

**SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY,  
SOBER THOUGHTS FOR ALL WHO  
ARE CONCERNED IN THE  
WELFARE OF OUR INDUSTRY, PP.  
3-40**

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**H. CHEROUNY**

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# Socialism and Christianity

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Saber Thoughts

FOR ALL WHO ARE CONCERNED IN THE WELFARE OF  
OUR INDUSTRY

BY  
H. CHEROUNY

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"And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

Bible: 2 Thess., 2:11.

ABOUT thirty years ago, some European workmen and erudite doctors appeared in America, bringing with them the seeds of an oriental plant—Socialism. These seeds were cast upon the hot-beds of our large cities and, being nourished by national calamities, produced a flower of so strange a nature that many dread the fruits which it may bear.

Learned men, especially economists, have filled pages of their books with descriptions of the effects of Socialism, and every weapon of human wit and wisdom has been employed in argument against it. In vain—the plant still grows.

This fact, as well as the impossibility of bringing home to learned or illiterate Socialists the simplest truths regarding human institutions, should convince careful observers that Socialism has its roots in *the human will*—a blind natural force, a power which can overrule the intellect and render it impervious to reason.

Since Socialism promises to end human sufferings as far as they come from want; and since its precepts give general direction to volition and determine the scope of all ideas of right and wrong: *we may class it among the religious systems* which from time to time were propagated among men, with the promise to make them happier than they had been before, provided their precepts, however strange, were obeyed.

*To form ideas given with a view to  
an closing, ...*

Hence it is that Socialism cannot be eradicated by the power of the State, though it be ever so great; and that tortures, prisons, the infliction of death, or any of the means usually employed by governments to suppress antagonistic ideas, are of no avail; and that, on the contrary, the mist surrounding the intellect of Socialists grows denser as the vapors of the blood spilt in its cause rise around them.

To convince the reader that the strong delusion to which our working people have fallen victims *is a religious system*, is the object of this essay.

A thorough understanding of the phenomenon will enable business-men to treat the question with more hope of success than heretofore.



## WHAT SOCIALISTS LOOK LIKE.

„Wie der ganze Baum nur die stets wiederholte Erscheinung eines und desselben Triebes ist, der sich am einfachsten in der Faser darstellt und in der Zusammensetzung zu Blatt, Stiel, Ast, Stamm wiederholt und leicht darin zu erkennen ist, so sind alle Thaten des Menschen nur die stets wiederholte, in der Form etwas abwechselnde Aeußerung seines intelligiblen Charakters.“

Arthur Schopenhauer. *W. z. 33.*, I, 341-42.

**D**URING a period of my New York life I acted as agent between several charitable societies and the poor Germans of that city. Evenings and Sundays I traveled through the long and dirty streets of those wards for which the sun's rays appear to serve only as generators of miasms. Front tenement, rear basement; first, fourth, fifth floor; room 1, 2, 3, and 24—it is all the same: there live the poor and wretched Germans, brooding over a past that brought forth the dire present; dreaming of a future that, when also a past, will leave a present with nothing to wish for but that it would ever remain.

Here and there an agent of the German Society or the Ladies' organization climbs up and down the narrow, rickety stairs, and brings the poor a gift from that part of the people of thinkers—as Germans are vain to call themselves—which has banished the pallid spectre hunger, and employs its spare time and ample means in a continual battle against grey sinew. The latter is called in our language "fostering of German ideas" or *Gemüthlichkeit*; the donation of ten dollars per year

to the funds of a society having for its object the relief of the destitute, is called charity.

But the poor have different terms for this. They name the latter "a return by pennies of what was robbed of them by thousands;" and the former "a waste thousandwise abstracted in pennies from their share of this world's goods."

There are also many Americans who visit the abodes of the poor. They are mostly the well-salaried missionaries of congregations of rich men who enjoy a sensation of pleasure on seeing a long list of rescued souls in their zealous pastor's annual reports. They bring a small gift and sing the wonderful lay from olden times of the Saviour crucified and his kingdom of universal love where all privations and the ailments of the flesh shall cease, and where the weary and laden shall live in eternal bliss.

The poor, young and old, take the gift and listen devoutly to the charming song, if need be three, four times a day. On Sundays they would, if possible, take the Methodist's blessing at 9 in the morning; the Presbyterian's at 11; the Episcopalian's at 2; and in the evening, they enjoy the City Missionary's exhortations and coal-tickets.

But when there is no fear of the pious visitor's return, the pale-faced father reads to the children the *Volks-Zeitung* or pamphlets kindred to it in spirit; and now the cheeks begin to color, the eyes of the humble penitents glow with innate fire when he explains the new gospel which proclaims "Good will towards men" by putting "God on High" out of the children's heart, and the "Peace on earth" out of the community.

I cannot banish from my memory the picture of a large-boned man whom I found, pale and woe-worn, suffering from rheumatism, lying amidst eight half-dressed, dirty children, on a sorely dilapidated lounge. The face was encircled by a shaggy black beard, and unkempt hair fell over a forehead that revealed between the bushy eye-brows the unmistakable traces of earnest reflection. Casting now unsteady and then veiled glances at me, he sang the common jeremiade of forced

idleness and disease. In the lodge, he had spent his time and savings; his work having stopped, he was unable to pay dues, and thereupon he lost his claims to the "benefit" which was to help him through the hour of trial that privation had caused: *he cursed lodge-brothers' charity.*—The pastor came to pray with the family; the man confessed to be an atheist, and the horror-stricken divine fled from him as if he were a leper, saying "This is God's judgment." *The man cursed Christian charity.*—The German Society desired to know why the wife did not take in wash, why the oldest did not work. "The Chinees wash, and Charley has no clothes." "It's all your own fault," the agent said and left. *The sufferer cursed official charity.*—And, as if the glowing fuse, faintly burning, had reached the bomb, so the sick man jumped up, took his cane like a musket, made the motion of firing and burst forth: "But death will be the fate of the rich and divines! and when at last over the ruins of their world the red banner of the wretched and the poor shall wave, then all tears will be wiped away and justice will reign on earth without end!"

In an instant the man fell back to his simulated humble composure; and, as if the thought had struck him that he might lose my good-will and two dollars from the charity-fund, he begged my pardon, stating *that thoughts set him raving at times.*

I did not wonder at this outburst, since the Pope, in his late bull, had stated a similar thing about all thoughts that moved the world since Thomas Aquino, and therefore did not get excited, but spoke kindly to the man. It is not so difficult to tear away the veil of simulation and base sentiment in order to reach the human heart! There the pauper stood before me, leaning on his staff to support his trembling knees—all head and no body—supporting words and eyes with a wildly gesticulating hand; and so eloquently he unfolded his faith in a millenium to come, which was to be preceded by a day of awful judgment for the rich and their subservient tools—*our* science and the Church—who, since two thousand years, had misled that part of humanity which he represents. Supporting himself with the free hand on the edge of the table, he