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EDITORIAL

## MAKING JAURES' EXPERIENCE.

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**A** new "Socialist Colony" is about to be launched; this time in Massachusetts. With Ruskin just now going up in stenchful explosion; with Topolobampo shriveling or shriveled away; with half a dozen similar undertakings in various parts of the land dead or gasping their last breath; and, moreover, with a flood of light thrown upon the subject by Socialist literature demonstrating the impossibility of the success of such undertakings, their folly, aye, their harmfulness to the movement they mean to aid;—with all this one may well pause at the recurrence of the scheme, now contemplated in the vicinity of Lancaster, Mass.

Are these plans, then, the evidence of increasing demoralization through poverty, and their promoters merely shell-men, frauds? Some may be; and yet it is impossible to look upon all in that light.

Are these plans then the evidence of hopeless stupidity against which it is useless to battle? That stupidity there is in abundance can not be denied, and yet the race gives ample proof of its sense and increasing knowledge.

How, then, is this "colony" illusion to be explained?

On the same day that the report of the projected Lancaster Colony was read by us, there came into our hands the preface by Jean Jaures, a leading and trusted Socialist of France, to a compilation of his several speeches, that is just to be issued. In this preface Jaures refers to the statement about himself that he had imbibed the Socialist idea only long after his election to the Chamber in 1886. This he denies, he states positively that, already at the time of his election, he was a Socialist to all intents and purposes, at least in so far as the abstract principle of Socialism is concerned, and that during his campaign, as well as immediately after

he so spoke and pronounced himself. As far as the understanding of the superiority and need of Socialism is concerned, he proves his graduation into the intellectual realm of Socialism as far back as 1886. But then he proceeds to say:

Yet it is a fact that I joined the Socialist and collectivist idea before I joined the Socialist Party. I imagined that all Republicans, by pushing the Republican idea to its logical conclusion, were bound to arrive at Socialism. It seemed to me wiser not to establish a distinct Socialist political party. THIS WAS A CHILDISH ILLUSION; WHAT MY POLITICAL EXPERIENCE DID REVEAL TO ME WAS, not the Socialist idea, abstract Socialism, but THE NECESSITY, THE INEVITABLENESS OF BATTLE.

This experience probably more than any other one cause, explains the persistence, at this stage of the Movement, of the Colony Illusion.

The bona-fide would-be Colonists, Socialists still in the abstract, are still indulging in an illusion, Jaures' old illusion; the illusion that Socialism can be "preached into the people" with sweet words; they yet have to learn the meaning of the struggle, of the "class struggle"; they yet have to learn the characteristics of the "Beast of Property." What that means is not to be learned theoretically. Only a personal experience will stand. Across the whole gamut of PROPERTY—from racial, hereditary, feudal and semi-feudal land or plantation-holding gentlemen and ladies down to the fakir-holder of a fakir job in a fakir union—the BEAST is essentially the same: a ferocious beast of prey. No honeyed words, no noble sentiments, no tearful plea, nothing of the kind will soften or affect him. Nothing short of his overthrow will do; and that can not be accomplished but by combat, a combat upon lines sharply drawn.

The prospective Lancaster Colonists are making experience. To aid them and all others along is just now one of the important missions of Socialist literature.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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