

SOCIALISM AND RELIGION

GERALD DESMOND

It is sometimes said by the ignorant, or those desirous of injuring the socialist movement, that we take our stand in opposition to religion. This is not true. The socialist movement is a purely political movement. It is not opposed to any religion. It is not connected or affiliated in any way with any religious body certainly; neither is it connected or affiliated with any anti-religious body. The mission of the organized socialist movement is to capture the political machinery of the world and establish a political and industrial democracy. We take into our ranks men and women of all religious beliefs as well as those who have none. We do not aim to abolish or suppress any religion, or to establish any. We believe that religion is a personal matter—strictly an individual concern. Surely no religious person, at this time, can ask for more. The age of state religion is past. The day of religious persecution is past. This is the day of religious liberty and complete individual freedom. With the spirit of liberty we, as a political party, are in complete accord. Our motto is "Liberty, liberty to hold none as the individual desires."

As regards Christianity, we have nothing to say. We do not in any way oppose its teachings. We do not combat its doctrines in regard to Christ; His existence, His divinity or otherwise. We do not combat the theory of a life hereafter, or heaven or hell or purgatory, or remission of sins or any of the dogmas of the church. On all these things we have, as a political party, nothing to say. Individually, we return our right to believe or disbelieve, as we please. But as a party we stand, aloof, apart, neither denying nor affirming; neither fighting for nor against. So far as these things are concerned, we do not therefore antagonize any Christian, neither do we, on the other hand, claim his or her support.

But in another way and on other ground we can perhaps, claim the consideration of the true Christian. Christianity besides its doctrines and dogmas and spiritual beliefs also preaches, even though its followers admittedly do not in many cases practice, certain standards of living and certain obligations to our fellows. Christ teaches in many places justice, love, equality of equitable distribution. With all of these socialisms, in its ultimate aim, is in full accord. It is this fact which leads to the statement being sometimes made that "the ethics of socialism and Christianity are identical" and that "socialism is applied Christianity." The writer does not make this affirmation for himself; neither will he deny it. The truth or otherwise of the statement is, of course, in the individual's conception of the "ethics" of "Christianity" and of "socialism." It is this fact which leads many devout Christians to support the socialist movement. Such persons, to quote their own words, "See the futility, the hopelessness, of the teachings of Christ in regard to the relations of man to man ever being realized in a competitive system."

They therefore work in the socialist movement for the capture of the reins of government, the ending of the competitive system and the bringing in of a co-operative system of industry; thus ending the struggle of man against man for a living. This they say "will bring us at least a step nearer to the realization of practical Christianity and render it at least possible for men to, if they so desire, apply in every day life the teachings of Christ, and order their lives so far as their relation with their fellows is concerned in accord with that teaching."

To sum it all up, therefore:—With the doctrines, dogmas and purely spiritual teachings of Christ, or of any other religious teacher, the socialist movement has not, and cannot have, any connection. So far as a desire for the uplifting of humanity on earth is concerned, our aspirations and desires are in harmony, if not perhaps, as some would tell us, exactly identical.

Socialism and its Travesty

It is really too ridiculous for words, the nonsensical way in which the capitalist Press uses the word "Socialism." Poor old people receive five shillings a week, which will barely pay their rent; after they are seventy years old; a bourgeois financier claps a trifling tax on "unclear increment" of land; children short of food are to get some cheap meals at public cost; the three hundred years old doctrine of the right to work is put forward in Parliament—this is all Socialism and Socialism of a revolu-

tionary kind! Of course, our scribes of the trustified newspapers know better, but they think this sort of talk will affect the public mind and give their faction votes. They may overdo the thing. People are beginning to know what Socialism really means and that it is something very different from burden-shifting taxation schemes, or palliation of capitalist iniquity. Thorough organization of the great and growing powers of man to make wealth, so that all men and women shall receive and enjoy a higher and far better standard of living in every sense than they do to day; the abolition of classes, the pacification of the class war, the co-operative commonwealth, in which each individual shall most completely develop his or her faculties in social accord. This, and this alone, is Socialism; and the world is making ready to accept it to-day—Justice.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ALTRUISM

One would think that grown men would be ashamed to arm themselves and go out with horses and hounds and engage in such babyish and unequal contests as sportsmen usually rely on for their peculiar "glory." And that they would be if grown men were not so often simply able-bodied bullies. If human beings could only realize what it means to live in a world and associate day after day with other beings more intelligent and powerful than themselves, and yet be regarded by these intelligent individuals simply as merchandise to be bought and sold, or as targets to be shot at, they would hide their guilty heads in shame and horror. This being from whose breaking heart gushed these lines of sorrow and sympathy on seeing a wounded hare was a god:

"Inhuman man, curse on thy barbarous act,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart.

Go, live, poor wanderer of the wood and field
The bitter little that of life remains;
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled one, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest but now thy dying bed;
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom pressed.

Of, as by winding Nith I musing, wait
The sober eve or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee spotting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim and mourn thy hapless fate."

We human beings, in our conduct toward the races of beings associated with us on this planet, are almost pure savages. We are not even half civilized. And this fact is certain to bring upon us the criticism and condemnation of the more enlightened generations to come. The fact is apparent today, however,—just as apparent as the barbarity of the Romans—to everyone who will take the trouble to rid himself of the prejudices which enslave and blind him, and view human phenomena from an unhuman, extra-terrestrial point of view.

—J. HOWARD MOORE in the "Universal Kinship."

In the great agricultural industries the wageworkers play a more important role than in ordinary farming. For the great farmer also, the high price of provisions is much more important than for the farmer who consumes a large portion of his product. The antagonism between the producer and consumer of provisions is, to be sure, not the same as between the laborer and exploiter, but rather like that between the city and country. But in the city the proletariat is to-day the most numerous and the most combative class and consequently the seller of provisions sees in the proletariat his most energetic enemy.—KARL KAUTSKY.

THE TRIUMPHS OF PEACE

By GEORGE H. HALL

"Peace hath her victories," she hath indeed!
No sweeter triumphs ever hath been sung,
So unlike those by war's hand hardly wrung
Out of men's misery, their tears, their need,
By ruthless cruelty, by grossest greed;
Stainless and fair the trophies peace hath hung
Around her altars, since the world was young
For light and right her voice did ever plead.
She conquers, and a waste and barren land
Becomes a truthful splendor in men's eyes;
She conquers, far and wide, on every hand,
From wreck and ruin fairer cities rise:
She conquers, and behold, at her command
Out of War's ashes grows a Paradise.

Pithy Points to Ponder

The course of social evolution is not smooth. The path of progress is an exceedingly stony one. Sometimes humanity creeps, sometimes it runs, sometimes it makes most daring leaps forward and sometimes, alas, it backslides under the influence of re-action.

No effort should be made to make the Socialist movement respectable by concealing its revolutionary aims and methods. The socialist program cannot be carried out by stealth. It will not be realized by timid people. The presence of such persons in the party is an impediment to decisive action rather than an aid thereto.

To become a member of the Socialist Party you must accept three principles, namely, the principle of the collective ownership of the means of production and their democratic control in the interests of the working class, the principle of the class struggle and the principle of parliamentary action. If you stand by these principles at heart, then you should stand for them in fact, by joining the Socialist party.

The revolutionary Socialist is determined to carry out his program in the speediest and most effective manner. He is not tied down to any one way or means. If parliamentary methods fail, then other methods will undoubtedly be adopted. If legal forms and paper constitutions block the path of progress then the forms and these constitutions must be swept aside and others substituted in their stead. Neither the dictates of a slave morality, nor the teachings of an antiquated religion, nor undue respect for "law and order," nor reverence for the sacred "rights of property" will stay his hand in striking loose the fetters of labor.

W. R. S.

One seeks hopelessly to rouse by political preaching English laborers to a higher way of life, to a mind capable of nobler considerations. The ethic of the proletariat flows from revolutionary efforts and it is these which have strengthened and ennobled it. It is the idea of the revolution which has brought about that wonderful elevation of the proletariat from its deepest degradation, which elevation stands as the greatest result of the second half of the nineteenth century. To this revolutionary idealism we must above all cling fast, then come what will, we can bear the heaviest, attain the highest, and remain worthy of the great historical purpose that awaits us.—KARL KAUTSKY.

The greater the power of the financier in industry, the greater the tendency of industrial capital to adopt the methods of finance. For the private business man who lives by the side of his laborers, these are still men to whose welfare he cannot be wholly indifferent unless he has become utterly callous. For the stockholder, nothing exists but dividends, and the laborers are simply figures in a mathematical calculation in the result of which he is in the highest degree interested, for it can usually bring him increased well being and increased power, or retrenchment and social degradation. The remnant of consideration of the laborer which was still preserved in the private employer is here wholly lost.—KARL KAUTSKY.

Is it not funny that some very religious people take so much pleasure in lying about the socialists?

It is apparent that the analogy between birth and revolution is rather far reaching. But this naturally proves nothing more than that one has a right to appeal to nature for proof that a social revolution is something unnecessary, unreasonable, and unnatural. We have also, as we have already said, no right to apply conclusions drawn from nature directly to social progress. We can go no further upon the ground of such analogies than to conclude; that as each animal creature must at one time go through a catastrophe in order to reach a higher stage of development (the act of birth or the breaking of a shell) so society can only be raised to a higher stage of development through a catastrophe.—KARL KAUTSKY.

THE EIGHT HOUR DAY

WILLIAM RESTELLE SHIER

The introduction of the eight hour day will not sharpen the demand for labor, nor raise wages. The price of labor-power is regulated like the price of every other commodity, namely by the law of supply and demand. If the demand is not increased, and the supply remains constant, things will remain pretty much as they are.

Assuming, however, that the eight hour day will diminish unemployment and thereby advance wages, unless the system were introduced upon a national even an international scale, the gain to the workers in the community in which it was applied could not be more than temporary. As water always tends to run down hill, so people always tend to flock to those localities where the conditions of life are most favorable. Immigration would soon overstock that particular labor market once again and depress its standard of living. A like effect would be produced by an increase in birth-rate following the improved circumstances of its work people.

Other factors might be mentioned, such as the tendency of capital to keep away from communities in which labor is dear and the fact that employers would be stimulated to intensify their resistance to labor's demands when their profits are being encroached upon, but enough has been said to prove that the economic claims of the exponents of the eight-hour day are not much more than agreeable illusions. However, morally, intellectually and physically the workers do profit by a shortening of the working day, for, though they work more intensely and consume more vitality per hour, they have more leisure in which to recuperate and spend less time in the poisonous air of the factory, mine or shop. As Professor Rae says—"The increased exertion during work-hours has always been balanced and more than balanced, by the restorative effects of the longer period of repose and recreation in good air." For these reasons the eight-hour day is a desirable institution, but let us not delude ourselves that it would solve the unemployed problem or give the workers a larger share of the wealth which they produce.

THE TRAVELLING SALESMAN

A minister who has been doing missionary work in India recently returned to New York for a visit, according to Success Magazine. He was a guest at well-known hotel, where everything pleased him except the absence of the very torrid sauces and spices to which he had become accustomed in the Far East. Fortunately he had brought with him a supply of his favorite condiments, and by arranging with the head waiter these were placed on his table. One day another guest saw the appetizing bottle on his neighbor's table and asked the waiter to give him some of "that sauce."

"I'm sorry, sir," said the waiter, "but it is private property of this gentleman." The minister, however, overheard the other's request, and told the waiter to pass the bottle.

The stranger poured some of the mixture on his meat and took a liberal mouthful. After a moment he turned with tears in his eyes to the minister.

"You're a minister of the Gospel?"
"Yes, sir."
"And you preach hell and damnation?"

"Yes," admitted the minister.
"Well, you're the first minister I ever met who carried samples."

Far better is the case of the working-man attracted by the socialist ideal. The Nihilism of socialism has no deterrent terrors for him, for, as Karl Marx said long ago, "he has nothing to lose but his chains, and a whole world to gain." He has long since lost all interest in religion; the factory by enlisting his wife and children as workers has already destroyed his home; and to him the State means nothing but the club of the policeman, the injunction of

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LIVE PROPAGANDA PAPER

the judge, and the rifle of the militiaman.—ROBERT RIVES LA MONTE.

To talk of "men born free," is a mere phrase. There are none such. Marriages, the relations of man and women have ruined the whole race and set on all the brand of slavery.—Robert Rives La Monte.

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Socialism will not come at once all over the world. One country will first become socialized and the others will gradually follow.

A Great Chew!
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BRIGHT PLUG
CHEWING TOBACCO
has just been increased in size.