

slavery. In other words, changes during this period of history were made by negative action, by getting rid of an oppressive condition. Where this was accomplished by a new class relation, the new system served the desired purpose, by giving comparative or temporary relief and freedom. Under such circumstances the abolition of classes is out of the question, because where the slave is not opposed to his slavery, or does not realize that he is accepting a new form of enslavement for an old one, he lacks the mental consciousness which is indispensable. It is not necessary, therefore, to investigate whether the material or objective conditions up to the end of the eighteenth century were ripe for the overthrow of the dual principle, for even if they had been it would have made no difference, inasmuch as society did not see this possibility and could not therefore avail itself of it.

But the French Revolution for the first time promulgated the idea of a society based on equality and fraternity, of a homogeneous society in which there should be one class. Not that this was as yet a clear scientific analysis; it was the expression in embryonic form of a social aspiration. The constructive formulation was to come later.

Meanwhile, the French Revolution solved the situation in accordance with the interests that guided the overthrow of the old regime, namely, the interests of the rising bourgeoisie. This class, at the same time that it did away with serfdom and privilege maintained the inviolability of private property (ownership of production) on the theory that the new order freed society for once and all by making it possible for the mass to combine earning and owning in the person of each individual. Anyone who was industrious, ambitious and frugal could become an owner through his earning capacity, and society would henceforward be founded on a large homogeneous mass each member of which combined in himself the "personal union" of the two functions which were regarded as fundamental. Individual ownership was regarded as an indispensable essential to the activity of the individual in society, it was merely the dislocation of ownership through

feudal privilege that needed to be rectified. Therefore, this process was supported concretely by the redistribution and subdivision of the property of the church and the feudal nobility.

The permanence of this solution depended on the continuance of the possibility of becoming an owner through productive activity, or on the permanence of the principle of distribution and subdivision of ownership in some other form (such as was done in the United States by the western land policy).

But this arrangement which afterward became the foundation of middle class ideology, had inherent material faults. In due course it transpired that the ownership and expansion of ownership (i. e., derivation of income from title to property) was the path of greatest gain and material progress for each, and the earning of wealth by productive activity (income derived from sale of labor-power) was a less desirable method. In fact, with the continual increase of productivity the share obtainable by ownership increased and the share of the worker dropped to cost of living. In consequence the union of earning and owning in each member of society was supplanted by a general scramble to acquire wealth by ownership and to make the acquisition by earning secondary or unnecessary. The result was a concentration of ownership in the hands of a decreasing minority (the successful ones) to the exclusion of the greater mass. When the property available had been appropriated by this competition, those who were left, had to get along without property. Thus the "personal union" was doomed by the evolution of its component essentials and their inherent incompatibility. The attempt to create a one class system by subdivision and de-concentration of ownership was in direct conflict with the interests of the members as individuals.

Thus the "personal union" was broken up by the dualism of functions on which it was founded, and resulted in the very thing which it thought to have done away with, a two class