

The Dawn of a New Era

BY COUNT LEO TOLSTOY

When people behave badly they always invent a philosophy of life which represents their bad actions to be not bad actions, but merely results of unalterable laws beyond their control.

In former times such a view of life was found in the theory that an inscrutable and unalterable will of God existed which foreordained to some men a humble position and hard work, and to others an exalted position, and the enjoyment of the good things of life.

On this theme an enormous quantity of books have been written and an innumerable quantity of sermons preached. The theme was worked up from every side possible.

It was demonstrated that God created different sorts of people—slaves and masters—and that both should be satisfied with their positions.

It was further demonstrated that it would be better for the slaves in the next world, and afterward it was shown that although the slaves were slaves and ought to remain such, yet their condition would not be bad if the masters would be kind to them.

Then the very last explanation after the slaves here and in the United States had been emancipated, and even a few short years ago by the president of the great American coal trust, which even now is allowed to disgrace the great country of the United States, was that wealth is entrusted by God to some people in order that they may use part of it in good works, and so there is no harm in some people being rich and others poor.

These explanations satisfied the rich and the poor for a long time, but the day came when these explanations became unsatisfactory, especially to the poor, who began to understand their position.

Then fresh explanations were needed, and they came in the form of science—political economy, which declared that it had discovered the laws which regulate division of labor and the distribution of the products of labor among men.

These laws, according to that science, are that the division of labor and the enjoyment of its products depend on supply and demand, on capital, rent, wages of labor, values, profits, etc., in general, on unalterable laws governing man's economic activities.

Soon, on this theme as many books and pamphlets were written and lectures delivered as there had been treaties written and religious sermons preached on the former theme, and still unceasingly mountains of pamphlets and books are being written and lectures are being delivered, and all these books and lectures are as cloudy and unintelligible as the theological treatises and sermons; and, they, too, like the theological tracts, fully achieve their intended purpose—that is, they give such an explanation of the existing order of things

as justifies some people in tranquilly refraining from labor and in utilizing the labor of others.

The fact that for the investigations of this pseudo science, not the condition of the people in the whole world through all historic time was taken to show the general order of things, but only the condition of the people in a small country, in most exceptional circumstances—this fact did not in the least hinder the acceptance as valid of the result to which the investigators arrived, any more than a similar acceptance is now hindered by the endless disputes and disagreements of those who study that science and are quite unable to agree as to the meaning of rent, surplus, value, profits, etc.

Only the one fundamental position of that science is acknowledged by all, namely that the relations among men are conditioned not by what people consider right or wrong, but by what is advantageous for those who occupy an advantageous position.

It is admitted as an undoubted truth that if in society many thieves and robbers have sprung up who take from the laborers the fruits of their labor, this happens not because the thieves and robbers have acted badly, but because such are the inevitable economic laws, which can only be altered slowly by an evolutionary progress indicated by science; and therefore, according to the guidance of science, people belonging to the class of robbers, thieves, or receivers of stolen goods may quietly continue to utilize the things obtained by thefts and robbery.

But the workingmen are beginning to wake up, their eyes are gradually beginning to look through the maze of lies invented to keep them down, and all signs point toward a new era when justice and equality will rule supreme and when every man shall be allowed unmolested to enjoy the fruits of his toil. My old eyes may not see that time, but it is coming.

When in need of furnishings look over the fine stock carried by The Economic, which is choice, and at prices that are right.

It's up to you as a good union man to assist organized labor by patronizing those firms advertising in the Tribune.

LABOR CONVENTIONS

Oct. 17, New York, N.Y., United Textile Workers of America.

Oct. 26, New York, N.Y., International Compressed Air Workers Union.

Nov. 6, Pen Argyl, Pa., International Union of Slate Workers.

Dec. 4, Denver, Col., National Alliance of Bill Posters and Buyers of America.

Dec. 4, Cleveland, O., International Seamen's Union.

IN 1906.

Jan. 8, St. Paul, Minn., Stone Masons' International Union of America.

Jan. 8, Washington, D.C., International Slate and Tile Roofers' Union of America.

The following resolution, introduced by J. A. Flett to the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada at their recent session in this city, is occasioning considerable comment. That of the Hamilton Herald is a fair review of the situation, and being such, we deem it well to quote it. This is the resolution:

FREE TRADE LOGICAL.

John A. Flett made a strong speech in support of a motion which he intended to demonstrate the inconsistency of the manufacturers. It was adopted by the congress as follows:

Whereas, the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada has, time and again put itself on record, by resolutions as well as by active participation in measures having for their purpose the advancement of the interests of manufacturers and employers of labor generally, and

Whereas, in pursuing this course we have accepted as correct the representations of employers that there is a common mutual bond of material interests between capital and labor; and

Whereas this oneness of interest has not been manifest to labor by reciprocal co-operation from capital in measures calculated to promote the material welfare of labor through their organizations, but, on the contrary, labor has been met by hostile action from employers, and particularly from associations of employers.

Therefore, be it resolved that, while free trade in labor is held by employers to be necessary for the promotion of their interests, we hold that free trade in the products of labor is equally logical and necessary for our well-being.

Therefore, the mutuality of interests between capital and labor can only be established when they operate to their interest through protection, reciprocity or free trade in labor and its products at one and the same time, as either one or the other becomes an economic necessity for the welfare of our country;

Resolved, that all possible effort be put forth, and all opportunities be embraced to bring about an equality before the law as between the buyer and seller of labor, which can best be secured at this time by the advocacy of such changes in our trade policy as will result in more equitable protection.

Of which the Hamilton Herald has this to say:

As the Manufacturers' Association demands more tariff protection, it is therefore good policy on our part to oppose it, and even to favor a lowering of the tariff, until such time as the Manufacturers' Association drops its policy of hostility to our interests.

This attitude may not be worthy of commendation either as patriotic or as economically sound, but it is eminently natural.

Operative plasterers met in the Labor Temple Thursday, Sept. 28. There were two initiations and three applications for membership, and nominations for the ensuing term, when the following were nominated: President, D. A. Webber; Vice-President, Geo. McGill and Jas. Smith; Recording Secretary, Jas. Ward; Financial Secretary, F. Fowler, A. Beaver; Treasurer, H. Naylor and J. A. Billeman; Sergeant-at-Arms, A. Smith and J. Potter; Trustees, F. Fowler, P. Heron, and W. Hamilton; Auditors, A. Beaver, J. Bellerman, and F. Hodgins. The sum of twenty-five dollars was voted to the striking bakers. It was a large and enthusiastic meeting.

THE TARIFF.

The Tariff Committee of the Labor Council—Messrs. J. W. Flett, Jas. Simpson, D. A. Carey and J. G. O'Donohue, met on Monday afternoon to organize for a vigorous campaign. Information is to be sought from the different organizations in other countries. It was also decided to communicate with the farmers' organizations who deal with the tariff question, with a view to securing united action on the tariff.



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