Until 1916, though much had been written about Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy ¹, nothing was known of the life of its author John Francis Bray, except that he was a journeyman printer in Leeds. In December of that year John Edwards published in the Socialist Review the results of research that he had made into Bray's career based on letters discovered in Leeds which had been written to Bray by his brothers. With these, he described Bray's life up to 1850 and discoveries of other letters by Alfred Mattison of Leeds brought the story up to 1854 which is the last date mentioned by Max Beer in his article on Bray in the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences.

A short time ago Miss Agnes Inglis of Michigan announced that she had tracked Bray's last home in Pontiac, Michigan, and there had found in an attic an old trunk which contained Bray's own copy of Labour's Wrongs, manuscripts of unpublished works by Bray, works published by Bray in the United States, log-books written by Bray off and on from his arrival in America to the year before his death, clippings of articles and letters which Bray contributed to newspapers and various works by authors in whom Bray was interested.

With these it is now possible to describe Bray's life more completely.

The father of John F. Bray was a comedian and singer of Leeds. In 1805 he went to the United States and in 1808 married Sarah Hunt in Washington. John Francis Bray was born in 1809 and had three brothers Charles, Edwin

¹) See for example H. S. Foxwell's Introduction to A. Menger, The Right to the whole production of labour (1899); K. Marx, Misère de la Philosophie (1847); E. Lowenthal, The Ricardian Socialists (1911); H. P. G. Quack, De Socialisten: Personen en Stelsels, (1899—1901); J. F. Bray (1903). Note also F. J. C. Hearnshaw, Survey of Socialism, (1928), in which the author, despite the article in the Socialist Review, declares that nothing is known of Bray's career except that he was a compositor at Leeds.
and Edgar and two sisters, Emma and Francis. The family lived for some years in Boston where the father and mother were acting at the Federal theatre. In 1822 the father fell ill and left for England to seek medical advice, taking his eldest son John with him. He died two days after arriving in Leeds and his sister took charge of John. In July 1822 he was entered at the Leeds Grammar School and later he was apprenticed to a printer in Pontefract. He served part of his apprenticeship at Selby and in 1830 he went back to Leeds. Here he was unable to find work and therefore went on tramp. Years later, Bray wrote his autobiography and described the hard times he experienced as an itinerant printer; elsewhere he stated that these were enough "to set any man to thinking about the causes of these miseries". In 1832 he returned to Leeds and in 1833 he was employed on an unstamped periodical in Huddersfield. The following year found him at York and here he began in earnest to study social problems.

From December 1835 to February 1836 Bray wrote five Letters for the People which were published in the Leeds Times 1) and signed U. S. These letters have been identified from similar passages in Labour's Wrongs and appear to be the first draft of the book.

In 1837 Bray went back to Leeds and was soon taking an active part in politics. The Leeds Times in August of that year announced that two deputies from the London Working Men's Association—John Cleave and Henry Vincent—had arrived in the town for the purpose of forming a similar association. The next issue 2) of the paper reported a meeting which had been held and stated that it had been resolved to form a Working Men's Association for Leeds. Bray took a prominent part in the meeting and was appointed a member of the committee which was to draw up rules for the Association. Later we learn that he was its treasurer. He was also one of its important propagandists. The same issue of the Leeds Times carried an appeal by Bray to the working men of Yorkshire asking them to form associations. In September, November and December 1837 the Leeds Times gave reports of lectures delivered by Bray to the Leeds Working Men's Association and an examination of these reports reveals much of the material of Labour's Wrongs 3).

Late in 1838 Bray commenced the publication of Labour's Wrongs in weekly numbers and early in 1839 the whole was published in one volume.

In this work on which hitherto his reputation has depended, Bray argues

1) See Leeds Times of December 19th, 1835, January 9th, 23rd, 30th and February 13th, 1836. These letters were traced by Mr. Mattison. 2) See Leeds Times, September 2nd, 1837. 3) See Leeds Times, September 23rd, November 11th, 18th, 25th and December 2nd, 1837.
that men cannot obtain the means to live except by labour. All men are equal, he declared, and all men ought to labour. He condemns private property in land and capital and quotes statistical data to show the extent to which under the existing system the labourer is robbed of the fruits of his labour. He concludes that more than a change of government is necessary since it appears that the labourer is robbed in this way even in a republican society. By community of property only will equal rights and equal duties be assured for all but since such a transformation cannot be immediately achieved, Bray outlines a system of co-operative joint-stock companies. All the adult producers of the country are to be associated in these and each company is to represent a single trade. The companies are to be supplied with bank-notes with which they are to hire or purchase the means of production. The producers are to be paid uniform weekly wages and arrangements are to be made for the support of women and children and of the aged. Governmental expenses are to be provided for by means of direct taxes. The new society is to be established peacefully—“reason and not force, conviction and not compulsion, purchase and not plunder are the proper instruments to be employed” 1).

It is of interest to note what authors influenced Bray in the writing of the work which Karl Marx described as a remarkable book 2). Bray quoted from the works of Colquhoun, Charles Knight, Volney, Adam Smith and Harriet Martineau. He quotes also from Ricardo as follows:

“Capital is that part of the wealth of the country which is employed in production; and consists of food, clothing, tools, raw material, machinery etc. necessary to give effect to labour.” (Page 197) 3).

“With a population pressing against the means of subsistence, the only remedies are, either a reduction of people, or a more rapid accumulation of capital.” (Page 197) 4).

“There is no amount of capital which may not be employed in a country, because demand is only limited by production.”) (Page 197) 5).

“The wealth of a country may be increased in two ways: it may be increased by employing a greater portion of revenue in the maintenance of productive labour; or it may be increased, without employing any addi-

tional quantity of labour, by making the same quantity more productive.” (Page 197) 1).

“...To secure the public against any other variations in the value of the currency than those to which the standard itself is subject, and at the same time, to carry on the circulation with a medium the least expensive, is to attain the most perfect state to which a currency can be brought.” (Page 198) 2).

“That commodity is alone invariable which at all times requires the same sacrifice of toil and of labour to procure it.” (Page 189) 3).

It is probable too that Bray was influenced by Hodgskin and it is obvious that he owes much to Robert Owen 4) and his supporters for his ideas on currency and for his conviction that a complete social and political change was necessary. Years later Bray expressed his admiration of Owen. Writing in an American Labour paper, The Word, in September 1873 he declared that Oastler and Cobbet had superficial ideas of reform and that all the reformers of that time “except Owen found a mere working class oppressed and impoverished and never went down to the causes which generated this class”.

From the time of his arrival in England in 1822 John F. Bray corresponded with his family in America and to some extent it is possible to follow his intellectual development from letters written by Charles 5), Edwin and Edgar which still exist. Perhaps Bray got some of his ideas about the United States from his brothers’ American life and certainly he wrote of his views to his brothers.

In a letter of 1834 Charles wrote as follows: — “I will now tell you what I can of the country at large; things...... have been in very unsettled state for the last six months. Business of all kinds has been very dull and money very scarce in consequence of the President’s withdrawing the States’ money from the Branch bank, which has caused a great deal of distress in consequence of withdrawing several million from the currency. In Boston alone the amount withdrawn was upwards of two million. Money had been let on the best security for 24 per cent and could not always be got at that rate...... They did not remain very long at that low state but have been

growing better within two or three months and are now quite recovering. At one time there were strong indications of a civil war but it fortunately did not quite ripen into rebellion. Some of our richest merchants have failed that were worth double what they failed for in merchandise but could not get the money for them and all confidence seemed to be shaken, but things now begin to brighten up and business is reviving. I note the remarks in John’s letter about the state of the country 1) but I hope it is not now in such a state, although it must be far from being settled, and it must be a poor place for a ‘Republican’ spirit to flourish.”

Some time later John invited Charles to share his growing interest in politics. Charles in 1835 wrote: — “You think one of the most important things for me to study is politics. I cannot agree with you in that respect as they do not interest me and I have no talents that way...... it requires something more than the common order to rise to distinction by them and a long time must be spent in getting to the foot of the ladder...... We have some great politicians here but the most of them have had an education fitting them for it as well as a full pocket to help them along and besides all this there are too many for the good of the country. Party spirit rages very high here and Whig and Tory are at swords point almost, but I hope they will not see the times that have been witnessed on the other side.”

In the same letter Charles went on to advise John: — “I do not exactly comprehend your meaning with regard to events that are to transpire in England which you say you must take a part in. I am afraid you trouble yourself too much about politics.—you also say you have principles to act by which may bring you into misfortune but not into disgrace. I do not think much can be done to ameliorate the condition of the people in that country and should not think it advisable for you to trouble yourself about it as you will not be able to do anything for them and will bring yourself into trouble to no purpose. I would now ask you a little about your opinions, which I am informed are atheistical. This I am very unhappy to hear. There are some of that class here...... they are not thought anything of here and are pointed to as outcasts...... I hope the next time we hear from you, you will have alter’d your views and I shall then be easy.”

The following year Charles wrote in answer to John: — “Your remarks are right in a measure of the Americans being a money-making people. They are so but not so much as to prevent them paying attention to pursuits of a higher order.” He also commented: — “You mention that you have heard that there are many drunkards in America. This I am happy to say is not

1) i.e. England.
the case, the age of intemperance is fast disappearing. Temperance Societies are all the go here and a person who visits a bar room is not thought worthy of notice. In fact any person who deals in spirits is not thought respectable.” He also replied in this letter to a question about Robert Owen. He said: — “Your ask me if the co-operative system of Mr. Owen is much thought of. I never heard of a system of that name. They have what is called the Trades Union—it may be what you have reference to—that is, the workmen of different crafts club together and get a stated price for work and agree not to work for a less price. This has spread to nearly all classes of mechanics but they do not as yet seem to meet with the success they anticipated from the number of Foreigners who daily arrive and will work at any price.

In the same letter, after commenting on the high price of money in Boston—“there is a scarcity of money at present, even ½ % per week has been charged”—Charles reverted to his concern about John’s atheistical outlook: — „you mention that your state of mind is such, as not to permit your being easy in any society. I am sorry that you let so much needless care prey upon you. I cannot conceive as you say what motives actuate you...... If you still hold to the views you expressed in a former letter, I think it must be that as you may be assured that you never can be happy while you entertain them as only true happiness is to be found in the consolations of ‘Religion’.”

By this time John was evidently contemplating a return to the United States for Charles added a postscript to this letter:—“I yesterday enquired, according to your request, the price gained by Printers and found that a smart journeyman could earn 15 dollars per week.”

In a letter of 1838, after stating that he would continue to send newspapers, Charles said: — “I presume you are as deeply engaged as ever in your plans for benefiting Society...... In your letter you predict a great change in England in the course of a few years. I think it will undoubtedly be the case but nothing like the extent you anticipate. My opinion is that all classes of Society can never be bro’t on a level but there must always be rich and poor—they will become more equalized than they are at present and it will not be in the power of the Aristocracy to oppress as they have done. I must differ from you in the opinion that there is no more liberty among the people of America than there is in England. There is more equality of right here, and much as the rich may desire to rule they have not the power—and I think they never will. The recent acts that you refer to in Philadelphia, etc. can hardly be considered as an expression of public opinion—for all the acts of violence in this country have been committed by the lawless and dissolute and that class is to be found in all large bodies
of people throughout the world...... This year I had the privilege of voting—as all Citizens have the right of suffrage at the age of 21."

In the same year, brother Edwin also sent a letter from Boston to John in which he said that he sometimes felt "a desire to see all the great things in England, although the pomp of aristocracy" was "rather at variance" with his "republican extractions." He would, however, have liked to see the coronation and "the glittering crown" placed on the Queen's head and "the gay apparel of the guests". He also remarked that he had heard that the Queen was waiting for a husband and added: — "Don't you tell her that I am not engaged for I have no idea of entering into matrimony at this time."

Curiously enough, the next letter from Charles commented: — "The British Government appears to be very lavish in the expenditure to support Royalty and I should judge the taxes would be enormous." He went on to say: — "You give a bad account of the condition of the people in England and I think it must be worse now then ever as I observe by the papers that there is great distress among the operatives in consequence of the low state of trade, and I think it wonderful that they can live at all with the very low wages they receive for their work." He pointed out, however, that conditions in the United States were not very good. "There will be very few orders for goods sent from this country to England this season, as business in general has been very dull, and the stocks of foreign goods in the market is quite large. Large quantities of cloth have been smuggled into this country for two or three years past, from Yorkshire, by means of bribery at the Customs House. This has been followed up with considerable system by the agents employed here by foreign manufacturers and they made a great deal of money by the business, as the regular importers could not compete with them in prices." On account of poor economic conditions, Charles said that "the people are looking forward to a change in the Administration for better times. The party now in power are very corrupt and many of the highest officers of the Government have proved defaulters and fled to Europe with great sums of the public money and are now living there in fine style."

A little later, however, Charles was more cheerful about the state of affairs in Boston. In a letter of 1840 he stated that "Boston is now fast rising in commercial importance and bids fair at some future time to cope with New York." He was optimistic because of the arrival of the first British steamer and he remarked that "the establishment of this line of Packets is looked upon as highly conductive to the interest of Boston as heretofore all the steamers have run to New York." The event evidently
caused much excitement. Charles wrote:—"The people here are all in a flurry for going to Europe and some are going that I am acquainted with, that did not think such of such a thing ten days since." Edwin also wrote to John and gave an account of the coming of the steamer. He said: — "On Sunday, thousands of citizens visited her...... she has been thronged with people ever since...... the Governor also visited her and was received with a grand salute...... on Tuesday the Merchants gave a grand dinner...... about 2,000 sat down to it...... there was an illumination in the evening."

In the same year, John was also in touch with his brother Edgar, who described the city of Boston. He wrote of it as "quite a place as there are 4 railroads, 2 canals, 2 ferry ways and sundry steamers; there are 66 churches, 65 public houses, 32 banks, 28 insurance offices, 16 public schools, 40 newspapers, daily and weekly. There are two theatres, but they are closed part of the season, as they find it a looseing (losing) business as a great many public lectures are held which take away many from the theatre."

In 1841 we learn from the letters that John took a sea voyage to London for his health, and possibly paraphrasing what he had said in a letter, Charles replied: — "I should judge that the two extremes of immense wealth and abject poverty which the traveller meets with in passing through the streets of London must strike him very forcibly"—a favourite comment on the part of observers of the city in the middle of the nineteenth century. Charles concluded that "if a portion of the immense sums annually spent by the British government for the support of 'Royal Splendor' was expended for the benefit of the people, how much more good it would accomplish."

To show the democratic nature of America, in the following year Charles wrote to John: — "English lords and noblemen have been quite plenty here but as a general rule, they attract but little notice. C. Dickens (or Boz) is here and is much talk'd of, while the name of the Earl of Musgrave who came at the same time is not heard."

When Labour's Wrongs was published, John sent Charles a copy and some of the reviews and Charles wrote that the book bore evidence of considerable research and that he agreed with many of its opinions and remedies. We learn from Charles' next letter that John lost money by the venture and Charles advised him not to publish another as money was too hard earned to spend on publishing a book which brought little monetary return.

John had, however begun writing a new work. Some reviews of Labour's Wrongs had been highly favourable, but the Leeds Times had spoken of it as "visionary" and "impracticable" and had asserted that Bray was too
critical of the existing social system 1). *A Voyage from Utopia to several unknown regions of the world* was Bray’s answer. In this work, Bray describes a journey made by an inhabitant of Utopia to some strange countries, Brydone, Franco and Amrico. Several chapters are devoted to a keenly satirical account of the curious and absurd institutions and practices of the people of Brydone. The Utopian comments adversely on marriage, tariffs, war-making, housing, clothing, the legal system and all through the work the unequal social system of the three countries is criticized while the different religious denominations are denounced as being merely a means whereby the priests can also share in the spoils of the capitalistic system.

In 1841 John had again asked his brother for details of wages and cost of living expenses, and in May 1842 he left England for America after a short visit to Paris 2). Charles had asked him to let him see his new production before publication since the last book must have eaten up the earnings of many days and perhaps nights. Possibly Bray showed the work to his brother with whom he stayed when he arrived in Boston and if he did so, Charles would certainly have condemned it. At any rate *A Voyage from Utopia* was never published. Bray made a mistake in not publishing it before he left, as the vigorous descriptions would have appealed strongly to the working classes of Britain and made useful propaganda.

Bray went to Lapeer, Michigan, in September 1842, where he bought a farm. Soon he married and he paid off his debts on the farm by working as a printer in Detroit. In 1848 he moved to Pontiac where again he worked as a printer. He bought a farm outside Pontiac, but he could not stay on it as his family was ill. He returned to Pontiac and in 1853 went to Detroit as foreman of the *Detroit Enquirer*. With the exception of a short visit to Boston, here he stayed until 1856, working on the *Enquirer* and when it ceased publication, he worked as a journeyman.

From 1853 Bray had been investigating spiritualism and in 1855 began the publication of a series of pamphlets called *The Coming Age*, in which he argued that spiritual manifestations are due to natural causes not yet

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1) See *Leeds Times*, February 23rd, 1839. Reviews that were favourable include the *Sheffield Iris*, December 24th, 1839, the *Yorkshireman*, February 2nd, 1839, the *Chartist*, May 18th, 1839, the *New Moral World*, April 27th, 1839, the *Northern Star*, September 7th, 1839, *Cleave’s Gazette*, May 2nd, 1840, the *People’s Journal*, August, 1846 and even the *Spectator*, March 16th, 1839 paid tribute to it. 2) In 1841 Bray had evidently contemplated a visit to France because in a letter of that year, Charles replying to a letter sent by John in February, said that he too would like to visit France but considered it “a dangerous place for young people to reside in, from the low state of the morals of the people and the dissipation that attaches to the French capital in particular.”
properly examined. The prospectus of *The Coming Age* states that eight parts were to be published but the pamphlets were not popular and parts 1 and 2 only appeared and part 3 remained in proof. Bray himself was not much impressed with his work. *The Coming Age* pamphlets are of interest mainly because they reveal that Bray continued to hold agnostic views.

In 1856 Bray returned to Pontiac where he bought a daguerrotype gallery and earned a living by taking portraits.

Bray’s next publication was a short pamphlet *American Destiny*—what shall it be, Republican or Cossack, an argument addressed to the people of the late Union which he brought out in 1864, and in which he appeals for the right of the South to secede since that right is the corner stone of republicanism. He states the belief that the war should end, for nothing is gained by two white men killing each other for the sake of one black man, and argues that eventually the Southern and Northern States would re-unite since their interests are identical.

Bray’s studio was burnt down in 1865 and he went to live on a small farm near Pontiac with his wife and surviving son. Here he made a precarious livelihood producing fruit and corn for market and when his wife died, he and his son for a time had to tackle the housekeeping as well as look after the farm. In his autobiography Bray tells us how difficult it was to study and write in these conditions 1). Yet though he had little time or money, Bray went on writing. He contributed numerous letters to American Labour papers 2) and in some of these he wrote of his experiences in England as a member of a trade union, in others he outlined his plans for reform of American social conditions, in others he criticized existing labour organisations in the United States. He addressed himself not only to the industrial proletariat but also to the farmer who, he declared, suffered at the hands of the middleman, the banker and the money lender.

In 1879 Bray published *God and Man a Unity and all Mankind a Unity*—a basis for a new dispensation, social and religious. Bray tells us that this book was a continuation of the study he began in the 1830’s in England, but there is one essential difference for in *God and Man a Unity* Bray sets

1) Some of the manuscripts found in the trunk were written on farm order sheets.
2) Miss Inglis has traced Bray's letters in the following papers: *The Detroit Socialist, the Detroit Labor Review, Detroit Labor Leaf, (later Advance and Labor Leaf), the Word, the Working Man's advocate, John Swinton's Paper, The Weekly Worker, Paterson Labor Standard, Canadian Labor Reformer, National Labor Tribune, The Carpenter, The Trades, The Irish World, The Hartford Examiner*. For all extracts from American Labour papers which appear at the end of this article, I am indebted to her researches.
out to be a religious as well as a political and social reformer. The work is divided into four parts. Part I reviews "the present dispensation, its theological ideas and social practices" and here Bray describes the rottenness of prevailing society. In Part II he states his belief in the existence of God but declares that all theologies are to be condemned because they give a distorted view of the Almighty; he flays the Christian version in particular because, he says, it insists that only those who accept the Christian teaching can be saved. He goes on to declare that immortality is only to be obtained only on earth and therefore every man must strive to live nobly and get the utmost happiness before he dies. The new life necessary to happiness, says Bray in Part III, can only be achieved by partnership between capital and labour in which labour in addition to wages would get a share of profits. By these means, present ownership would not be disturbed but labour would have a proprietary interest in all future accumulations. In Part IV, Bray appeals to all classes to unite to bring the new dispensation into being and to replace the existing unequal system by a system of equity based on the recognition of the unity of God and man, and of man with man. 

*God and Man a Unity* does not compare very favourably with *Labour's Wrongs* and one feels that Bray wasted his energy in trying to tackle the theologians. His articles to the Labour press of this period are much more convincing. The book did not sell, partly because of its defects, partly because Bray published it anonymously and put a title to it which would not attract attention from radicals. Bray gave away many copies, sending them to addresses all over the United States and some to England. He was not displeased with his book, and in 1895 his log-book records that he was hoping to print another edition.

In the last years of his life Bray was still busy drawing up schemes for the reform of society. One such scheme written at the end of his log-book for 1894 (and never published) entitled "Steps to Reform" is of interest because it too stresses the need for partnership between capital and labour. It reads: —

"First, an active crusade of discussion and enlightenment, as to the justice of the servitude of labor and the monarchy of capital.

Second, a universal clamor among all farmers and wage-workers for the abolition of class control of labor and the general establishment of co-operative partnership between capital and labor in all productive and distributive business.

Third, control of the federal and state governments by majority vote on the sole issue of governmental reforms and changes, that will lead to vast economies, such as the abolition of federal and state senates, and diminution
of federal representatives to one or two from each state, and in like pro-
portion in the states.

All legislation to be reduced to mere proposals of laws by the federal and
state representatives or outsiders, presented to and discussed universally by
the people and accepted or rejected by them. This constitutes the necessary
self-government which we have never had, as we have copied the clumsy
and dilatory aristocratic forms of the upper class governments of Europe.

Great reductions in the federal army, and no more warships.

Reduction of the salaries of President and other high officials.

The attention of federal and state representatives, who must be business
men and not politicians, to the needs of the country as to general employ-
ment everywhere, through new productive enterprises adapted to the
resources of various localities.

These new enterprises to be started by the issue of one thousand millions
of green back dollars or more if necessary, by the federal government to
the states.

Establishment by the states of state federal banks with this currency
which is to be loaned to the new enterprises at cost of issue, the state to
have a lien on said enterprises to the amount borrowed.

Recall of all the present national currency, with its bonds, and the abolition
of all the present national banks, their place being supplied by the new
federal state banks.

Demonetization of gold and silver as currency, except silver for fractional
currency. Our system of trade with foreign countries to be governed by the
exchange of products for products, we so amplifying our productions as to
produce or manufacture something that every country and ourselves need;
thus escaping the disturbances that arise from the use of gold and silver.
Here we are to-day with hundreds of thousands of good men out of employ-
ment, side by side with starvation prices for wheat and other farmers’
products, and hundreds of producing establishments overloaded with goods,
which they cannot sell! Overgorged with wealth side by side with starving
multitudes!

Gradual payment of the nation’s debt in greenbacks, the same species
of money in which it was contracted, thereby putting a stop to the extortions
and gamblings of the “gold bags”. Greenbacks receivable for all products,
taxes, debts and dues.

How will you redeem the greenbacks, asks the gold bag. In labor, lands,
houses and every conceivable product that men and women require. The
plunder of labor of all its creations, by interest and profits, and one cunning
device after another, must be stopped. Frauds and plunder are rampant
among the ‘business classes’ everywhere. How many millionaires has labor created during the last fifty years? And what has it to show for its toils? Go around and into all our manufacturing and mercantile establishments and ask the wage drudges how much they have saved or are saving! Class divisions not only impoverish all peoples, but destroy all republican governments. It has been so from the beginning of civilisation, and the only remedy is to unite all in a common interest, through universal partnerships. We have partnerships in our families, in our churches, in our political parties, in business and innumerable other things; then why not one great national partnership in production and distribution?

Partnership consolidates and harmonises all interests and destroys all antagonisms. The gains of one will no longer be comprised of the losses of another.

Universal partnerships give a firm foundation for society to rest upon. They do away with strikes and antagonisms between classes that have opposing interests, as the worker and the master now have. They will put an end to trade competition and regulate wages on a basis satisfactory to all engaged. The wages of workers will still be unequal as they now are, for it cannot be expected that the man who has devoted years to self-improvement and enlargement of his capacities should be satisfied with the same payment as the dull clump whose thoughts have never been elevated above eating and drinking.

Society does not want, and will not have, any cut and dried social or industrial system. Robert Owen, a wholesouled and good man, whom I knew well and who spent years of time and large fortune in efforts to elevate humanity, erred in presenting plans outside of the common life of the people. And it was the same with Fourier. But partnership and the wages system, is only an extension of the present industrial system to higher grounds. It elevates labor from dependence and serfdom, and adds to its rewards, according to the expenditure of its energies. The “masters” as well as the “men”, are simply members of the firm with common rights and duties, with probably little more association than at present, but debarred by their position from injuring each other. And while wages to each are unequal, the profits must be shared equally. Whereas now, there is too much difference in the income of the “boss” and the hireling, the latter receiving only a small percentage of the profits for his labor.

Partnership removes innumerable causes for contentions, while affording a solid basis for social progress in all directions. The worker will have something worth living for. A brighter future is before him. The vast inequalities between capital and labor in the apportionment of the profits, will be totally
changed and the end of the millionaire will come through new industrial conditions founded on justice. Every millionaire and rich man is simply a social juggernaut, picking the bones of industrious men and women, and ruining the nation by his exactions. There is no longer an excuse for this financial existence.

Partnership enables society to move forward into higher conditions. There is no end to the reforms it will establish. The tenement house and the slums will soon give place to palaces in comparison. The millions now squandered by capital on its pleasures and fooleries will create a new world when brought into national use for the benefit of all.

Would you steal the wealth now held by the capitalist? Certainly not. But the abolition of that great curse upon labor everywhere, interest on money, simply keeps all this income in the hands of those who create it.

With the farmers and wage workers in possession of the federal and state governments it will not require from three to five hundred millions of dollars to carry on our federal government, even with the government of the states thrown in. We pay this enormous sum in high salaries to men who do but little useful work, and for a multitude of things that have no relation to the welfare or happiness of the people. All our governments are the masters instead of being the servants of the people. They are literally outside of the popular necessities, and have no power to furnish work, wages or homes. They are but so many juggernauts, to which the people must bow their heads and pay tribute. They were established at the beginning of our national life by copying the governments of Europe, and because the people had no higher conception of republican government. Our monstrous taxes and expenses are due to the upper classes, who have obtained control of all the governments through the gross darkness of the people. While our present governmental expenses are kept up, it is folly to expect retrenchment or economy from any political party with the existing machinery. It must be changed, economised and simplified from top to bottom.

Just look at so-called Christian Europe, with its vast armies and fleets, to destroy nations or plunder them! And these things are called for, not by the wage workers or farmers, but the “upper classes”! These governments are responsible for all the evils that afflict and impoverish their people, and the time for their destruction is not far off. If every one of them was swept out of existence along with their debts, what a happy world would arise from their ruins!

Bray’s last letter appeared in the *Paterson Labor Standard* in September 1896. He died in February 1897.

To the end of his days Bray was poor. He never made money by his
writings—indeed he lost it, for he had to finance his books himself. Yet he lived rich in the affection of his fellow men. His letters were much appreciated in Labour circles and it is clear that he had considerable influence. Frequently Labour papers praised him and often his words were quoted from one paper to another. When he spoke at Labour meetings he was greeted with enthusiasm and it is believed that he would have been nominated in 1880 for the Presidency on the Greenback Labor Party Ticket, had not the Socialist delegates walked out of the convention in Chicago. He was a vice-president of the American Labor Reform League and when he joined the Knights of Labor, their assembly in Pontiac was named after him.

To achieve so much against great odds was no mean feat, but it is one not unexpected of the author of the famous little book of 1839.

1) I hope to publish shortly a Collected Works Edition of John F. Bray which will include a biographical preface, A Voyage from Utopia, The Coming Age pamphlets, American Destiny, God and Man a Unity and Bray's autobiography.
My leisure moments through life have been devoted to an examination of social wrongs and the various remedies proposed. Many of these latter were good, but impractical. The masses were too undeveloped for some, and too poor for others. More than thirty-five years since, I adopted substantially the following platform, which seems broad enough for all reformers to stand upon:

1. Formation of a great political party, composed of the agricultural, mechanical, trading and laboring classes, who are robbed by the present social and governmental usages.

2. Control of the general and state governments by this organisation.

3. Gradual organisation of all forms of industry into co-operative associations, composed of present employers and employees.

4. These associations to be set to work through the aid of federal currency, lent to them without interest, and to be legal tender for everything. Such currency to be lent exclusively to these associations, and all other currency to be recalled.

5. These associations to buy, sell, manufacture and transport commodities, and to take the place of individuals.

6. Money wages to be paid as now, higher or lower according to value of services, but the lowest amount being amply sufficient for a comfortable subsistence.

7. What is called increase, or profit, now allowed to individuals, to be modified into a Percentage, added to the cost of all commodities; such percentage to be uniform in every association, and to constitute a general fund for payment of indebtedness, for fixed capital or estates purchased; for state and federal taxation; for improved dwellings and surroundings; and for educational and other purposes.

8. Abolition of all customs houses, and duties; all taxation, federal or state, to be applied and collected on real and personal estate. Judging from past failures you may doubt the possibility of forming such a party... etc.
Reprint of letter sent by John Francis Bray to the third Annual Convention of the American Labor Reform League held in New York May 4 and 5, 1873.

J. F. Bray, Pontiac, Mich., wrote: — I regret that I shall not be able to attend the Annual Convention of the American Labor Reform League, but I am with you heart and soul in the great work of social reform. I have been many years awaiting and expecting the rise of the tide which is now pouring not only over the United States, but Europe also. While our late war grew out of a protest against the slavery of the dark man to the light one, the present struggle is against the slavery of men and women of all colours to money. Incorporated money is to-day king, aristocrat and slave-driver, and no true republic can exist under any such conditions as now surround us. I go with you for the broadest freedom in everything, and for such social and governmental changes as will liberate all forms of labor from the nomination of all forms of capital. I see no hope for society except in a perfect union of labor with capital—not based on the existing conditions of master and man, but a union that is equitable and equalitarian so far as men are equal. The earnings and profits of toil must belong to toil. The present system of distribution is robbery. The poverty of the masses is a necessary concomitant of the wealth of the millionaire. The near future will tolerate neither millionaires nor poor men and women. The wrongs of labor flow from inequality of exchanges. Equal values must exchange for equal values, or there will always be rich men to oppress poor men, and constant but useless revolutions and wars to remedy the governmental defects which are inherent in the constitution or society.

I hope the Convention will aim high and strike hard, so as to awaken the laziest dreamer to the fact that a great social revolution is upon us—the culmination of the wrongs of unnumbered centuries. Surely it is high time for the formation of a new party, directed by new men and based on new political and social ideas. The corruption of state and federal legislatures is only a reflex of the dishonesty of monied rings and monopolies. There can be no political justice without social justice. The farmers of the west will soon join the workers of the east, in the coming struggle against the tyranny of money.
Workingman's Advocate, Chicago. 1877 May 5

To the Editor of the Workingman's Advocate,

Just as soon as the money power finds itself confronted by a determined opposition, and in danger of losing its power to plunder the community, it will set itself to overthrow the republic and destroy the popular liberties. It has long been covertly engaged in this work and has made many inroads upon the constitution. It is endeavouring to curtail the suffrage through an educational test, so that the masses that toil in mines and factories, and have no time to acquire education, shall be disfranchised. It is intended that votes shall be confined to the "respectable" classes—men who live on profit and interest, wrung from the labour of the wages serfs.

It is therefore no time for the wages class to wrangle about petty policies. The only policy should be to escape from class servitude as soon as possible. While we have yet political liberty we must use it to acquire industrial liberty, for an industrial republic is the grand ultimate to be attained.

Every co-operative association is a republic in miniature, based on an approximation to equal rights. Our stock companies are republics, so far as the shareholders are concerned. But there is nowhere a republic of labor. It is held in subjection everywhere by a monied aristocracy, which extends upwards from the one-horse employer to the millionaire railroad corporations.

Labor is in chains to-day, as it was in the ancient republics. Its toils secure it a bare sufficiency of food and clothing. Its surplus earnings are invariably transferred, without consent, to employing classes, and exhibited in brick factories, slave-pens and palatial residences. It is a social outlaw, kicked into the cold, to grovel in intemperance, to become emburted by its surroundings, and fill prisons and workhouses.

As all the evils endured by the working class flow directly from their servile and dependent position, their endeavours should be persistently directed towards industrial liberty, and the abolition of class divisions and class aristocracies. All that the wages slave can now obtain is a little more or less wages, and a better or worse master. There is no hope for labor under the mastership of hostile classes, because it is the aim of these classes to get as much labour for as little wages as possible.

Organisation of the working classes as trades unions, or unions of any kind, will give power to ultimately effect reforms or industrial revolutions. The structure of our government not only invites but compels political action as the remedy for all grievances; but no remedy can come through
the Republican or Democratic parties, for they have ceased to represent anything but greedy politicians and a hostile money power.

Labor must therefore organise, and, no matter, whether in trades, or other unions, steadily keep in view and work for its emancipation from class serfdom. For industrial independence from class mastership includes all other reforms, while minor reforms which do not aim at this are a waste of time and resources. A well-fed and satisfied serfdom is not worth struggling for. Wages slavery is of a piece with chattel slavery, and the first must be destroyed as well as the last.

J. F. Bray

_Detroit Socialist._ December 8 1877 Vol. I No. 9

The Issue Coming Upon Us

by J. F. Bray

One of your New York correspondents, in alluding to the cigar maker’s strike, says: — “The gulf between labor and capital is widening every day, and the work people are more embittered.” And yet, plain as this is to every observing mind, our “upper classes” are deaf and blind to the signs of the times. They do not seem to realise that there is any wrong or tyranny in the present relations of capital and labor. With them a capitalistic class is a necessity, for the purpose of employing labor; and a working class is a necessity for the purpose of being employed. This is their whole gospel. Demand and supply regulates wages, and the satisfied employer does not hold himself responsible for the poverty, low wages and disemployment of the operatives.

Neither can it be truly said that he is responsible, for employer and employed are alike mere bubbles on our boiling social cauldron. They jostle and collide because they occupy a false and antagonistic position. The gains of capital are the losses of labor. Every mill, factory, workshop and rail-road demonstrate this fact. For all these things being the joint products of labor and capital, they ought to belong to labor and capital, whereas they belong to capital exclusively, and represent what capital has been enabled to abstract from labour through a false and unjust industrial system.

This is the great wrong to be remedied, and it is the mission of the Workingman’s party to furnish a remedy, and that remedy consists in the self-employment of labor through governmental assistance, whereby work and wages shall be assured under all contingencies, and labor be no longer dependent on capital. The independence of labor from the control of capital is a necessity of modern civilisation.
What are Labor's Rights

Labor has never yet comprehended the whole of its rights, or demanded them. Finding itself in servitude to capital, compelled to work certain hours at so much per week, and to be employed, or disemployed, as might happen; it has tacitly accepted its hereditary servitude as a necessary condition of things and has done little more than to institute trade unions for the amelioration of its conditions of work, shorter hours of toil and wages. None of its efforts have struck at its servitude or had in view its independence and self-employment.

Is it right that labor should be in subordination to capital, or that it should be free?

Is it right that capital should dictate its hours and wages or that labor itself should control them?

Is it right that capital should appropriate the greater part of labor's earnings or that labor should enjoy them itself?

The time has come for the settlement of these issues in the broadest sense. It is not sufficient to contend for shorter hours and more pay. This does not cover half the ground. It does not touch the issue of the serfdom of labor to capital. It settles no abstract rights. It leaves labor in bondage. It guarantees neither work nor wages.

Is it not clear that a man has a right to live, and a right to labor for all that is necessary to sustain life? Is it not equally clear that a man has a right to the whole results of his labor? Our present industrial system, with its class divisions, destroys or curbs every natural right of labor and reduces it to hereditary serfdom.

Capital enthroned among its laws, police and prisons, will discuss nothing, and yield nothing. Its ultimatum is the unconditional submission of labor. Labor must therefore define its rights to their fullest extent, and compel capital to defend its aristocratic exclusiveness, its tyrannies and its legalised plunderings.

How shall this be done? Clearly through a rational movement of the whole wage class, with the farmers and others who bear the burdens of society. And this movement must act politically, with the object of obtaining possession of the Federal and state governments, thereby accomplishing legally all the changes and reforms that may be desired.

At the basis must lie a declaration of the independence of labor from the control of capital, with its right to self government and self employment.
The capitalist is thereby narrowed down to the natural wants of man, proclaimed at the Revolution. Capital will be compelled to defend its assumed rights, or admit the rights of labor, or make compromises. Things will be forced to an issue, and that issue will involve the independence of labor from the serfdom to capital, and its progress assured in wealth and refinement.

J. F. Bray, Pontiac, Mich.

The Irish World. June 10 1882.

A Rich Nation
Labor first creating capital and then paying interest on it

Editor, Irish World: — It seems a contradiction to say that the richer a nation is the poorer and more oppressed are its workers. But such is the case under existing conditions. It is so because what we term national wealth is simply class wealth, from which the bulk of the nation is outlawed. Notwithstanding all our labor-saving appliances, the wage workers toil harder than they did a century since, and have no better chances to save. Our vast machinery ought to have decreased our labor one-half, or doubled our receipts and means of enjoyment, but it has not done so because our industrial system takes everything from the wage-class and heaps it upon the capital-class, through rent, interest, and profits which are cunning inventions for the robbery of labor.

If a farmer were to raise twice as much produce as he could consume, and keep it, he could pass the next year without working. He could use his crops as he needed them, and at the end of the second year would be neither richer nor poorer, having used up his surplus wealth. But if he sell his produce for money, and put it out at interest at ten per cent, he finds himself at the year's end one-tenth richer without having produced anything.

Every man has a right to save, and ought to have a surplus to save. His savings rob no man. But when these savings are put out at interest, and a profit derived from them, somebody is robbed. As our rich men grow richer, and save more, it is clear that the more they save and put out at interest the harder must somebody work to pay this interest. A century since there was but little money at interest, while now a thousand million a year are paid in interest, every dollar of which must come from those who work.

Therefore every millionaire is a perpetual blood-sucker, drawing more and more from labor. If interest is low, he invests in real estate or manufactures, and the interest still comes in the shape of "dividends" rents or
proceeds. Labor not only has to pay interest, a profit that an employer may
live in plenty this year, but it has to pay perpetual interest on all his savings
for half a century. Everything is "invested". We may double or quadruple
our machinery and increase our productive faculties a thousandfold and it
will not materially help the wage-worker. It will only increase his burdens
paid in interest, rent and profits. To double our so-called national wealth is
only to double our tribute to non-laboring, unproductive dead-heads.

Now, unfortunate wage-worker, wearing out body and soul for family
and home, hoping year after year for "better times", cannot you see why
better times are impossible for you? You are working all the time for a "dead
horse" as well as a living one. The twenty thousand dollars the corporation
that employs you saved last year is "invested again" and you have to pay a
profit on that, and on all the savings and profits for years back! There
never was a more fool-like contrivance for the plunder of the men and
women that work than this interest on money. And its twin brother is rent
on land, whereby acre is added to acre, as dollar is to dollar through interest.
How long will the sufferings of the masses tolerate rent for land and interest
for money?

"No Rent" must be allied with "No Interest", and the two war-cries must
be heard throughout the world. The land millionaire and the money mil-
lionaire have plundered nations from time immemorial, and it is time for
the ancient frauds to disappear from the earth. They are curses alike to
old countries or new countries. The longer we retain them the greater will
be our annual toils and burdens.

Not only should land be national, being a gift to man by the Creator,
but productive appliances—machinery, railroads, etc.—should likewise be
national, being creations by the labor of the nation. Don't tell us what
capital has done and defend its right to usury, but let us look at what labor
has done. Capital has not a dollar, a machine, a factory, a home, a garment
even to cover itself, that labor did not create. Yes, this beggarly, despised,
plundered and oppressed labor has given it everything—given it blindly,
under false pretences, under fears of "eviction" from the land or the factory.
It has been the patient of the centuries, bearing the burdens of all govern-
ments, aristocrats and ruling classes. Is it not time it was allowed some rest
and food?

The very wages that capital doles out to labor come from labor itself.
And they are not given from any principle of sympathy or social justice,
but every dollar is regarded simply as the seed of another dollar, which
labor must cultivate with all its strength and water with its sweat and blood,
that the increase may go to capital. The wages that are paid to-day are
only the interest that capital deprived labour of yesterday. Whatever may be its excuses for its pinchings and tyrannies and abuses of labor, at bottom there lies the indisputable fact that labor has created all that capital is in possession of.

How did labor lose it? Through our class divisions and class dependence, which place one man at the mercy of another for work and bread. If the landlord had made the land, and capital toilsomely reared its factories, their titles would be valid. Let us have industrial justice, no matter where it leads.

J. F. Bray

The Examiner, Hartford, Connecticut, 1883 April 14

Friend Pyne 1),

Accept thanks for remittance sent for sale of "New dispensations". I fully appreciate your position. It is enough to make even a saint swear to see the apathy of the dronish and swinish multitudes, as somebody has called them. But they cannot help being what they are. Their surroundings of all kinds have been hostile to any progress. I have been striving to enlighten them for fifty years. Now, everywhere, I see the words, "labor reforms", and it gives me hopes. There was nothing of the kind when I began. Robert Owen was the only prominent reformer striving to benefit the people. Now we have reformers and organs everywhere, all battering with more or less effect at the bulwarks of capital and monopoly. And more will come up every day, so we must not despair, but comfort ourselves with the thought that reformers of other days suffered even worse than we do.

Fraternally,

J. F. B.

Detroit Labour Leaf. Vol. I No. 47. 1885 Sept. 30

What is in the Way?
Demand Partnership with Capital, and the Control of your own Destinies

To the Editor,

It ought to be clear to every wage-worker that something stands in the way of industrial reforms. We try humble appeals for more wages and

1) Pyne was editor of The Examiner.
fewer hours of work, but they are derided. Then we try strikes, which often fail from the competition of starving comrades. Then we try politics, and the politician and bummer come and promise and lie and deceive and divide us. What shall we do? There is an obstacle to success constantly confronting us. We weet with it everywhere. It paralyses all our attempts, and chains us to the Old while our salvation depends on coming into the New.

Class divisions into rich and poor, idlers and workers, authority and slaverstry, are older than history. No matter how they originated, they must be got rid of. The separation of capital and labor, with its resulting antagonism and destructive effects of labor, is The Thing to be changed. Capital has become a despot. Its power controls every railroad, mine, factory and industrial establishment. The whole press of the country chronicles its reductions of wages, its blacklisting, its hatred and contempt for labor under all circumstances. No government, no laws, no courts can help labor, because all are under the control of capital.

We have agitated for all sorts of things but the right one, and that is the abolition of class distinctions, and the partnership of capital and labor in all occupations requiring wage labor. It may be an unpalatable remedy for those at the top, but it is the only efficient remedy for those at the bottom. Let this idea permeate every labor and reform organisation, and draw all wage-workers together on this issue. Individualised capital is the obstacle. It is the monarch, the robber, and the executioner of labor. It is a hyena in its hunger for wealth, a tiger in its cruelties, and a fool in its management of industry. It wants a market for goods, and cuts off the ability of labor to buy, through its exactions. It tempts a gaunt and famished labor to sack its palaces and seize upon its productive agencies. It is crazy with pride at the nature of its possessions, and is stimulating a craziness in labor by the contemplation of its own wrongs and sufferings.

The times are crying "Halt" but capital hears it not. The jingle of its gold deafens it to outside noises. It is blind to the massing and organisation of labor. It is comforted with the thoughts that aimless mobs retreat before its armed thugs. That is it, "aimless mobs", without a fixed principle or guide to action. What can they do but retreat?

Labor reform does not require hostility to capital or individuals. The war is against the system that gives one class or individual power the welfare of other classes and individuals. Labor is reduced to utter helplessness by the existing industrial system, based on the separation of capital and labor. It must demand unity and possess power over its wages, hours of work, and its whole destiny. Compel capital to show its rights to universal empire over labor. Has it "divine rights", self-existent? or is it merely a bandit
collecting legal toll from all it meets? Who gave it authority over labor? Did labor ever delegate power to it to fix its wages and its hours of work?

Ah, dull labor! Let your empty pockets sharpen your wits. Think! Are your human or brute? Do you want constant work and high wages? Then demand partnership with capital, and the control of your own destinies. Let this be the ruling idea of labor under all contingencies.

J. F. Bray, Pontiac, Mich. Sept. 1885

The Revolution

Men desire no revolution, except as a means of getting rid of unbearable evils

To the Editor,

Yes, the revolution is coming, surely, and the first phase is here already—a revolution in the thoughts of the multitude, in all occupations. What will it accomplish? It will put an end to the industrial despotism of capital, by making labor the controller of its own destinies. It will insure short hours of labor, with abundant work and wages everywhere. It will shut up all the sluices that lead to deadheadism and millionaireism. It will lead to the progress and improvement of the race at large, by abolishing poverty and its disabilities. It will accomplish all the "dreamers" have longed for during all ages.

If it will not do this, and much more, what is the use of aiding it? Men desire no revolution except as a means of getting rid of unbearable evils. But are we prepared for it? Certainly not! The condition of labor thought is chaotic. It is yet unable to work out the problem of its own destiny. But there is a growing clamor for Revolution, as if this of itself would make us wise and abolish all our evils. Revolution simply tears down, and it is the people that must reconstruct. They are no more prepared for it than the French were, in any of their revolutions, hence all who have failed in liberating labor from the despotism and plunderings of capital. And this is the great wrong to be remedied.

The Revolution must come in the nature of things. Our work consists in being prepared for it. A howling mob, heads on pikes, the gallows and the guillotine reconstruct nothing. They give no work and no wages, guarantee no rights, provide no subsistence, establish no liberty. These good things come with reconstruction of the social and industrial fabric. This Revolution
must not fail as others have done, because they never liberated labor from the domination of capital. Class distinctions and class antagonisms must be abolished, and the only way is through the voluntary or enforced union and co-operation of labor and capital in all occupations requiring wage labour.

This is the rock on which social and industrial reconstruction must be built. No individual or class shall live in idleness on the plunder of another through rent, speculative profit or interest. Deadheadism must go, and earn its own living. The working world is smothered under the weight of its "upper" classes. The future shall demand that all shall work at some useful occupation, and be paid for what they do, in lieu of all profits and "dividends" now extorted from an impoverished labor through class divisions.

J. F. Bray, Pontiac, Mich.

The Knights of Labor

The Order growing too fast to be permanent — Mr. Bray criticises part of its platform.

To the Editor,

Looking at the past fate of unions of various kinds, does it not seem as if this order were growing too fast to be permanent? And, looking at its declaration of principles, and the means by which the necessary reform is to be effected, are they a remedy for the condition of the wage workers? Will not more be expected of the order than it can accomplish with its present declaration? If it is a deliverer, come to stay, will it not have to go beyond its present mark, for how can advanced reformers be satisfied with Art 22: "To persuade employers to arbitrate all differences which may arise between them and their employees, in order that the bonds of sympathy between them may be strengthened, and that strikes may be unnecessary"?

As an advanced reformer, familiar with the efforts and failures of labor unions of all kinds for the last fifty years, I must confess that I see no element of strength in the order unless it is compelled by its progressive element to go outside of and beyond its present demands. The declaration commences: "The alarming aggressiveness of great capitalists and corporations, unless checked, will inevitably lead to the pauperisation and hopeless degradation of the toiling masses". And yet its whole 22 articles neither touch nor destroy this great enemy of labor. Its ultimate is "sym-
pathy between employers and employees" whereas it ought to contemplate the end of these class divisions through some form of co-operative partnership between capital and labor that will create sympathy through unity. The feudal age of a common interest between the baron and his man-at-arms has gone by.

I am led to these reflections by the letter of a friend who has been active in forming unions, and was discharged by his employer, a member of the same union, for something he said or did. And three others were discharged in the same manner by other employing knights. If this is to be the case, then no employer should be admitted, for under their auspices there will be nothing but milk-and-water work.

But the order will assuredly be a benefit as an instructor in the work of organisation. Its thousands of members will never go back to their original thoughtless indifference to their fate. The man who has once looked up will always look up. He may grow despondent of success, but he has an ideal that he hopes for.

One thing is certain: All organisations must advance with the times, or reorganise. Our Democratic and Republican parties have lived longer than they ought to, if judged by usefulness. We need some giant organisation to stand in their place, and accomplish ends that the old parties were not fitted for. Let every Knight of Labor bend his energies to make the order worthy of a high destiny.


Coming to the Final Issue

To the Editor,

It is refreshing to look into a labor paper now-a-days and read of the strikes and conflicts taking place. It shows that that dull clod, labor, after a servile sleep for unnumbered centuries, is on the point of awakening,—just grunting and snorting, and stretching out its arms, to find out where-about it is.

And where is it? In a grand world, filled with the elements of happiness, not for a class, but for all. But, like a child, it suffers the politicians to tickle it with straws, and divert its attention from the great issue up for settlement. But it is all the time growing stronger in body and mind through its failures and disappointments.
And what is the great issue it is blindly struggling for? *Entire emancipation from slavery to capital.* It has not yet grasped this idea, but is feeding on the pap of ameliorations, which generally contain more wind and bellyache than sound nourishment. The small concessions of capital do not “touch the spot”. They help those in work but do nothing for those who are out. And the thing needed is, constant employment and liberal wages for all, under all conditions.

How shall this end be attained? Only through the reorganisation of our industrial system, on the basis of the right of labor to the use of all the productive agencies now monopolised by capital. It *must* come to this, either through some form of partnership between labor and capital, or through a great upheaval, and the confiscation of these productive agencies to the nation as a whole. Capital must contemplate future possibilities. The “dog” is showing his teeth.


*Detroit Labor Leaf.* Vol. II No. 32. 1886. June 16

Set it all Down

To the Editor,

Not a week passes without working-men being clubbed by police or shot by “citizen soldiery”. The clubbing and shooting thugs seem to enjoy it. Revolvers have given place to rifles. “Public opinion” is on the side of “law and order”. All this shows the folly of appealing to physical force by the workers. The “mob” have not mastered the labor problem, and if they had power to put down every city government, they have not the least idea of industrial reconstruction, and could take no advantage of victories.

Scores of unoffending and peacable citizens have been mained by police without justification. Put this down.

Numbers have been shot and wounded by “citizen soldiery” without provocation or authority. Put this down.

Every mine owner, corporation or private individual employing workers can turn them out of work at pleasure and subject them and their families to starvation, or unconditional submission. Put this down, and burn it into your very souls, for it shows how utterly helpless the workers are.

Set down every fact, outrage, tyranny, lock-out and empty cupboard to capital. They are agencies to keep you in subjection. What, then, can you do? Thoroughly permeate yourselves with the great fundamental truth that slavery is the lot of labor so long as labor and capital are reparated.
as distinct classes. There is no remedy but a co-operative partnership between capital and labor. Claim this before all else, and present the wrongs you have set down as arguments why industrial reorganisation should take place. You need ideas on this great issue of the elevation of labor into partnership with capital, and the changes that will flow from it. Rifles and bombs do not 'touch the spot', or give you control over work and wages.


Letter from J. F. Bray
Mr. Bray's Platform

To the Editor: —

The Socialists, Anarchists, Knights of Labor, Trades Unions and Greenbackers, all have their platforms, as well as the Democratic and Republican parties. How many of these express fully the thoughts or desires of the individuals connected with them? Is it clear that the wages class, as a body, do not know what they want, and are composed by these platforms, which are mostly expressions of policies and ignore vital principles. Let us, if possible, have a platform based on principles, that will endure for all time.

The value of the worker is not sufficiently estimated. Without the labor of somebody, we should starve. No labor, no life. It is labor that furnishes all the necessaries and luxuries of life, all the dwellings, factories, railroads, raw material and machinery used in production and distribution. The value of labor should be pushed to the front continually, to disabuse the popular mind of the fallacy that it is the wealthy class that are the cause of all prosperity.

From its importance, the social condition of labor should be one of abundance and happiness, whereas it is a chained and poverty-struck serf, rolling up wealth for others, and having nothing for itself. Why is it so? Simply from the division of society into capitalists or employers and wage-workers. The divisions, and the competition growing out of them, are the cause of all labor’s poverty, inordinate toil and suffering. Class distinctions are anti-Republican, and ultimately destroy every republic, for there can be no true republic where there are superior and inferior classes, either by birth or wealth.

Let me offer for consideration and discussion one solitary plank for a
platform. It was logically forced upon me fifty years since, as the foundation for all reforms:

1. Labor is a unity, and, therefore, the existing class distinctions into employers and wage workers, however useful in the past, create antagonism, tyranny and despotism; give one class absolute control over the employment, hours of labor and wages of the other; beget great inequalities in wealth and social position, through the facilities given the employing class to appropriate the whole national surplus of wealth. These class distinctions must therefore be abolished as the first step to all reforms and give place to the universal co-operation of labor and capital.

Here is a broad foundation for all reforms, as appropriate to a century hence as to-day. It establishes for all time the independence and self government of labor in all that concerns its welfare, establishes industrial equality, abolishes mastership, and prevents one class from gaining wealth at the expense of another.

A plank like this contains a broad issue between the "upper" and the "lower" classes—an issue that has been long needed to define the true position of individuals towards each other. The conditions of existence render labor of some kind perpetual. Who shall do the work, a special class or society at large? Who shall possess and enjoy the wealth created, society at large or a special class? Our whole industrial system must be reorganised on a basis of justice to all.

We may wriggle and fiddle for ever over reforms of special abuses that naturally grow out of our industrial system. Strike at the system and then you hit the great enemy. We want great vital principles enforced. Put the issue to every wage worker.—Will you control your own destinies and enjoy the wealth you create, or will you remain a quiescent, clubbed and imprisoned serf, breeding serfs for your "masters"?


Paterson New Jersey Labor Standard. 1892 December 31
A Platform for Farmers and Wage Workers

All our legislation is too costly. What with the enormous and useless expenditures of our governments, and the exactions of the profit and interest classes, the masses of the country are gradually sinking into pauperism. Reduction of tariff duties and other cheese-paring policies will amount to nothing. Here are some reforms for the people that our "upper class" parties and politicians will not look at, but they are coming in spite of all obstacles:
1. Reduction of the salary of the President to 12,000 dollars a year.
3. Reduction of the Federal House of Representatives to one from each
   State, and a similar reduction in all State Legislatures.
4. Reduction of the army to 5,000 men and officers.
5. No more three-million dollar iron-clads for aristocratic junketings.
6. A reform in army and navy reputations, such as will curb the despotism
   of the demi-gods at the top and give more liberty to the demi-dogs at
   the bottom.
7. Reorganisation and retrenchment in the pension list and greater
   security against frauds.
8. Demonetization of gold and silver currency, the abolition of private
   banks, and a return to Federal Greenbacks, issued by the Federal
   Government to the States at cost, and by the States to State bankers
   at the necessary localities; such currency to be a lien upon the respective
   states.
9. An income tax, on all incomes over 5,000 dollars a year.
   A vast reduction of governmental expenditures of all kinds, and the
   simplification of legislation.
11. The speedy abolition of interest on money and “investments”.
12. State assistance to new production enterprises. Work and wages must
   be assured to all, at all times. No more millionaires or paupers. Every
   hundred million of dollars spent on useless legislation is just so much
   stolen from the farmer and wage worker. No wonder that the pistol
   bandits on the railroads copy the example of the law making banditti
   in Congress.

   As little money as possible spent on governments, and more devoted to
   fit the people for actual self government.

   These reforms are political, and may come through constitutional changes.
   There are others still more important, that must come in time through the
   necessities of the people, and the natural equities of social and industrial
   life.

   With few exceptions, all classes seem blind to the necessity for great
   reforms, and wallow along in the antiquated ruts of their forefathers. We
   need a free national organ, devoted solely to the discussion of reforms, and
   the growth of political and social enlightenment, that we may get rid of
   our class fetters.

   While we are celebrating the discovery by Columbus of a new world,
   let us leave to our descendants a government and a social order worthy of
   this new world.

Juggernauts
by J. F. Bray

We read in the missionary tracts about a huge idol whose name is Juggernaut. It is mounted upon a car, and taken abroad now and then for the adoration of the worshippers, scores of whom throw themselves under the wheels and are crushed to death to show devotion to the great idol.

We are termed a civilised and christian people, but have we no Juggernauts here? Yes, plenty of them that sit enthroned in the Federal and State Governments, to whom we have to pay millions of annual tribute that crush us under the wheels of poverty.

We inherited Juggernaut from our ancestry, and his disciples not only spoiled the new government we thought we had gained by the Revolution, but established Juggernaut everywhere, and year after year he grinds us into the earth by excessive taxation and his high priests are the party politicians. We are constantly told that we are "a free and independent people", and we view with contempt the submission of European nations to their Juggernauts, but where on earth is there a more rapacious and exacting Juggernaut than reigns in the temple at Washington.

Statistics show that our Juggernauts last year expended four hundred and fifty millions of dollars—well on to ten dollars a year stolen from every man, woman and child in the Union; and what have they done with it? Built warships for junkets, and to rot in navy yards; and support an army of thirty thousand able-bodied men, not needed except to protect Juggernaut in case of danger.

Juggernaut is the embodiment of an army of place-holders, who live on the fat of the land, while the wage-worker and farmer take the skin and bones. Every man and woman, no matter what their occupation, should try and figure up what Juggernauts plundering would do for the people if left in their pockets. What cities it would build, what manufacturing plants it would create to furnish work and wealth to the toiler. The people's means spent by Juggernaut in the last twenty-five years would create another United States. It would have furnished every man a home of his own, and an abundance of the good things of life such as no population has yet enjoyed, because Juggernaut stole them. And of all these thousands of millions of dollars spent how much has gone back to the people?

Juggernaut is an idol outside of the needs of the nation. It does little but grab and spend. Where has it raised wages or shortened hours? Where has
it founded colonies for workers or furnished comfortable homes for the worn out working man or woman? Juggernaut is a fraud and thief here as everywhere else; leaving out the postal service and a few other things which the community and not Juggernaut pays for, the nation would not have suffered if Juggernaut had been dead and buried, and its vast useless expenditures put an end to twenty-five years since.

Throughout the United States we have Governors, but the countries, towns, cities and townships govern themselves without any help from Juggernauts. It is there only that we have self-government. The Federal government does nothing for us, and all we ask is that it should cease to plunder us by cunning schemes of taxation. And who really earns this hundred and fifty millions of dollars a year? Mainly the farmers and wage workers, who are never sent to Congress among the “upper ten”, but are left to the toils of every day life.

Now, carpenters and other toilers, dissect this Juggernaut's carcass. Look into its frauds and extravagances. Trust to yourself to reform it, for no existing party or class of politicians will do it.

Pontiac, Mich.

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Paterson New Jersey Labor Standard. 1894 September 2

What will You Do about It

Editor of the Labor Standard: — I must confess to disappointment at the slow progress made in the enfranchisement of labor, and its elevation in the scale of humanity. I entered my first trades union in 1830, sixty years since 1), and have kept track of unions and their platforms and objects every since, and it is pretty much the old song to-day that charmed man long ago.

Why do not unions and reformers give utterance to some broad fundamental idea, that will forever put an end to strikes, lockouts and reductions of wages? We still keep on creating millionaires by the hundred through our toil, yet what have we created for ourselves? Recent strikes and reductions show how helpless we are with every dominant interest in society against us.

It is time for us to make an advance movement that means something, and that all men can understand. That movement is a demand for partnership with capital in all the great national industries. Bring this issue to the front and keep it there. Such partnership does not imply any proprietary interest

1) Bray ought to have written “sixty-four years since.”
in the plant, but only an interest in the products and property which labor creates.

Such an idea will be howled down as a horrible anarchistic attack on property. What is this property? A thing which labour has created. What is labor? The power that does the whole work of the world. We hear it trumpeted, what can capital do without labor? Nothing. What can labor do without capital? Nothing. This clearly implies that both are helpless until they come together. So they come together and capital gives labor a certain wage supposed to represent what it earns. But it does nothing of the kind. At the end of the year capital has had ten times a better living than labor, and yet rakes in all the surplus and in time becomes a millionaire, while labor is vainly contending against reductions and lockouts, and is as poor at the end of the year as it was at the beginning. Is this the proper condition for two equal forces to be in?

Giving capital its wages for superintendence, and labor its wages for work, to whom belongs this profit? Clearly to labor and capital, at so much per head to all concerned. Capital advances the plea that its "capital" has a sort proscriptive right to all the profits. Why should it, when they were two equally helpless powers when separated? And what of the workman? Has he no "capital" invested in him? Surely, yes. A thousand skilled workmen are worth as much as the whole plant with which they work. But who ever speaks of allowing them interest on their toiling bones and muscles? Yet they have the same right to the surplus capital has. They have cost as much money as the largest plant.

Society has progressed to almost a deadly struggle between capital and labor. The only thing to secure lasting peace is partnership. It lifts labor out of the servile ruts of the past, and makes him a citizen. It puts an end to every labor disturbance and gives a security to capital far stronger than guns and bajonets.

Labor everywhere should raise a universal cry for partnership with capital. It should be discussed at every meeting of a union until the whole country rings with the great industrial and political reforms to grow out of it. The politicians have been hammering away at the tariff like so many children at a tin kettle, to keep the masses from thinking of the nine or ten hundred millions of dollars we pay for this sham millionaire republic. And who pays it? The man and women that create visible wealth by their labor.

Peace and partnership should be the universal motto.

Editor Labor Standard:—What a miserable spectacle this great nation presents to the world: We are overwhelmed with parties, each trying what it can do for the country or its managing politicians. The remnant of the old Democratic party—now under the control of capital—is howling for a "sound dollar", without specifying just what the expression means, but clearly advocating gold alone as a currency. The old Whig-Republican party is howling for "protection to industry", meaning protection to the employing class, that never reaches the workers. The nation has gone on under the control of these two parties for a century, and they have loaded it down with unpayable national debts and gambling concerns under all sorts of names, that fatten upon the people and render no labor or service for the millions they may be said to steal. Labor is literally skinned by the millions taken from it in the shape of public and private "interest" on "investments" so called. The interest-sucking or blood sucking has amounted to thousands of millions during the last twenty-five years.

And now there has come up a new party, professedly for financial reform through silver, but it is really a revolt against the old parties and their humdrum policies. And it will grow until it is practically revolutionary against the enormous wrongs and abuses inflicted on labor on the farm and in the workshop. If defeated this year it will come up again with added strength and greater demands.

And who have been our rulers during this time? Not the "stupid" farmers and ignorant serfs that work in factories and mills, but the rich, educated and "refined" classes, who would hardly touch a worker with a pair of tongs! And now the workers of all industries must join this new movement through their trades unions and other organisations. It is the battle of overcrowded and oppressed labor against the numerous tyrannies it groans under.

Nations must grow and move forward like individuals. The ultimate of all currencies rests on something to eat and wear. Let us rest the "sound dollar" of labor on itself and its products, through a currency which says:—"this dollar is legal tender for labor and the products of labour, and all debts and dues, throughout the United States". Make enough of this currency to supply the nation. Let the federal government loan it to the states, which shall be responsible for the amount loaned them. Let the state establish state banks, which may loan this money on mortgage at its cost of handling, two
or three per cent, to establish new plants and other helps to labor. All existing banks must be abolished as too heavy a burden on the people.

This labor currency does not rest on dead gold, but saves the expense of it. Its gold will be in payment of gold debts and in exchanges with foreign countries which require gold. It is a currency which cannot be "cornered" or manipulated by speculators because the whole nation is its bankers and cashier. It would prevent financial disturbances and hard times.

Now let the farming and working classes examine this idea and they will discover its benefits over all other forms of currency.

RÉSUMÉ

La récente découverte de nouveaux documents a rendu possible de décrire de façon plus complète la vie de John F. Bray, auteur de Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy.


En 1842 Bray retourna aux États Unis, se fit cultivateur pendant quelque temps et travailla ensuite dans l'imprimerie. En 1855 il publia deux recueils d'une série de pamphlets intitulés The Coming Age, attaquant le spiritualisme. De 1856 à 1865 Bray gagna sa vie comme photographe. En 1864 il publia American Destiny — what shall it be, Republican or Cossack, un appel au droit de sécession des États du Sud.

En 1865 Bray alla vivre aux environs de Pontiac où il resta jusqu'à sa mort en Février 1897. Il contribuait aux journaux travaillistes américains par de nombreuses lettres et publia en 1879 God and Man a Unity and all Mankind a Unity — a basis for a new dispensation, social and religious. Ici il critique les doctrines théologiques et expose son programme de réforme sociale. Sa dernière lettre à la presse fut publiée dans le Paterson Labour Standard de septembre 1896.
ZUSAMMENFASSUNG


1842 kehrte Bray nach den Vereinigten Staaten zurück, arbeitete zeitweise als Farmer, zeitweise als Buchdrucker. 1855 veröffentlichte er zwei Hefte einer Serie von Pamfletten unter dem Titel The Coming Age, die den Spiritualismus angriffen. Von 1856 bis 1865 verdiente er seinen Lebensunterhalt als Photograph. 1864 veröffentlichte er American Destiny — what shall it be, Republican or Cossack, an argument addressed to the people of the late Union, in dem er das Recht des Südens auf Abtrennung verteidigte.

1865 liess sich Bray in der Umgebung von Pontiac nieder, wo er bis zu seinem Tode im Februar 1898 blieb. Er schrieb zahlreiche Artikel in Briefform für amerikanische Arbeiterblätter und veröffentlichte 1879 God and Man a Unity and all Mankind a Unity — a basis for a new dispensation, social and religious, worin er die religiösen Lehren kritisierte und ein Programm für soziale Reformen entwickelte. Sein letzter Artikel wurde im September 1896 im Paterson Labor Standard abgedruckt.