

Materialist Conception of History

FOR BEGINNERS

LESSON IV.

CARLYLE has said: "Man is a tool-using animal, without tools he is nothing, with tools he is all."

Carlyle is not correct in his analysis of the difference between man and the animal. Some animals use the branches of trees, and stones as tools, but we Socialists point out, that it is not the production of the articles of consumption nor the use of tools that distinguishes man from the animals. It is the production of tools, which serve as means of production and defence.

Time has been divided into three periods.

1st—The Geological, or Inorganic Period.

2nd—The Biological Period.

3rd—The Sociological or Economic Period.

In the Geological Period, we have the development from the nebulous whirl to the earth, changes caused by the elements struggling together, estimated by Lyell, the father of geology, at 200 millions of years.

The Biological Period is from the amoeba to man, a struggle not only between different species but also between individuals of the same species.

The fittest to survive was determined by the physiological differences of the animals. When land arose, then land animals would triumph because they had the necessary limbs, if the land sank below the sea level then the water animal would survive. If the change was slow and the organism not too complex, gradual adaptation to environment was possible. The huge fossils to be seen in our museums are the remains of those which failed to survive.

The animal develops its organs to the new environment, but man has reached the stage of developing his tools, which has strengthened and lengthened his natural organs, enabling man to spread over the globe. This has given him a larger correspondence with nature, enlarged his environment, extended his knowledge, and enlarged his mentality over the animals, thus entering into the sociological and economic Period. This development of the tools used by man has rendered invalid all the analysis and arguments the opponents of Socialists are fond of using against Socialism from the Biological viewpoint.

Haeckel at Munich Congress, defended Darwinism, and attempted to overthrow Virchow, who said Darwinism led to Socialism. Haeckel took Bee Society as an illustration to defend classes in society. He pointed out that the Queen bee could perform no other function than reproduction. Drones existed as fertilizers of the Queen, and the workers to gather the flower dust to make the honey. Here we have a biological illustration. Before this argument against class abolition of society is valid, Haeckel would have to prove that a Queen could not wash clothes for a living with starvation as an alternative, or a workingman's daughter could not wear a coronet if her father became a Duke. Haeckel ignored this vital distinction. Society cannot be considered as an organism in the biological sense. The difference between mankind is not a physiological, but an economic one.

Man is a tool making animal, and such difference as there may be between a navvy and a clerk is not like that between two different animals, but exists as a result of the difference of the tools used. There are animal societies that have no biological divisions, therefore no classes. The crow and the pelican recognize only three grounds as a justification of idleness: infancy, old age, or accident. Pre-historic man lived in that period before man had written records.

The knowledge of pre-historic man has been gathered from the implements he used which they buried with their dead, also partly by the study of modern savage races and by words found in some of the related languages. This knowledge has been gained by the discovery of various implements discovered on all continents. There is no definite re-

corded period of time of the pre-historic age, but we are able to classify stages as the stone, copper, bronze, and now the iron age.

Man, depending on the fertility of the soil, his food was so precarious that war was a result of the uncertainty of his food supply.

The discovery of fire enabling men to dry the roots and fruits was a great advance in man's progress, and brought about a division of labor. Hunting and fighting fell to the men, and the women's duties became cooking the fish and game. This remaining behind of the women folk resulted in the discovery of the cultivation of the soil. The war spirit was weakened with this discovery and the domestication of animals began. The possession of tribal property began a new cause for war. Side by side in fruitful and unfruitful regions war became robbery, and defence against robbery, and it has remained robbery in its essence until today.

When food-getting was precarious and depended on hunting, the old people were killed and eaten, but with cultivation and domestication enabling them to feed the old people, they became the medium through which the knowledge of the tribe was handed down to the next generation, before man could write. Man therefore has developed or evolved from the primitive State to civilization, as a result of the development of the tools which enable man to obtain food easier and more plentifully.

Man has changed from using caves as dwellings to huts and better constructed houses, from the clothing made from skins to the woven cloth, from food of wild roots and fruits to the cultivated fruits and grains.

Language has proven a parent race, but the increasing population, pressing on the limited food supply, caused the younger to emigrate by families banding together.

Lewis Morgan, in his "Ancient Society," gives illustrations of various savage tribes in different stages of development in our own time, which coincide with the conclusions arrived at regarding our own ancestors when they were in the same status of development. That they passed through these stages has been learned from the various implements discovered in advanced countries during excavations.

Morgan says primitive people had no fixed abodes, but wandered about, so long as they had to depend on nature's fertility for their means of subsistence. Time was no object to primitive people. They stayed in one place so long as they obtained subsistence, and when there was no lack of food, the men and women lounged about, while the children played.

The great epochs of human progress have been identified, more or less directly, with the enlargement of the source of subsistence.

The women folk carrying the burdens of the tribe on their backs was an economic necessity during their wanderings. The man could not do it and hunt at the same time.

When the first white men went to Australia, the natives took the oxen to be the white men's wives because they carried the burdens.

Man's first stages of social development must have been by far the most difficult, as hunger and sex passion must have been the first motive power, and not until man developed speech could he be said to have risen above the animals. Although we cannot trace every piece of history of a given race we can, by studying the various developments of savage people whom civilization has not yet exterminated, build up a fairly well defined history of the development of the human race from savagery to civilization.

Morgan divides the period of history in this fashion:—

1st—Lower Status of Savagery.

2nd—Middle Status of Savagery.

3rd—Upper Status of Savagery.

4th—Lower Status of Barbarism.

5th—Middle Status of Barbarism.

6th—Upper Status of Barbarism.

7th—Status of Civilization.

These we will deal with in our next lesson, giving a clearer vision of the materialistic conception of history, which ascribes the driving power of all social change to the economic development of society, with its creation of classes and the class struggle.

P. T. L.

P. T. L.

THE HIGH COST OF LIVING

(Continued from last issue).

Finally, the continual increase in the use of giant machinery, and the inevitable displacement of labor, through the perfection of productive methods, immensely increases the productive capacity of labor actually in production, and by this increase in volume of production lessens individual cost, while, at the same time, magnifying total value. On the other hand, and also at the same time, the operation of the same causes on the workers by lessening the cost of production of labor power, lessens its price on the open market, and by intensifying competition for jobs, puts an ever sharpening edge on the struggle for bare existence.

There is therefore an ever-increasing surplus accruing to the master class from the ownership of industry; a proportionately increasing lowering of the life condition of the workers, from the operation of that same industry. There is therefore a continually widening gulf between the value of the product of labor and the value of the power that creates the product, and as a necessary consequence of its own productivity the purchasing capacity of labor is progressively lessened.

As the total volume of the world's annual production is annually consumed, and as all wealth is gauged in money tokens, this accumulated wealth of capital is but paper, and has no real existence. Yet, for the same reason, because it is paper, the purchasing power of the workers' share of that paper is steadily declining. By right of property, the master class owns all that its property produces; by the self same right, the working class owns the price of its labor power. Or, put in another form, for the privilege of working on the property of the owning class, the working class is allowed the price of its subsistence, and because of the perfection of industrial machinery and methods, the value of the creative capacity of social labor, is far in excess of the value of its labor power. That is where the H. C. L. comes in.

Hence it is that no scheme, or device, or reform, however ably conceived, or nobly inspired, can alter the economic relationship of master and slave in the industrial productive system of capital. The H. C. of L. will yield only to one remedy—the abolition of wages and the transference of ownership of social necessities from individual or corporation to the collective community. To the owners of those necessities must accrue the benefits and privileges of ownership; and hope and its desires, art and its attainments, science and its plenitude, life and its fulness, man and his regeneration, can find their realization and satisfaction only in the terms of economic freedom.

R.

MANIFESTO

— of the —

SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

(Fifth Edition)

Per copy 10 cents

Per 25 copies \$2

Post Paid