a gas light behind it and get more shine and radiant, brilliant beauty than there is in all the crown jewels of Russia.

The reason for which the women value the jewelry is that it is a condensed form of "goods"—so much of human life and labor, so many tons of pork and beans
and rice and dried fish, fed into human working machines, were transformed by the labor process into these fancy pebbles.

I would like to point out that it would be much more grand and imposing if instead of wearing the jewels the ladies would carry on their persons the genuine "goods" which they represent. We are not sufficiently impressed when the papers tell us about a hundred thousand dollars' worth of pearls; but if they were to mention a hundred car loads of wheat we'd understand because we raise it; or we'd appreciate a train load of coal because we dig it; or a ship load of fish because we catch them. The physical impossibility of a woman's carrying in eatables and drinkables and wearables a fraction of the value represented in the jewels need not interfere with the plan—just let her wear the bills of lading and warehouse receipts. And then the society columns of the Sunday papers would contain items such as these:

Miss Armorita Swift, daughter of our distinguished butcher, was charmingly decorated in ten car loads of premium hams and perfect bacon.

Miss Olive Gingersnap, daughter of the great delicatessen king, was simply gorgeous in fifty hogsheads of sauer kraut and five hundred barrels of dill pickles.

Mrs. James W. Spondulix wore a lovely string of street railways about her neck, with several large cotton mills pendant at the front, and clasped at the back of her neck with a genuine glue factory.

And what the genuinely rich can't waste by their own fantastic expenditures is largely consumed by a vast horde
of petty capitalists and their hangers-on who still infest the distributive markets.

Wastes of Competitive Distribution

Consider, for example, the method of distributing goods in our cities. The post office, which is a social enterprise, does not send to your house four carriers, one for each different class of mail. But as soon as the postman is gone—ding! ding! here comes the boy from the laundry. He marches downstairs whistling, "O Promise Me," and here comes the boy from the bakery. He slides down the banisters and bumps into the boy from the grocery. Then a one-horse wagon comes up the alley and a gentleman with a strong Latin accent wants to know if you desire to purchase strawberries at three for a quarter—not three strawberries, but three boxes, you know. You buy the boxes and trust to the generosity of some noble stranger to see that the bottom of every box is in the middle, where for the sake of convenience the bottom of everything ought to be, and that a limited number of strawberries answer "présent" when you call the strawberry roll.

Want a spool of thread delivered from a department store? Two bob-tailed horses with silver buckles on 'em prance up to the front door pulling a delivery wagon with more varnish and regalia on it than queen Elizabeth could have afforded on her state coach. While the coachman holds the horses the footman jumps down and runs up to your back door in better clothes than your friends wear in at the front door and delivers that spool of thread. They have made forty times as much noise, fifty times as much work and about a hundred times as much "style" as the postman would have made, yet if he had delivered that thread it would have been there just the same.

The footman runs back and hops into the coach, the coachman stokes up that six-hundred-dollar team and they go tearing down to Seventy-Ninth Street to deliver a darn-
ing needle to a woman who sends 'em back for a different size. Of course, all this prodigious consumption of time and axle grease and horse feed doesn't cost you a cent. Certainly not! If you bought coal by the lump and had every separate lump delivered in an ambulance with a porter, a driver, a physician and nurse, you could still buy it for ten dollars a ton!

And if you happen to want a cake of soap, why, there is in almost any American city an army of a hundred thousand men standing ready to hand it to you. You step out on the street and look for the sign: "Drugs, soaps and perfumery." Here's one, only ten feet away. Thirty feet in this direction is another. All up and down the street you see them, drug stores in platoons, companies, swarms, battalions. You peek around the corner of the block, and there's another. If they suspect you of having a nickel you've not already spent they'll chase you right down the middle of the street.

But there is this to be said about a drug store—it certainly is a convenient place. In one end they keep soda water, cigars and confectionery. In the other, headache powders, digestion tablets and pills. Here you buy your maladies, there your remedies. Disease in front and death behind! But they're so convenient. If you wish to die on the spot you can buy a postage stamp, write a letter to your sweetheart, step right to the telephone, say good-bye to your folks and call up the undertaker.

Another way of wasting the goods is to employ a big gang of men to make something that nobody needs and then employ another big gang to sell it to everybody for more than they can afford to pay. We call that "salesmanship."

Waste of So-Called "Salesmanship"

Salesmanship is the noble art of biting without teeth, of bruising without fists, of crushing without a club, of stabbing without a knife.
For example, take the pickpocket business. It is usually run by a lot of coarse, ignorant fellows who have not the slightest idea of the value of salesmanship. They get next to you in a crowd and relieve you of your watch and chain without so much as saying, "Thank you!" No wonder they get themselves arrested and have unpleasant things said about them in the papers. If they knew anything of salesmanship they would come at you with a business card, steel embossed, on the kind of paper that snaps like new money.

"Good morning. I represent the Intercontinental New Process Pickpocket Company, of New York, London and Paris. Now if you have been getting your pocket picked by total strangers, the work probably does not satisfy you. These small concerns are not responsible. Why, just the other week a fellow on the floor below had his gold watch taken, and the workman tore his pocket, leaving the gentleman to have it repaired at his own inconvenience. Now, you know such work as that is very unsatisfactory. I just signed up a man yesterday who was used to having his pocket picked by his wife. Well, one night she overlooked two nickels and a dime, and when he found that twenty cents, he had a fit and danced all over a new Panama hat. These things are annoying and expensive.

"Now, here's what we have to offer you. In the first place, back of this Company and on its board of directors are such men as J. Pierpont Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and all the leading high class pickpockets of America and Europe. Our contracts are just as good as a U. S. Government bond: We don't send a man to carelessly frisk your clothes while you are wearing them—we don't cater to that class of trade. Our automobile service wagon will call at your house and take your coat, vest and trousers to our 'model picking plant, where every pocket is examined under a calcium light with a magnifying glass, and genuinely hand picked by a graduate of the Illinois legislature, using sterilized fingers. If you want your clothes pressed after they are picked, that will cost you fifty cents
extra.

"If you give us good references you can open an account, otherwise we simply hold your clothes as security until the picking bill is paid.

"Owing to the immense plant we have, the scale on which we operate, and our facilities for reducing to the absolute minimum every item of cost, we can offer you this unparalleled service for the extraordinary price of five dollars a month.

"Sign here, please."

Salesmanship is the super-art of getting people to put their names on the dotted line, agreeing to pay you for picking their pockets. It is robbery revised to date. Instead of applying hot irons to the victim's feet you apply hot air to his ear. Instead of soaking him on the nose with a club you paste him in the eye with a pamphlet. Instead of the pit covered with leaves you employ the lying advertisement. The salesman who refused to lie or exaggerate would succeed about as fast as a Billikin would capture a battleship with a bean shooter.

Waste of Competitive Advertising

Another favorite method of wasting the goods which labor produces is what we call "advertising." To a certain extent, some advertising is educational; but most of it can be resolved into million-dollar debates over the respective merits of Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum. Suppose two men in Chicago manufacture and sell socks. Now, the socks they make are just alike—same sizes, same kind of yarn, same weight, same colors. You can't tell which Jones made and which Smith made. The manufacturers themselves can't tell the difference. There isn't any difference. But Jones calls his "Evermore" socks and Smith calls his "Nevertore" socks. So that's the difference—a different label on the boxes, a different brand, a different name.

But see how that difference affects the industrial world.
Minneapolis ships a car of flour up to the Wisconsin woods, Chicago sends a car of hams and bacon, New York sends a car of sugar and coffee, Philadelphia sends a car of saws and axes, and St. Louis sends two car loads of men. Those men jump off the cars and grab those saws and axes and that sugar and coffee and hams and bacon and flour, and they start off on a run looking for a patch of uncut timber. And when they find it they roll up their sleeves, and the hills ring with the sound of axes, and with mighty screams of rending wood the trees come crashing to the ground.

Why? Because one box of socks is labeled "Evermore" and the other "Nevertore."

Can’t see it? Wait a minute!

Those fallen trees are cut into sections and floated down to the paper mill. The wood is ground to pulp and the pulp is made into paper, and two train loads of paper are rushed to Chicago. An advertising expert sits at his desk and writes this advertisement:

Evermore Socks wear like rocks,
Buy 'em and try 'em—
One-fifty a box.

And, another expert sits down at his desk and writes this advertisement:

Nevertore socks stand the knocks,
Try 'em and buy 'em—
One-fifty a box.

Then one group of artists get busy making pictures of the smiling, happy, healthy people who wear Evermore socks. Some other artists make some more pictures showing the happy smiles on the healthy faces of the wise people who wear Nevertore socks. And the compositors set the type and the electrotypers make the printing plates and the pressmen wash up the rollers and get the ink fountains to working right and they cut little pieces of tissue paper and paste them on the cylinders of the presses so as to get
the squeeze just what it ought to be, and when the sheet is ready to print the advertising man writes O. K. on it, the foreman squints at it on both sides and says: "O. K. Let her go!"

"How many?" asks the pressman.

"Five hundred thousand impressions, four forms on; work 'em, turn and back up." Two million booklets telling how much better Evermore Socks are than any other socks.

And over at the other printing shop, or perhaps in the same shop not ten feet away, they are printing two million booklets telling how much better Nevertore Socks are than any other socks.

And as you go down the street a big electric sign is throwing off fits of incandescent hysterics trying to convince you that Evermore Socks are the best in the world. And another sign in blinding electrical spasms is sincerely assuring you that Nevertore Socks are the best on earth. And every fit and flash of these big sign boards costs an extra lump of coal down at the power house.

If you were to take a match and set somebody's dog house on fire to amuse the children you'd be arrested and sent to jail. Yet burning that dog house would be a useful and benevolent act compared with the burning waste of American advertising, which consumes whole empires of forests in making the paper, great rivers of oil in making the inks, great mountains of metal in making the printing plates, and great regiments and armies of human lives in printing and distributing that advertising matter.

And for what? To tell you that Uneeda biscuit. You don't. What you need is a forty-horse-power alarm clock to wake you up.

The Waste of Men

And in addition to this waste of goods, this deliberate destruction of the material from which men are made, is waste of another kind. We have already suggested that
human life rests upon the work of mixing nature’s dust and nature’s water and creating from them certain substances in certain forms. Out west there are great tracts of land which nature has wasted. Mankind, the intelligent animal, is reclaiming that waste land by stopping rivers in their seaward course and turning them back to water the waste places, to mingle with that dust in the forms of grain and fruit and vegetables; and, as the supreme object of it all, in the form of prosperous and happy men, women and children. They call that irrigation and reclamation. There was plenty of land; there was plenty of water; the only problem was to get them both together.

But we have a bigger problem than that of waste land. It is the problem of waste men. We call it the army of the unemployed, and its membership ranges from one to five millions. It has a creative power of from seven to thirty-five million dollars a day, and this creative power is lost because the machines and the raw material are privately owned. Private enterprise cannot handle the problem of the unemployed any more than it could dig the Panama Canal, and for the same reason—that private enterprise seeks only personal profit, and these people are unemployed only for the reason that no private enterprise can make a profit from their labor.

Socialism, and the Eternal “Goods” Problem

Well, let’s see how Socialism would answer some of these perplexing questions and solve some of these social problems. We found mankind in the first place struggling with nature for possession of food. But at the inception of his existence man does not sustain life by his own efforts. Without exertion on his part he is nourished and protected by his mother.

Now suppose the child is a year old. Mother does his marketing. Your marketing, let’s say. Let’s just imagine that you are this one-year-old child. Your mother goes to
the market of modern business and says: "I want some material that's good to build up a child. The doctor recommends milk and eggs."

"Yes, Madam," says Business. "Step right this way. Here are some eggs at three for ten cents."

"But grandfather writes that they get only fifteen cents a dozen for eggs on the farm. Why do you ask me forty cents?"

"We have to have a profit," says Business.

"And how about milk?"

"Five cents a pint—we have to have a profit on that, too."

There's your Modern Business system. Your mother starts to build you to a man by pouring food into that little mortar mixer of yours, and the great Business world meets her at the nozzle of your milk bottle and fights her for every spoonful that goes down your throat!

What would Socialism say to your mother's request for milk and eggs to put into you?

It would say: "We're not in the profit business. You can have all the milk and eggs you need at what the farmer gets for them, plus the precise cost of delivering them to you, and since the government handles the express business the charges are about one-fifth what they used to be."

And suppose, like most children, you want some jam and preserves and jelly. Mother goes to market for them, and Business says: "Yes, Madam, we have lovely jam with some of the nicest hayseed you ever tasted in your life, and it contains some glucose we bought at a bargain, and some perfectly beautiful Diamond dyes."

"I don't think that would be good for my child." says Mother. "Well, perhaps it isn't," says Business, "but they like it, and we give short weight and short measure on all these goods, so it doesn't hurt them as much as though we gave full measure."

There you get it again. Your mother tries to secure building material to make you a half inch taller and a quar-
ter of an inch wider and Business is perfectly willing to
poison you for profit, and not only that, but it steals three
ounces out of every pound of your poison.

What would Socialism do about it? Socialism would
say: "There's nothing to be gained by filling children with
colored sawdust and glucose, and there's everything to be
gained by filling them with first class food."

But your mother must develop your mind as well as your
body, so when you're five years old she starts you to school,
and she must buy you a book. If you live in Chicago the
book is Heeler & Company's Primer.

Here it is. Your mother opens the book and sees that
it is full of nice, large print and pretty pictures of babies,
and boys and girls and rabbits and squirrels and kittens and
pups. The first lesson reads:

"Mamma loves Baby.
"Baby loves Mamma."

And the second lesson is some more about Mamma and
Baby, and the third is about the kitten, and the fourth about
the dog.

Very nice, indeed. Over here on the last page the pub-
lisher has an advertisement about the book. He says it's a
nice book, and that the thought it contains is simple, beau-
tiful, childlike and pure. But he forgot something. What
he forgot is that the book also contains a simple, child-
like, beautiful and pure graft. He forgot to say that this
book, which is retailed to Chicago mothers at twenty-five
cents, costs about seven or eight cents in the manufacture.

So when your mother asks for a picture book with which
to help the school teacher build up that brain of yours, she
pays for three books and gets one of them.

What would Socialism do for her there? Socialism
would say: "Certainly, Mrs. Smith, we have books. We
have a great printing and binding machine which starts a roll
of paper here and a roll of cloth over there, and it turns
out books for children. It prints them in all the colors of
the rainbow and puts a cloth back on them and drops them
out as fast as the man can lift them away. And nobody
gets a profit on them—the people own this big printing house
and it is run for service and not for profit.”

When you are sixteen your Mother thinks she needs
still more help in building up your character and giving
shape and symmetry to your life, so she wants to send you
to college. Business says: “Why, nobody ever heard of
a workingman’s children going to college. It’s absurd. It
would unfit them for their station in life. If you give
everybody a college education, who’ll do the dirty work?
You’d better let us start that child to work in a factory
where he’ll learn something practical.”

Socialism would say: “Mrs. Smith, we know that a
human being is superior to the brutes because he has a su-
perior brain, and to just the extent that we shut off the de-
velopment of the brain we brutalize the man. But a man
is not complete unless he can also use his hands. Now, you
need not be afraid to send your child to a factory because
under Socialism the factory is a school where men and
women make and mold beautiful and useful things, and are
themselves made and molded into beautiful and useful
beings.”

. Socialism, the Universal Liberator

And you, grown to manhood or womanhood under Social-
ism, will not have to beg for a job, but because the State owns
the resources of nature and the machinery of Society and
you are a citizen of that state, you will have free access to
the wealth of nature and can create for yourself and those
dependent on you enough to satisfy every need. When rail-
ways are run for the use of the people and not for the
profit of the plutocrat, you will enjoy that freedom to go
and come which is so essential a part of genuine liberty.

And you will be capable of appreciating and enjoying
these things, for you will not be a half-grown creature,
blighted by ignorance and stunted by child labor. You will
be a fully developed being because the dust and water, the
mud, the mortar of which human creatures are made was
supplied in loving abundance to the mother who built you. For this is the saddest, most brutal thing of capitalism—that nature sets before our women the superlative task of renewing the human race, while we rob and cheat them of the very clay out of which they are to form the children of tomorrow.

Socialism, and the Making of Men!

For we clothe with glory the builders of temples, but load with scorn the builders of men; we greet with applause those who idealize beauty on canvas, but reward with disdain those who realize it in flesh and blood; we crown with laurel those who carve images in stone, but we crown with sorrows those whose statues breathe and sing.

Somebody has told you that Socialism is opposed to marriage and the home. I tell you that under Socialism working people will for the first time possess homes. Then for the first time will marriage take on its full significance and woman assume her rightful place in human society.

Woman, despised and oppressed among the savages of the jungle, forbidden to cross her husband's shadow or cook her food upon his fire; woman, driven from the camp of the barbarians to suffer the martyrdom of motherhood alone in the dark and cold; woman, spurned from the councils of social welfare in the twentieth century and told to go back to her crude tools in the kitchen. She is coming into her own through Socialism,

“When Science shall draw down Orion's band
To ease the burden of the woman's hand.”

For woman is the supreme artist of the world. Her engravures live; her pictures speak; her sculptures think, and dream, and love!
Should Socialism Be Crushed?

The National Office has reprinted this splendid booklet.

It is just what is needed, particularly for circulation among trade unionists.

It shows up the Civic Federation in all its hollow hypocrisy.

It describes how the workingmen of other countries have improved their condition by electing Socialists to office.

It is a revelation to the average American workingman on the desirability and effectiveness of working class solidarity on the political field.

Locals and comrades should buy it by the thousands and put it into circulation. The wholesale price is so low that if you sell only a small proportion of them the remainder can be given away if desired, without financial loss. Or, if you sell all of them, it will put a goodly sum in the treasury.

It has thirty-two pages and cover. Every page and also the cover filled with good stuff.

And you know, most publishers charge from three to five times as much for booklets of the same size in wholesale quantities.

PRICE

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GET THE OTHER FELLOW

To think about "How We Are Gouged."
We want to change things.
We can change things when everybody understands how futile and foolish is the Capitalist System.
No one book or pamphlet will do all the educating.
This one by Arthur Brooks Baker is doing its part, largely because it is so different from other books and pamphlets.
Get a supply for the next Socialist meeting, and sell or distribute them in the audience.
When everybody understands "How We Are Gouged," the gouging will have to stop.

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