

To talk of immigration as though that were the cause of scant employment and low wages, is at once to make a pretense of devotion to the interests of labor and to turn the attention of the laboring masses in the direction that will not threaten "vested interests." And just now the outcry against immigration seems to line with the policy of both the great parties. On the one side anti-protectionists can utilize it to show the hollowness of the pretense that the tariff on goods protects American labor. On the other side protectionists can use it to excite those prejudices against "foreigners" which have so powerfully aided them in imposing their scheme of robbery on the American people. To preserve the one Chinese wall which they have induced the masses to erect around our coasts, they would be willing, if need be, to have another erected. To save protection on goods, they would, if necessary, give up free trade in labor. They are the more ready to countenance this idea, because they well know that it is really impossible to impose any substantial restrictions upon European immigration without restoring to the complete Chinese plan of non-intercourse. They well know that the foreign contract labor law is a mere sham, and that any amendment that congress can make to it will be but the casting of another tub to the whale.

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There is one valid, and at least in the present stage of our civilization, insuperable, objection to the immigration of the Chinese in any numbers. Besides the vast differences that separate them from us in language, religion, customs and habits of thought,

there are also physical differences sufficiently marked to prevent assimilation, and to secure the perpetuation of all other differences. To admit them would thus be to admit an unassimilable element, which would continue, perhaps for long generations, to arouse prejudices and enkindle strife. But the people who are coming to us from Europe belong to the same great family of mankind as we ourselves, have the same religious beliefs that exist among us, speak for the most part different variations of what philologists tell us is the same mother tongue, and when not massed together as are the French in Canada, become in a generation undistinguishably blended with the rest of our people.

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And this is the real bottom of the sentiment against immigration; the real cause of the largely changed feeling in regard to it. Work is growing scarce in the United States, and the competitors for work not unnaturally view with jealousy and dislike any new comers who may deprive them of the share of the work they might otherwise get.

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But why is work growing scarce? Why is it that we seem to have what Mr. Powderly calls a "surplus population?" These are questions which Mr. Ford, who is only a congressman, and who as a congressman cannot afford to go ahead of his constituents, may with some reason decline to answer. But they are questions which Mr. Powderly, who is the head of what he claims to be a great educational order - an order which, as he declares, has taken as its function not only the enlightenment of the toiling masses of America but of Europe as well-

cannot decline.

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Is work growing scarce because there is less need for work?

What is the need for work? Is it not the supplying of wants - the satisfaction of desires? Are all wants supplied? are all desires for the things that work produces satisfied?

Surplus population! What does the general master workman of the world-instructing order mean by the phrase "surplus population," which he uses so glibly? Does he mean a greater population than there are natural resources to support - a greater population than the Creator, in whom, as a Catholic, he believes, intended to exist? Or does he mean a greater population than there is any use for?

He calls for a party which will "take the same interest in the reduction of the surplus population as is taken in the reduction of the surplus in the treasury of the nation?" How does Mr. Powderly propose that this reduction of surplus population shall proceed? Surely, he would not think of exporting it to Europe, for there, also he says, there is a surplus population? Nor to Asia, Nor to Africa? How then would he have his suggested party propose to get rid of it? By war, by pestilence, or by electricity?

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To one who will simply look with a desire to see, it must be perfectly clear why even in such a sparsely settled land as this there should be a seeming scarcity of work, a seeming surplus population. Without the use of land men can neither work nor live. If one man owned the earth all the rest of its people, save such as he

permitted to work, would be unnecessary laborers - surplus population. Whether, in holding vast areas idle, he were prompted by caprice or merely by the desire to get great speculative prices for the use of the earth, the result would be the same, except as to the definiteness of the line, the tension of the pressure. What would be true of the earth must be true of a continent or a country? And what is troubling our civilization to-day is that we have, throughout the civilized world, made the earth private property.

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Or look at the matter in another way:

There are five thousand Italians out of employment in the city of New York, says Mr. Ford. They are nearly all agricultural laborers, and they are honest enough to find bankers who will lend them at least some capital if they have any prospect of repaying it.

Why don't they go upon the Newark marshes and convert them into gardens? Why don't they go upon any of the large amount of unused land that is to be found around New York? "The price is too high," replies Congressman Ford, and he replies truly. Why don't they go west? Because wherever they went they would find the same obstacles, in a degree proportioned to the difficulty of getting there, and the difficulty of getting produce transported from there. If they were to go to Oklahoma, they would find a great concourse waiting for the territory to be opened. And as soon as it was decided that they should go anywhere, there, as Congressman Ford truly says, would the price of land go up.

Now if these Italians could get this unused land, Mr. Powderly's surplus population would be reduced at once by five thousand. That

number of competitors for employment would be taken out of the overstocked labor market of New York city. But this would be only the beginning. These Italians, no matter how cheaply they tried to live - and no blame to them for thinking of wife and children, or sister or mother at home - would, by their demand for other things, set other now unemployed men at work, and those, again, others still.

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Here is the cause - the one great, fundamental cause of unemployed labor and "surplus population." And the remedy is as simple and as plain.

Abolish all the duties and taxes that are now levied in any shape on the useful products of labor and put them, instead, on the value of land. What would become of the trusts and the combinations? How long would the dogs- in-the-manger keep their hold of natural opportunities they are not using? How long would the Italians be unemployed? How long would the builders stand idle? How long would it be before every man in all this broad land who was willing to work would find all the work he wanted to do, and instead of looking with jealous, hateful eyes at our kindred from beyond the sea who seek our shores, the cry would go up, "Come over and help us! Help us subdue a continent; help us build up a republic stronger, greater, richer, purer, than any nation the world ever has seen before - a republic where there shall be work for all, leisure for all and plenty for all."

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All Europe would come? What if they did? We would have room

for them, and work for them, and plenty for them. But nothing of the kind would happen. The spectacle of such a republic across the western sea; the return visits of those who had come; the letters that went back; the close intercourse which a free trade would give, would arouse such a moral force that thrones would totter, and fall, and standing armies would disappear, and a United States of Europe, before a generation had passed away, would clasp hands with a United States of America.

Signed: Henry George,

August 18, 1888.