

## CHAPTER 10

# The Era of Utopianism

The crisis of 1837 dealt trade unionism a devastating blow. Production almost came to a standstill, and thousands upon thousands of workers were thrown out of employment. As early as January, 1838, 50,000 persons were said to be unemployed in New York City alone, and an additional 200,000 were described as living "in utter and hopeless distress with no means of surviving the winter but those provided by charity."<sup>1</sup>

Everywhere the same story was told; workers were "dying of want" in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Lowell, Boston, and other commercial and industrial cities. Everywhere, too, a cry of despair arose from starving workers—a cry "not for the bread and fuel of charity, but for *work! work!*" Said a group of workingmen in New York: "We do not want alms. We are not beggars. We hate to sit here idle and useless; help us to get work. We want no other help."<sup>2</sup>

### DECLINE OF THE TRADE UNIONS

With one-third of the working class unemployed, and most of the others working only part-time, the trade unions of the 1830's found it impossible to keep their heads above water. One after the other, local societies, city trade unions, and the promising National Trades' Union passed out of existence, taking with them the first labor newspapers. The process of disintegration was hastened by the offensive of employers, who saw in the depression their chance to smash the militant labor organizations. One newspaper, the *New Yorker*, urged businessmen to "employ no men who do not forever abjure the unions." It said further, "The rules of the unions as to hours, pay, and everything else, ought to be thoroughly broken up."<sup>3</sup>

A few unions struggled magnificently to keep their organization alive. The Philadelphia Cordwainers announced in May, 1837, that depression

or no depression they intended at all hazards to maintain their wage scale. A month later, the New York printers issued an address to their fellow craftsmen, urging them to remain in the union and to combat any effort to lower their wages. Let the employers see, said the organized printers, "that the insignificant and paltry pittance which you now obtain for your support shall not be reduced at their pleasure—that for them to grow richer you will not consent to become poorer." The address concluded, "Without union nothing can be effected—with it everything. Come forward, then, you who are not members of the association; and join in putting a shoulder to the wheel. Support the association, and the association will support you." <sup>4</sup>

The employers' offensive continued; by 1839 wage cuts ranging from 30 per cent to 50 per cent had been forced on the workers. This does not mean that labor activity was entirely absent during the lean years after 1837, or that the working class had ceased all efforts to improve their social and economic conditions. Unemployment demonstrations, support of reading rooms and lecture rooms, rallies of workmen to demand shorter hours and equal rights before the law are proof that the labor movement was not dead. It had but changed its form.

Seeing their organizations smashed one by one, the workers were, as one contemporary graphically stated it, "ready to explode." <sup>5</sup> For years they had called on the government to curb the insane financial speculation, the blind and wasteful development of internal improvements, the fevered increase in the number of banks and the amount of banknote circulation which had now plunged the nation from prosperity to misery. And now that their fears had come true, the same groups who were responsible for this suffering told their workers to "go home and *plant corn*," "as if the labourer was responsible for the decrease in business, and his wife and children must be punished and starved so that the employer's account of profits and gain may foot up as they did when business was good." <sup>6</sup>

"How is it that a country as rich as ours is yet pinched for the common necessities of life?" asked a workingman. "A vigorous, healthy and intellectual population, yet bowed down with gloom and despair... with ruin and starvation before their eyes." <sup>7</sup>

## SPREAD OF MACHINERY

The concentration of industry during the panic of 1837, and the extensive use of machinery immediately after the crisis, threatened, as one worker put it, to "annihilate the last surviving hope of the honest mechanic." <sup>8</sup> Were not the factory owners saying publicly that they

regarded their workers as mere cogs and wheels? One mill owner remarked of his workers, "So long as they can do my work for what I choose to pay them I keep them, getting out of them all I can. What they do or how they are outside of my walls I don't know nor do I consider it my business to know. They must look out for themselves as I do for myself. When my machines get old and useless, I reject them and get new ones and these people are part of my machinery."<sup>9</sup>

"Part of my machinery"; these words sent a chill through thousands of skilled workers as they saw the machine threatening to extend itself into all parts of American production. The machine became an occult power. Said Thomas Devyr, a working class leader:

"Machinery has taken almost entire possession of the manufacture of cloth; it is making steady—we might say rapid—advance upon all branches of non manufacture; the newly invented machine saws, working in curves as well as straight lines, the planing and grooving machines, and the tenon and mortise machine, clearly admonish us that its empire is destined to extend itself over all our manufactures of wood; while some of our handicrafts are already extinct, there is not one of them, but has foretasted the overwhelming competition of this occult power."<sup>10</sup>

During the 'twenties and 'thirties, American labor leaders welcomed the introduction of machinery but insisted that it be used for the benefit of society and not for the profits of a few capitalists. As far back as 1829 Thomas Skidmore in his study, the *Right of Man to Property*, said:

"The steam engine is not injurious to the poor, when they can have the benefit of it; and this, on supposition, *always* being the case, instead of being looked upon, as a curse, [it] would be hailed as a blessing. If then, it is seen that the steam engine, for example, is likely to greatly impoverish or destroy the poor, what *have they to do but lay hold of it, and make it their own? Let them appropriate also, in the same way, the cotton factories, the iron foundries, the rolling mills, houses, churches, ships, goods, steam boats, fields of agriculture, . . . as is their right.*"<sup>11</sup>

John Commerford, a leading figure in the trade union and Loco-Foco movements, in an address at the second anniversary of the General Trades' Union of New York and vicinity in 1835, argued for the social control and operation of machinery for the benefit of all. The time would come, he predicted, when the power of capital over machinery would be ended, and the machine would work for and not against the laborer. "Machinery will not then be used, as it now is, for the benefit of the few, but for the mass. Governments will become the legitimate

guardians of its improvements, and they will be compelled to keep machinery in operation for the comfort and convenience of the people." <sup>12</sup>

As the factory system spread and the prospects of using machinery for the benefit of the mass faded, American workers became more and more alarmed at what they called "growing industrial feudalism." An address in behalf of the workingmen of Charlestown, Massachusetts, early in the 'forties read: "Brethren, put these things together, and tell us, if the natural tendency in this country is not to reduce us, and that at no distant day, to the miserable conditions of the laboring classes in the old world? We stand on the declivity; we have already begun to descend! What is to save us?" <sup>13</sup>

### CREDO OF THE UTOPIANS

There were some who said that the only solution lay in prayer and spiritual comfort; others insisted that if the workers would elevate themselves mentally they need have no fear of what the factory system would do to their body and spirit. There were a few who said that the suffering of the people came from the nature of capitalism; a few capitalists, they explained, had gained control of the means of production and used this control not for the welfare of the people, but for their own profits. Whenever these profits stopped, they shut down production, threw thousands out of work, spreading misery throughout the land.

The solution, according to this school of thought, lay in a new social order which would abolish all types of slavery and oppression by restoring to the people control over the productive forces. Only such a society could answer the question asked by the workingmen of Charlestown, for it would usher in an era of universal freedom, peace, and harmony in place of war, discord, and suffering. Finally, this new social order could be built overnight! The plan was already formulated; all that was necessary was that the rich and the powerful endorse the scheme and support it financially. All people could then join in and build the communal co-operative society. The people who held out these glowing visions were the Utopian Socialists, American disciples of two great European thinkers, Robert Owen and Charles Fourier.

Robert Owen was a Welsh factory owner who, early in his life, observed the ills of the new industrialism. Determined to do something to eradicate these evils, he established model textile mills at New Lanarck, Scotland. He paid comparatively good wages, shortened working hours, provided schools and nurseries for the children of his employees, replaced slums with decent housing, and even kept all workers on at full pay when his mills were forced to close during a cotton short-

age. During the 1820's Owen began to think in terms that went beyond the sentiments of model factory towns established by benevolent factory owners. What was needed, he said, was a new system of society in which the producers of commodities should own the means of production in common. He proposed the establishment of communities which would be operated by co-operative labor; and in which private property would be abolished as would all distinctions between capitalists and laborers and producers and consumers.<sup>14</sup>

Though none of the Owenite community experiments in England succeeded, Owen exerted a powerful influence on the English workingmen's movement; and the famous Rochdale consumer co-operatives, started by British weavers in 1844, were among the products of this influence. And as Engels says in his masterly study, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, almost every progressive activity in England during the nineteenth century bore the impress of Owen's work.

At the same time that Owen was evolving his plans for a new social order, Charles Fourier was engaged in a similar enterprise in France. Like Owen, Fourier believed that the organization of co-operative communities would eliminate the social evils of capitalism; but his communities, known as phalanxes, were to be joint-stock enterprises and unlike Owen's societies would not be based upon community ownership of property. The profits of the enterprise would be divided into three parts—four-twelfths to be paid as dividends on capital, three-twelfths to individuals of special talent, and five-twelfths to labor.

The basic difference between Owen and Fourier was that the former abolished individual property rights while the latter preserved them. Another major difference was that Owen believed that the industrial development could contribute to human progress if society were better organized, while Fourier regarded industrialism as a great evil and believed that the salvation of mankind lay in an "agrarian, handicraft economy."

In Owen's society, "Mechanism and science will be extensively introduced to execute all the work that is over-laborious, disagreeable, or in any other way injurious to human nature." Fourier, on the other hand, planned to have this work performed by members of the phalanx. By making these tasks honorable, they would become attractive.<sup>15</sup>

Despite these fundamental differences, Owen and Fourier had much in common. Both believed in a co-operative society which would remove ownership and control of the means of production from a handful of capitalists. Both believed that partial reforms were worthless and that it was necessary to "remodel the world entirely, and abolish all dissension and warfare." No friend of progress can help but admire the strivings

of these social reformers for a better society, yet their strivings were never thought out scientifically and were therefore doomed to failure.

Owen and Fourier relied upon the exploiters to end exploitation voluntarily. If only some generous and far-seeing king, prince, or capitalist would contribute part of his wealth to the cause, a small experimental community could be financed. In a year or two the mass of the people would see the contrast between life in a co-operative community and life in a capitalist community. Then the biggest problem would be how to manage the influx of thousands of people anxious to set up similar communities. Among these thousands would be the capitalists themselves, for they too would come to endorse the new society in order to escape the danger of revolution created by an aroused working class. Thus Robert Owen appealed to the capitalists in the United States to realize that the new co-operative communities presented their only avenue of escape from eventual destruction.

"These establishments," he wrote, "will enable the capitalists and men of extensive practical experience to solve without difficulty the Great Problem of the Age, that is, how to apply the enormous and ever-growing new scientific powers for producing wealth, beneficially for the entire population, instead of allowing them to continue, as heretofore, most injuriously to create enormous riches for the few and to impoverish the many, driving them toward a desperation that will ultimately, if not timely prevented by this measure, involve the over-wealthy in utter destruction."<sup>16</sup>

The following story told of Charles Fourier is illustrative of the naïveté of the Utopians: "Once he announced publicly that he would be at home at a certain hour to await any philanthropist who felt disposed to give him a million francs for the development of a colony based on Fourieristic principles. For twelve years thereafter he was at home every day, punctually at noon, awaiting the generous stranger, but alas, no millionaire appeared."<sup>17</sup>

For a time the Utopians gained numerous converts, many of whom were intellectuals who, sickened by the growing contrast between wealth and poverty, welcomed a program which by appealing to reason and good will would bring in an era of equality and happiness. They followed up their mistaken theory that a co-operative society could grow up within capitalist society by insisting that the working class should have no part in its own emancipation. Owen bluntly stated that he did not wish to "have the opinions of the ill-trained and uninformed on any of the measures intended for their relief and amelioration. No! On such subjects, until they shall be instructed in better habits, and made rationally intelligent, their advice can be of no value."<sup>18</sup>

## OWENISM

Early in 1825 Robert Owen came to America where in the new world of promise people were not controlled by the "dead hand of a feudal past." No venture for the transformation of society had ever before received such a wide and influential hearing in the United States. On two separate occasions, February 25 and March 7, 1825, he addressed the House of Representatives in the presence of James Monroe, the President of the United States, John Quincy Adams, the President-Elect, heads of departments, and members of both houses of Congress. Owen's frequent lectures to audiences ranging from New York to New Orleans were carefully reported in the American press, and models of his proposed community were printed and widely circulated in the newspapers.

The first Owenite community in America was established at New Harmony, Indiana, where Owen had purchased 30,000 acres from the Rappites, a religious sect that had founded a communal group on the Wabash, and had already cultivated the land and built houses, mills, factories. On April 27, 1825, Owen's "Kingdom Come-in-the-Wilderness" invited the "industrious and well-disposed" the world over to join the community. Close to a thousand persons from all parts of America flocked to New Harmony during the summer of 1825. Others arrived later, among them some of the great minds of the day: William Maclure, president of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences; Josiah Warren, economist, naturalist, and the inventor of a rotary press; Thomas Say, entomologist; Gerard Troost, internationally famous Dutch chemist and geologist; Robert Dale Owen and David Dale Owen, sons of Robert Owen.

The colony failed; lack of planning and the absence of clear and forceful leadership made for repeated quarrels and divisions which helped to wreck the community. After having spent more than \$200,000 on the purchase of the property and the debts of the community, Owen withdrew all financial support from it. The adventurers, speculators, and idlers who had attached themselves to the community left as soon as Owen announced that they would have to go to work. But many workers accepted Owen's offer of leasing farms and homes to them at very reasonable rates. As a co-operative community, however, it was finished.

Eighteen other Owenite communities were formed in New York, Ohio, and Indiana during 1826-1827. But they all met the fate of New Harmony. By 1828 Owenism as a movement had practically disappeared. In the 'forties it revived somewhat. Owen returned to America in 1845 and issued a call for a "World Convention" to be held in New York City "for the commencement, in the New World, of a new social order for the benefit of all, upon the principles upon which the American

government was based by its far-seeing founders.”<sup>19</sup> The convention met for eight days, but its resolutions remained only on paper. Once again, Owen had been unsuccessful.

## FOURIERISM

Owen's plans attracted considerable discussion in America, and many of his followers carried forth his ideals years after the model communities had failed. It was Owen who prepared the way for Fourier's popularity. Fourier himself never came to the United States, nor did he live to see the brief period during which his ideas swept the country. He died in Paris on October 10, 1837, three years before Albert Brisbane, his great American disciple, had published the first of several books and many articles in which he introduced Fourier's philosophy to Americans.

Albert Brisbane, father of Arthur Brisbane, Hearst's famous mouth-piece, was the only son of a well-to-do landowner. During a visit to France, Brisbane came upon Fourier's writings. He returned to America in 1834 to devote himself to furthering the cause of the French Utopian. His first book, the *Social Destiny of Man, or Association and Reorganization of Industry*, was published in 1840. Half of the volume was devoted to Fourier's writings, and the rest contained the author's commentaries and illustrations showing how the system could be adapted to American conditions.

The most influential convert to Fourierism in America was Horace Greeley, the distinguished liberal journalist.\* Greeley had been a working printer and had participated in the workingmen's movement in New York City. The suffering during the crisis of 1837 and the increased introduction of machinery during the 'forties convinced him that the vaunted advantages enjoyed by the American workers over their European brothers did not really exist.

\* There are two opinions of Horace Greeley among present-day historians. One school regards him as a sincere radical reformer who "was to the social revolution of the 'forties what Thomas Jefferson was to the political revolution of 1800." (See John R. Commons, "Horace Greeley and the Working Class Origins of the Republican Party," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. XXIV, pp. 468-88.) Others grant that Greeley was sincere but point out that he championed those programs that diverted the attention of the working class from the basic struggles to improve their immediate conditions, opposed strikes and was lukewarm to trade unionism. (See Norman J. Ware, *The Industrial Worker, 1840-1860*, pp. 21-22, 167, and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson*, New York, 1945, pp. 294-96, 364, 367.) There is much to be said for the latter viewpoint, but it overlooks the fact that the *New York Tribune* did open its columns (at times for a price) to issues of great significance to labor, did report events in the labor movement much more sympathetically than most newspapers of the period and did give support (frequently in a vacillating manner) to many campaigns waged by the labor movement.



“To talk of Freedom of Labor...when the fact is that a man who has a family to support and a house hired for the year is told, ‘If you will work thirteen hours per day, or as many as we think fit, you can stay, if not, you can have your working papers, and well you know that no one else hereabout will hire you’—is it not the most egregious flummery?”<sup>20</sup>

Greeley thought that the factory system should be “counteracted by some radical change in our social economy.”<sup>21</sup> One day on a trip to Boston he read Brisbane’s book on Fourierism; he returned to New York City an enthusiastic believer in industrial association, as it was called. When he founded the *New York Tribune* Greeley opened the columns of his newspaper to Brisbane. On March 1, 1842, the paper carried the following headline, “Association or Principles of a True Organization of Society.” Then followed the first of many articles which appeared regularly in the columns of the *Tribune* until September 9, 1843. Later the movement established its own newspapers—the *New York Phalanx*, the *Harbinger*, the *Social Reformer*, etc.—but these little magazines with their limited circulations could not be as influential as Brisbane’s columns in the widely read *Tribune*. Brisbane analyzed the evils of contemporary society and showed how Fourierism remedied each evil. The following is a typical excerpt:

A general view of the contrasts between the present false Social Order and Association, that one is Hell and the other Heaven upon Earth.

*Result of our Present Societies*

1. Waste
2. Indigence
3. Fraud
4. Oppression
5. War
6. Disease uselessly and artificially produced
7. Predominance of all prejudices; and obstacles offered to improvements

*Results of Association*

1. Vast economies
2. General Riches
3. Practical truth
4. Real Liberty
5. Constant Peace
6. Preventive System of medicine
7. Progress in all branches and opening offered to improvements

To end this hell and to bring in this heaven all that was needed was to find enough capital to buy 6,000 acres of land; the property would be held in the form of a joint stock association each member of which was to be both partner and stockholder; each worker in the co-operative would receive the necessities of life at cost and receive high wages as well as dividends on the stock. Peace and happiness! Just one Association

would be a model for others; it would soon convince all the people in America that the new society was superior to the old, just as it had taken the single steamboat of Robert Fulton to convince the world that it was superior to any ship in creation." <sup>22</sup>

Even more attractive to workingmen was a pamphlet distributed by the Rochester Fourier Society in December, 1843, entitled *Labor's Wrongs and Labor's Remedy*. The pamphlet vigorously attacked the status of the working class in capitalist society. "What are the working classes of every nation considered by the non-producers, the idlers," it declared, "but beasts of burden; without heart and without souls whose doom it is to labour and to die?" What was the cause of labor's poverty and suffering, it asked? "Your labor has too many idlers to support," it answered, "who think it dishonorable to work."\* The solution was obvious; workers should become members of a Fourierist phalanx where almost immediately they would receive for their labor "at least one-fourth more than in the best circumstances labour receives at the present time." <sup>23</sup>

These appeals must have been alluring to mechanics who, frightened by the sudden appearance of the factory system, were casting about for some means of returning to the good old days of Jeffersonian democracy, which, in retrospect, seemed days of security and independence. For a time, quite a few of these workers believed that they had found the avenue of escape in the association movement, just as the middle-class social reformers of the day thought that the same movement was the answer to their prayer for a principle by which the forces making for class divisions might be arrested or counterbalanced, and by which the proletarian misery and revolutions in Europe could be kept away from America.

So easy did the road to utopia appear that Fourierism soon numbered its adherents in America in thousands. After a tour of New York State early in 1843, Albert Brisbane reported jubilantly to the *Tribune*: "In all the principal towns and many of the smaller ones the people are taking up the subject with the greatest enthusiasm and energy—forming societies for the dissemination of the doctrines and organizing small associations." <sup>24</sup>

During the next ten years, more than forty Fourierist communities were established in localities as widely separated as Illinois and Massachusetts. They attracted individuals from all classes in society and

\* In advancing this concept, the pamphlet deviated from Fourier and Brisbane, neither of whom considered fraud or the unequal distribution of wealth as the cause of labor's misery. It was the discordant organization of the social system that caused poverty, they argued, not the greed of the capitalists.

especially gained many recruits from the working classes. Shoemakers, bootmakers, tailors, carpenters, joiners, cabinet-makers, painters, carpet-weavers, blacksmiths, iron molders, machinists, masons, laborers, teamsters, watchmakers, and clerks were among the different categories of workingmen listed as members of various phalanxes in America.<sup>25</sup>

The first phalanx founded in the United States was Sylvania, established in Western Pennsylvania in 1843 by a group of mechanics who had formerly lived and worked in Albany and New York City. On January 17, 1843, the *Tribune* announced: "The Sylvania Association is undertaken by intelligent and energetic working-men, who, despairing of obtaining the aid of men who have capital, have determined upon building up an Association by their own labor."

The capital for Sylvania came from the workingmen themselves and from a few friends who became stockholders by subscribing to not less than one share at twenty-five dollars. Throughout its brief existence, the colony was faced with the difficulty of obtaining capital. "It asks of the opulent and the generous," the executives of the association appealed publicly, "subscriptions to its stocks in order that its lands might be promptly cleared and improved, and its buildings erected."<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, the opulent were not generous, and the generous were not opulent.

There were other difficulties too. The workers had had no previous training as farmers, and the work was exceedingly difficult. The climate was severe; the buildings were barely more than shanties, and the life in the wilderness of Western Pennsylvania was anything but comfortable. Several branches of industry, including shoemaking, were established, but difficulties in obtaining markets prevented their growth. On August 10, 1844, Brisbane announced the failure of the colony:

"We are requested to state that the Sylvania Association, having become satisfied of its inability to contend successfully against an ungrateful soil and an ungenial climate, which unfortunately characterize the domain on which it settled, has determined on a dissolution."<sup>27</sup>

Most American phalanxes, like Sylvania, failed within a few years after they were founded. The North American Phalanx, on which Fourierism practically staked its all in this country, remained in existence for thirteen years, and Brook Farm in Massachusetts lasted six years.\*

\* Although it did not begin as a Fourieristic community, Brook Farm was the most famous of all the phalanxes founded in America. Associated with it, directly or indirectly, were the intellectual giants of the day: William E. Channing, George Ripley, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, Nathaniel Hawthorne, John Greenleaf Whittier, Margaret Fuller, and Elizabeth P. Peabody, to mention but a few.

The great majority, however, went under before their first year was over.

The reasons for the failure can be swiftly recounted. In some communities, bitter conflicts over such issues as observance of the Sabbath and the character of the educational program hastened the decline. In others, frequent complaints that the stockholders received a greater reward and had a more important voice in managing affairs than working members speeded up the process of disintegration. Several phalanxes, moreover, found it impossible to continue and do business because of the inability to secure a firm legal title by means of an act of incorporation. But in almost all cases, the chief difficulty arose from the failure to secure sufficient capital. Some capitalists joined the Fourierist movement and even loaned land to a phalanx. But frequently this gesture was simply a shrewd device to get their property improved by the community, for when the phalanx failed, they received arable land in place of wilderness.<sup>28</sup> Most capitalists, however, ignored the appeals of the Utopians, who urged them to support a movement which would eliminate struggles of "class against class, or labor against capital."

Writing to a friend from Brook Farm, Nathaniel Hawthorne, the novelist, predicted that the venture would not succeed. "I form my judgment," he added, "not from anything that has passed within the precincts of Brook Farm but from external circumstances—from the impracticability that adequate funds will be raised or that any feasible plan can be suggested for proceeding without a considerable capital."<sup>29</sup> In 1845, George Ripley, one of the founders, wrote to Brisbane, urging him to help raise \$15,000 for Brook Farm. Brisbane's reply revealed the bankruptcy of his principle that support for the association would come from wealthy capitalists. "You want capital," he wrote, "and immediately for Brook Farm. Now it seems to me as a problem as perplexing to get \$15,000 for B[rook] F[arm] as it does to raise \$100,000. Where can it be had?"<sup>30</sup>

## PRODUCERS' CO-OPERATIVES

The failure of the phalanxes did not signify the end of the influence of utopian socialism in America. It did, however, convince many workmen that it was "impossible to introduce any system of complete co-operation at once."<sup>31</sup> But these workers still believed that a new organization of production and distribution was absolutely essential if labor was to maintain and improve its living standards. The result was a significant trend during the 'forties and 'fifties toward producers' and consumers' co-operatives.

Producers' co-operatives, it will be recalled, had been started in several cities during the 1830's. In 1836, in Philadelphia alone, factories and

stores had been opened by cabinet-makers, cordwainers, and hand loom weavers. Other trades were about to follow suit when the panic of 1837 wiped out all of these early efforts.

In the 'forties, the producers' co-operative movement revived and attracted considerable attention. Much of this, of course, was due to the influence of Fourierism in working class circles. But to a considerable extent, it was also the result of the stimulus supplied by the French Revolution of 1848. During this revolution, Louis Blanc's remedies for the evils of capitalist society excited a great deal of attention among the working class of Paris. Blanc proposed that the state should set up social workshops and factories which would then become independent bodies competing against private capitalism. Like Owen and Fourier, Blanc was confident that the result of this competition would be the gradual elimination of capitalist production and the establishment of a new social order.\*

Yielding to the demand of an aroused working class, the Provisional Government of France set up a few "national workshops" but confined their functions to the building of roads and digging of ditches. Workmen in America, however, did not stop to examine the makeshift character of these so-called workshops or pay too much attention to the fact that Blanc himself had denied that the enterprises were based upon his principles. They were interested only in the fact that their brothers in France were making great efforts to change the existing system. Labor papers like the *Voice of Industry*, published in Lowell, Massachusetts, devoted a great deal of space to the course of the workshops set up in France, and called upon American workers to emulate their working class brothers across the ocean. All in all, the advocates of producers' and consumers' co-operatives were greatly spurred by the activities of the French Socialists.<sup>32</sup>

The first important producers' co-operative in America, however, antedated the French Revolution of 1848 by several months. It began in the winter of 1847-48, during a strike of iron molders near Cincinnati. To support themselves during the strike, twenty of these molders established a co-operative stove and hollow foundry. Their total investment was \$2,100, but they obtained enough credit from two wealthy philanthropists to continue their venture even after the strike was lost, and secured a

\* According to Blanc, the workmen's associations would be collectively owned, the compensation for labor would be based on the amount of time devoted to work and the exchange of goods would be facilitated by the use of paper money representing accumulated labor. The government through its "minister of progress" would finance the early associations and later would supervise the functioning of the entire system. In the transition stage the government would nationalize the railroads, mines, the Bank of France and the storage and marketing facilities of wholesale and retail trade.

charter of incorporation from the State of Ohio under the title of "Journeyman Molders' Union Foundry." Early in 1850, the venture was still going strong. The capital had increased to \$7,792 and 47 workers were employed at the union scale of wages. By this time, a store had been established in Cincinnati for the sale of stoves and castings produced at the co-operative foundry. Horace Greeley, who visited the foundry in 1850, described it as "the most commodious on the river." An enthusiastic champion of co-operation as a solution for the problems of the working class, Greeley informed labor of the virtues of the union foundry:

"While other molders have had to work 'off and on,' according to the state of the trade, no member of the Journeyman's Union has stood idle for a day for want of work since the foundry was first started." <sup>33</sup>

However, shortly after Greeley's visit, the co-operative failed, for it was impossible to compete successfully with private enterprises which possessed much more capital and were ready to sell below cost to force the workingmen's venture out of business. But the initial success of the Cincinnati foundry and the news of the workshops established in France stimulated other workingmen to organize similar ventures. When the Boston journeymen tailors failed to win a strike to secure the acceptance of their price scale in the summer of 1849, they, too, decided to set up a co-operative shop. Several mass meetings were held in Boston to raise funds to launch the enterprise and about \$500 was collected. Late in September, 1849, the Boston Tailors' Associative Union began to engage in production. This contagion spread to a group of striking printers in Boston who set up a co-operative printing shop called the "Boston Printers' Protective Union." In addition to commercial printing, the association published the *Protective Union*, a weekly paper which urged workingmen to abandon the use of strikes to improve their conditions and to concentrate upon the organization of co-operative shops. These enterprises, the workingmen were assured, would make them "their own masters and not only put the tools into the hands of the workers but ensure them the enjoyment of the full product of their industry instead of diverting the larger part into the pocket of the employer." <sup>34</sup>

To workingmen who were seeking an escape from a rising industrial system and who were trying desperately to preserve their rapidly disappearing status as skilled and independent craftsmen, such appeals hit home. The spring of 1850 saw the establishment of a host of producers' co-operatives all over the country. In Pittsburgh, an iron foundry, two or three glassworks, and a silver-platers' shop were set up. Wheeling, Virginia, boasted a co-operative foundry with a capital of \$25,000 and a nail-cutters' association. Co-operative stores of seamstresses were estab-

lished in Boston, Philadelphia, Providence, and other cities. In New York, the coopers, hat finishers, shade painters, German cabinet-makers, and tailors organized co-operative shops, and it was even reported that the dry goods clerks were making plans to "form a joint stock store for the purpose of freeing themselves from the control of any individual employer." When the tailors established their co-operative clothing store, a mass meeting of New York trade unionists was held to bestow the blessings of the city's entire working class upon the venture. The meeting unanimously resolved to advance "the principle of co-operation as one of the chief means whereby the masses may redeem themselves from a state of degradation." <sup>35</sup>

Invariably, these producers' co-operatives met the same fate as the phalanxes, but their existence is a striking illustration of the influence of the Utopians as well as of the determination of American workers to maintain their independent status in the face of major economic changes.

## CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVES

The consumer co-operative movement sought to eliminate the profits of the middleman and thereby to reduce the cost of living to workers and farmers. From 1839 to 1843, several "Farmers and Mechanics Stores" were set up in Vermont and New Hampshire by joint stock associations organized by farmers and mechanics. A member of one such store in New Hampshire described the venture as "a scheme by which the Farmer and Mechanic may exchange the products of their labor without: 1st, the risk of unjust price, 2nd, of extortion and imposition." <sup>36</sup>

It was not, however, until 1845 that the consumer co-operative movement really got under way. On October 6, 1845, a group of Boston mechanics set up the first Working Men's Protective Union. This association, soon to become the model for hundreds of similar organizations, had as its main purpose the purchase, at reduced prices, of necessities for its members. It also included mutual benefit features such as provisions for sickness and old-age insurance. For the payment of an initiation fee of \$3 and a small monthly assessment, a member of the Protective Union could purchase groceries, fuel, and other goods at the association store. The prices charged at the store, it was estimated, would save him \$66.66 a year or in ten years, with interest, \$879.62. In addition, a member would receive \$3 a week when sick provided the condition was not due to "debauchery or licentiousness," and when he reached the age of 65 and had been on the roll for at least ten years, would receive a weekly pension of \$7.50.

The protective union movement was enthusiastically endorsed by work-

ing men who lived constantly on the edge of poverty and insecurity. By December, 1847, forty divisions had been set up with a membership of over 3,000, most of them located in eastern Massachusetts. During 1850 alone, the New England Protective Union chartered 101 new divisions and enrolled 5,564 new members. Throughout the decade and a half, from 1845 to 1860, over 800 protective unions were organized in the United States and Canada. The majority were set up in the New England states and New York, but some even appeared in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois.<sup>37</sup>

The spread of the protective union movement was the result of a well organized campaign conducted by labor papers and traveling lecturers. The *Voice of Industry* ran a series of weekly educational articles on the subject of "Protective Unions," and played a big part in the spread of the movement. John Orvis, one of the lecturers sent out by the Boston Working Men's Protective Union, traveled throughout New England and western New York explaining the principles of the movement to audiences composed of workers and farmers. Moreover, even Brisbane and his disciples took to the lecture platform to urge workingmen to join a protective union and set up co-operative stores. The leaders of the Association movement viewed protective unionism as "an entering wedge for Fourierism," and were convinced that through their experience with consumer co-operatives, workers would see the need for a complete reorganization of society.

To a certain extent this feeling was justified. Although the leaders of the protective union movement mainly emphasized the money-saving features of the scheme, they rarely left it at that. They were careful to indicate that the ultimate objective of the movement was a completely reorganized society. Nor were they hesitant in revealing how this new society would come into being. It would start with the combining of stores so that instead of sixty grocery stores in a city there would be about six protective union stores. The elimination of middlemen and the reduction of lighting, heat, and transportation costs would reduce the price of commodities for workers just as the presence of so many empty stores which could be converted into dwellings would reduce their rent. In like manner, factories and transportation facilities would be taken over by the protective unions and combined. The middlemen, traders, and employers would be eliminated and forced to join the ranks of the laboring classes.

Yet even this was only the beginning. As protective unions spread throughout the country, the new society would gradually take form. Divisions in Lowell and Lynn would specialize in manufacturing cloth and boots and shoes; those in the West would raise flour; Vermont would produce butter and cheese; and the South would grow cotton,



rice, and sugar. Each division would exchange goods which would be carried from one section to another on protective union ships and railroads. The capitalist wage system would soon be but a sad memory and no real problem would exist for workingmen and women.

It is doubtful, however, whether this dream was shared by the rank and file of the protective union movement. The *Voice of Industry* admitted that many who joined the movement "know but little about it further than there is a saving of dollars and cents." Again, a committee of the New England Protective Union appealed to all members to think beyond the immediate function of the movement:

"Brothers, shall we content ourselves with the miserable idea of merely saving a few dollars, and say we have found enough? Future generations, aye, the uprising generation is looking to us for nobler deeds.... We must proceed from combined shops to combined houses, to joint ownership in God's earth, the foundation that our edifice must stand upon."<sup>38</sup>

In the end, the protective union movement was no more successful than were the phalanxes or the producers' co-operatives. By 1855, its influence had waned and, though the panic of 1857 gave it a temporary lift, the movement was a thing of the past when the Civil War started.

The reasons for this rapid decline are not difficult to discover. Merchants lowered prices to undersell the protective union stores and sold their goods on longer credit terms than ever before. The protective unions never had enough capital to engage in price wars with private businessmen or to sell on a credit basis. And very few workers had sufficient means to pay cash. Conflict within the movement over control and resentment at the abandonment of the sick benefit fund contributed to the difficulties. Finally, at the very time that businessmen were denouncing the protective union movement as "socialism" and calling its adherents enemies of private property, the social reformers were criticizing it for not going far enough. The Associationists soon lost all hope of converting the members of the protective unions to socialism. Thus Brisbane said in disgust in 1851: "Do they care about Socialism? No, they don't, but they found out that they get their goods at twenty per cent less than they used to at the grocer's and they care about that."<sup>39</sup>

## LAND REFORM

About the same time that Robert Owen and Albert Brisbane were appealing to American workingmen in behalf of their reform programs, another group known as Agrarians or National Reformers were eliciting strong support from the working class. The land reform movement was led by English-born George Henry Evans, formerly the editor of the

*Working Man's Advocate* and *The Man*, and a leader of the workingmen's movement during the Jacksonian era. In 1836, Evans, forced by poor health to abandon his activity as a labor journalist and to sever his connections with the labor movement, had retired to a farm in upstate New York to recuperate. In the early 'forties he returned to activity to lead the crusade for free public land. His interest in agrarian reform had been evident during the 'thirties, but not until 1841 did he present a specific plan for land reform. Evans advanced the thesis that land monopoly was the "king monopoly, the cause of the greatest evils," and that the only way to solve the problems facing American workers was to restore their rights to ownership of the land. "If a man has a right on the earth, he has a right to land enough to raise a habitation. If he has a *right to live*, he has a right to land enough to till for his subsistence." <sup>40</sup>

Control of large tracts of land by a few individuals, Evans believed, placed the landless workers completely at the mercy of the employers. "The poor," he argued, "must *work* or *starve* in the manufactories as in England, unless they can cultivate the land." In America, the debasement of the working class, which had already taken place in Europe, could still be prevented if a law were passed granting every citizen his rightful heritage—a portion of the public lands. Enough workers, Evans contended, "would avail themselves of such a law to prevent such a surplus of work in the factories as would place the whole body (as now) at the mercy of the factory owners."

Not only would land reform free workers from dependence on capital, but as workers moved west to establish their homes on the public land, the employers would be forced to advance the wages of those who still remained in the East and landlords would be compelled to reduce their rents. Labor scarcity alone, Evans contended, would bring about better conditions for the workers in the factories and shops. Hence, through this program, "those who remain, as well as those who emigrate, will have the opportunity of realizing a comfortable living." <sup>41</sup>

But land reform would also "undo the work of the Industrial Revolution," and restore economic independence to workers who were being crushed by technological improvements. The triumph of machine labor and ultimate prostration of human labor could not be averted under existing conditions. It was useless to fight it; one had to "escape from an evil which it is impossible to avert." In Europe, there was little hope of getting the laboring population out of the difficulties and distress caused by the Industrial Revolution, for there, every parcel of land, "God's inheritance to man," was fenced in and appropriated by the aristocracy. Hence, the European working class had no other alternative, as long as it remained in the Old World, "except to sell the labor of their bodies for whatever price it will bring, live upon that pittance as long as it

will sustain them alive, and when it fails sink into their last earthly refuge—the grave.”

In America, however, the land and its resources belonged to the people or were held by the government in trust for them. Let the workers, then, redeem their right, go to the land in the West and live in Rural Republican Townships created out of the public domain. There, any landless man would have the right to settle on a quarter section farm or village lot—he could have no more than that, and his farm or lot was to be inalienable—and everyone coming of age was to have the same right. Here in the Rural Republican Townships, the mechanic would be a farmer-artisan, working part of the time on the land and part of the time making commodities with his own tools. The shoemaker artisan-farmer would exchange the shoes he made with his tools for a suit of clothing fashioned by the tailor artisan-farmer. They could also sell their products directly to local traders in the village square.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, according to the land reformers, the time would soon come—once the public land was made available to all—when the industrial cities would fall to pieces. All the inhabitants would leave for the happy life in the townships, leaving behind nothing but “warehouses, shipyards, and foundries to accommodate international commerce at the great sea and the river ports of the earth.” Gone would be the old social order in which workers labored in poverty and misery at soulless machines. In its place would be a new society of prosperity, peace, dignity, and security.

Evans went so far as to provide a specific timetable, indicating the exact course that the peaceful revolution would pursue, once the free land program was enacted. The imaginary schedule appeared in Evans' paper, *Young America*, on February 8, 1851, and predicted that if Congress passed a land reform law in 1851, the following events would soon occur:

“1855—General prosperity such as was never known before civilization. Free trade is established. . . . Emigration is all the rage in Europe. British Statesmen become alarmed and concede ‘The Charter.’ . . .

“1860—Labor for wages now being voluntary is about the same price as it was in Oregon and California in 1850, ranging from three to eight dollars a day. Rents in the cities now are merely nominal. . . .

“1870—No man or woman in the United States begs ‘leave to toil.’ . . .

“1880—Free Soil Republics are now springing up all over South America and Europe. . . .

“1890—Almost every family in the Union is now in possession of a Home, and there is no want of employment. . . . Machinery now works for the laborers not against them. . . .

“1900—The United States is now a Nation of Freeholders. The doctrine

of the Declaration of 1776 is fully recognized and practiced.... Men wonder why their fathers tolerated Land Monopoly...and debating whether the Millennium has arrived."

"And all this," concluded Evans, "can be obtained by a simple *vote*, if the workingmen throughout the country will unite."<sup>43</sup>

Evans' program, it is obvious, contained aspects of Utopianism. But land reform, unlike the program of the Associationists, was an integral part of the labor movement, even if the workers did not fully accept Evans' theory that it would solve all of their problems.

In several other respects the land reformers differed from the utopians. For one thing, they did not appeal to the capitalists for support, nor even include them in their plans; in fact, they boasted that they did not enroll in their ranks "a single man of wealth."<sup>44</sup> For another, they differed with the Fourierites over the issue of political action. Brisbane and his leading disciples were unalterably opposed to political and administrative reforms, regarding them as useless and a waste of time and energy. Evans disagreed, for his experience in the early workingmen's parties had convinced him that political action by labor was of great value and could accomplish miracles. He made political action the cornerstone of his entire program. To render the public lands available to all citizens, a Congressional law would have to be passed. This could only be accomplished by mass pressure and political action. To bring his program to the people Evans formed the National Reform Association, called public meetings, organized ladies' auxiliaries, and distributed throwaways and memorials. In addition, he revived the *Working Man's Advocate*, which was changed later to *Young America*,\* and he also utilized the columns of Greeley's *Tribune* to urge the workers to organize politically for land reform. Working closely with him were men who had had years of experience in the labor movement—Seth Luther, John Ferral, John Commerford, and others.<sup>45</sup>

In 1845, the walls of New York were plastered with circulars bearing the title, "Vote Yourself a Farm." Thousands of copies of this handbill were distributed throughout the country by Evans and his followers. It asked:

"Are you tired of slavery, of drudging for others—of poverty and its attendant miseries? Then, Vote Yourself a Farm."<sup>46</sup>

\* Evans adopted this title from the movement in the Old World known as Young Europe, and said that it meant "the great army of progress." (See *Young America*, March 25, April 15, 1845; also Saul F. Riepma, *Young America: A Study in American Nationalism before the Civil War*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Western Reserve University, 1940. For an interesting account of the activities of the National Reformers in the anti-rent movements of up-state farmers in New York, see Henry Christman, *Tin Horns & Calico*, New York, 1945, pp. 71-2, 121-23, 219, 233.)

The response to this appeal startled conservatives. Workingmen throughout the North and West and even in a few areas of the South joined the National Reform Association, organized ward clubs, and signed a pledge to vote for no man for any legislative office who would not agree in writing "to use all the influence of his station, if elected, to prevent all further traffic in the Public Lands of the States of the United States, and to cause them to be laid out in farms and lots for the full and exclusive use of actual settlers." Some communities even witnessed the launching of independent workingmen's tickets to advance the principles of land reform along with other progressive reforms such as full right of suffrage, election of all officers by the people, direct taxation of property, and reform of the legal system. In Pittsburgh, where John Ferral was championing the cause of land reform, the movement held the balance of power for a time.<sup>47</sup> All in all, it seemed as if the millennium sought by the National Reformers was close at hand. As one of Evans' disciples put it:

*See the Agrarian Ball a rolling,  
Hark, the Knell of Avarice tolling,  
Roll the ball to every station,  
In our own great Yankee nation,  
Push along and keep it moving,  
The People's cause is still improving.*<sup>48</sup>

It is doubtful, however, whether any considerable number of workingmen regarded land reform as the program which would elevate the working class. Very few workers could move to the West even if they wanted to. The costs of migrating and of outfitting a farm were far greater than the average worker could afford, even if he possessed knowledge of farming methods and was willing to leave familiar surroundings in eastern cities. To most urban factory workers, farm life on the frontier was both unfamiliar and unattractive. When asked by an English traveler in 1843 why they submitted to exploitation at the hands of capitalists and why they did not "leave . . . and go to the land," a group of factory workers replied:

"We could not travel to the West without money, and we cannot save money; it is as much as we can do to provide our families with necessaries. We should want money to travel, then money would be wanted to buy the land, to buy agricultural implements, to buy seed, and then we should want more to support us till we could dispose of part of our crops, and then we have no money at all. But, suppose we had all these means, we know nothing about the cultivation of land—we have all our lives worked in a factory, and know no other employment, and how is it likely that we should succeed? Besides which, we have always been used to live in

a town, where we can get what little things we want if we have money, and it is only those who have lived in the wilderness, who know what the horrors of a wilderness-life are.”<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, the fact that few laborers actually did leave the industrial and commercial centers of the East and turn westward did not completely stifle the influence of the land reform movement in working class circles. The speeches of labor leaders and editorials in the labor press continually emphasized the fact that the struggle for free land was necessary, even if no workers went west, for the very presence of free land and the existence of the possibility of moving westward would stay the hands of capitalist oppressors in the East.<sup>50</sup>

Another belief widely held by workingmen was that free land would prevent the piling up of great numbers of immigrants in the industrial cities, thereby preventing the decline in wages which inevitably follows such a concentration of workers. In addition, during periods of depression, the presence of free land would drain off unemployed workers from the “overcrowded cities to the Great West.” Labor scarcity would give those workers who remained “a better chance” to obtain employment, and would soon result in higher wages and shorter hours. Not all workingmen agreed on this point. During a mass meeting of unemployed workers in 1857, workingmen hissed the proposal that they should concentrate upon moving to the West. “One man has told us to go West,” said a worker. “Why if we should, our places would have been filled with other laborers from abroad!”<sup>51</sup>

While the evidence offered by recent researchers into the question indicates that there were few movements of workingmen to the West, it does not in any sense negate the fact that the existence of the frontier exercised a real and important influence on the development of the labor movement, and influenced to a marked degree the conditions and the ideology of the working class. Furthermore, the struggle against land speculators and slaveowners for free land attracted the support of many workingmen who correctly regarded it as one of the most important aspects of the movement for greater democracy in America.

## UTOPIAN REFORMERS AND TRADE UNIONISM

If Owenites, Associationists, and Land Reformers differed in many ways, they did agree on one point: Unless their specific program was adopted, the workers could not really solve their problems. The Owenites and Associationists even publicly condemned the efforts of workers to secure shorter hours, arguing that “a mere shortening of hours of labor” would only convert them “from twelve and fourteen to ten hour

slaves.”<sup>52</sup> Nor for that matter would increased wages help the working class. An Associationist told a convention of New England workingmen in 1847: “No. None of these expedients will avail you. The whole system of labor for wages is wrong, an accursed system. The blackness of death is in its train. It has no sympathy with light. It is not laden and productive of life. Like the poisonous fire-lamp, it destroys all that comes within its fatal embrace. As the fearful maelstrom swallows up whatever ill-fated object comes within its reach, so are you under the present system absorbed by the unsatiated maw of capital.”<sup>53</sup>

The language is striking, but its aim was to convince workingmen that anything short of the abolition of capitalism was useless. Evans shared this view—in a somewhat different form. He supported the ten-hour movement and the demands for higher wages and even called upon New England workingmen to agitate for a shorter working day. At the same time he tried to convince the workers that such agitation for shorter hours and higher wages was bound to fail unless land reform was first achieved. “This,” he declared, “is the first measure to be accomplished, and it is as idle to attempt any great reform without that as it is to go to work without tools.” The struggle for immediate demands was useless, since it could not “elevate them to the true dignity of independence.”<sup>54</sup>

Evans and the Associationists, in various degrees, shared the same outlook on trade unionism. To the Associationists, trade unions were bad not only because they concerned themselves primarily with the immediate demands of the workers, but because they conducted strikes which stirred class antagonisms at a time when it was necessary for all classes to unite in building a new social order. Evans, although never a class harmonizer, believed during the land reform period of his life that trade unions were of little value to landless workers. “Not only do I think that trade associations are not the *only* remedy for the oppressions of the working men,” he wrote in the *Working Man's Advocate*, “but I doubt whether they would be a remedy at all. They have been tried repeatedly and almost universally failed,\* except when they have degenerated into mere partnership. And why? Simply because *associations* of landless men can no more keep up the price of their labor than can individuals.” Nor could strikes accomplish anything for labor since they could not get at “the root of the evil”—surplus labor—which “frequently compels the employer to reduce wages.”<sup>55</sup>

The utopian reformers not only pronounced these views. They entered labor organizations and attended working class meetings for

\* This attitude was not confined to Evans. At a meeting of reformers in 1847, several people “spoke of the inutility of the Trades’ Unions that had existed in the United States.” (See *Proceedings of the Industrial Congress of 1847*, Lowell, June 18, 1847.)

the sole purpose of convincing the working class that they were wasting their time and energy fighting for better conditions within their present society. If they would but devote themselves to co-operatives or to voting themselves farms, all their grievances would be remedied. Being persuasive speakers and excellent parliamentarians, the social reformers were often able to convince workers' organizations to abandon trade union struggles for immediate demands and to convert their movement into a co-operative or a land reform institution. In fact even when workers were indifferent or hostile, the utopians were able to capture the loosely organized working class meetings and to push through resolutions endorsing Associations or land reform as "the only means by which the industrious millions can be rendered permanently prosperous." As a result a movement initiated by workmen to secure shorter hours and higher wages would often be transformed into one which devoted itself to the establishment of a phalanx in a wilderness in Pennsylvania, Indiana, or Illinois, or a Rural Republican Township in the West.

The era of utopianism did not end the evils of capitalism in America any more than it did in the European countries, but it did call attention to the need to remedy a situation in which millions starved in the midst of plenty, and hundreds lived in luxury on the wealth produced by tens of thousands of workers. For every one that benefited by technological advancements, why did tens of thousands have to be destroyed? "Must labor," the Utopians asked, "the creator of wealth, lose from age to age, and from century to century, one portion after another of its just and fitting reward?"<sup>56</sup>

The utopians found no remedy for the ills of industrial society. Their philosophy could not discover the relation between the immediate needs and the ultimate emancipation of the working class. By ignoring political action they took from the worker his key to freedom. By ignoring the immediate needs of the working class, the utopians weakened the trade union and political movements of the working class—the only movements which educate and train the workers for the socialist transformation of society. Finally, they did not understand that the development of capitalism was a precondition for socialism. As Karl Marx said in criticizing the land reform movement, the "capitalist evil" they were vainly trying to avert was "historically good, for it will frightfully accelerate social development and bring ever so much nearer new and higher forms of the communist movement."<sup>57</sup> And as Joseph Weydemeyer, an early American Marxist, emphasized in the New York *Turn-Zeitung* of August 1, 1852: "The accumulation of capital is not harmful to society; the harm lies rather in the fact that capital serves the interests of a few. If the bourgeoisie has fulfilled the first task, it is the task of the proletariat to put an end to this state of affairs which has ended in chaos."