

The One Idea of the Empty-Headed Socialist

BY F. W. MOORE.

OF all the extraordinary delusions we ever heard of, none is more remarkable than that of the honest individual whose imaginary multiplicity of ideas gives rise to the hallucination that socialists are men of one idea only. He accuses them of continually reverting in argument to the following facts: that our industrial institutions do not correspond with the needs of society and ought therefore to be completely reorganized; that this reorganization ought to be developed on an international scale and along lines indicated by democratic management; and that if this course were followed, it would prove a panacea for all political and industrial ills as well as for the still worse maladies that follow in their wake. He makes no allowance for a connection between this fundamental thesis and the numerous tributary problems that it predicates—problems of which the disconnected ideas of the exuberant one, are mere reflections—problems which interest him all the more because in many cases they are relative to the high cost of living; yet they are problems that do not interest him sufficiently to induce him to go further afield in his quest for a solution than the columns of a press whose very existence is to a large extent, depending on the income derived from the printing of advertisements of those who make it high.

Needless to say, the connection between outgrown industrial institutions and the ills of society is never mentioned consequently, the deluded one, imagining that each of the problems springing from the separate roots of the parent stem is an isolated entity, succeeds by this mental process in automatically lowering the veil of prejudice and in effectually obscuring the truth that would glow effulgently if traced to its original source in accordance with the law of economic determinism. The light of truth would then fall on the problems arising out of the multiplicity of disconnected ideas of the exuberant one—ideas incidental to many topics of which we shall choose a few for discussion. In these we shall include, trusts, unemployment, war, education, defence, trade, and commerce: all of which are of a homogeneous nature, in as far as the problems to which they give rise are directly dependent for their solution on a knowledge of the thesis laid down above.

Take the case of the trusts for instance; only a booby imagines that in these days of meal-ticket electioneering any government could, satisfactorily to the wishes of the public, regulate one of these octopuses whose money is the great agent in returning it to power; as well might the hired man be asked to regulate the affairs of his master. And since the owners of a trust were the only men ever known to regulate it, we are justified in concluding that this can only be accomplished when the time arrives for public ownership and democratic management, and right here we flounder into the one idea of the presumably empty-headed socialist; nevertheless, we must not let that fact excite us in the least, since we are bound to run into it at every turn, as we shall presently see.

In the meantime, let us consider the next subject on the list above: Unemployment, apart from the abnormal conditions incidental to the World War, is caused in many ways, one of which recurs sufficiently often to deserve special attention: We refer to the so-called "glut" in the market. It is not hard to see that an overproduction of commodities for this dwindling institution is bound to clog the wheels of industry, and temporarily shut the door on further employment; but this is not all. These gluts must occur oftener as time passes in consequence of the industrial development of backward countries, and the invention of new and improved machinery, until eventually conditions become intolerable and necessity compels the reorganization of the whole fabric

of society, and here, for the second time, we have stumbled into the mental atmosphere of the notorious socialist who, no doubt, is still in contented possession of his precious idea.

Now let us consider the World War. There is hardly need to repeat at this late date that it was not fought to put down militarism, which, metaphorically speaking, is a vigorous baby still. Nor was it fought to make this world a fit place for democracy; most people bide by the opinion that with increased taxation, higher cost of living, unemployment, and poorer material in the world's commodities, it is not quite as fit as it used to be; but to stop war we must obliterate its cause by instituting a federation of the nations of the world, and here again we stagger into the solitary idea of the contented one. Verily, it appears that all ideas relating to industrial problems when traced logically to their origin, converge acutely towards the radical concept of the queer fellow, just as in ancient days all roads led towards Rome.

Education comes next in order, and in connection with this subject we shall be surprised if the exuberant one is not astounded by the array of facts that we are about to produce. Here is a statement concerning the appropriations for the national revenue in the United States for the year 1920. They are taken from a report by Dr. Edward B. Rosa, of the United States Bureau of Standards, and were published in the "Social Service Bulletin," the organ of the Methodist Federation of Social Service, for April, 1921.

United States Appropriations for the Year 1920

1.—Past Wars	\$3,855,482,586	68%
2.—Future Wars	1,424,138,677	25%
3.—Civil Departments	181,087,225	3%
4.—Public Works	168,203,557	3%
5.—Education and Science	57,093,661	1%
Total	\$5,686,005,706	100%

This is an example of the cost of apotheosising the spirit of Nationalism, a practice for which there might have been some excuse when conditions were not ripe for closer union amongst men, but which today, as we have just proved, is expensive to the taxpayer and potentially bestial in its nature, inasmuch as in it, is embodied the spirit of war, which with the improvement in infernal inventions becomes, year after year, more infernally horrible to contemplate.

Think of it, ye gentlemen of the exuberant stock of ideas! This is what we calculated would astound you. Think of ninety-three percent of the national revenue; indeed, we might say "international revenue," since the United States is only a type of the other industrially developed nations. Think of this ninety-three per cent. amounting to billions, spent to pay debts contracted on account of past wars and to provide for defence for the duration of the ones expected, while one per cent. goes towards education.

Don't you think that it is high time commingled shame and disgust with the necessity that exists for international prodigality under our present system of international competition, would suggest the advisability of a complete revolution in our modes of thought—a revolution that would lead us to train ourselves in accordance with the dictates of economic determinism for the time when circumstances will force us to make unnecessary this process by establishing a United States of the World?

And again we have expressed it—that ubiquitous solitary idea of the gentle revolutionist. We shall, however, make amends by trying to get away from it as we pass on to the last topic of those mentioned above, and concerning trade and commerce we shall cite more quote from the Social Service Bulletin

In the number for April 1923, is a quotation from Mrs. Forbes-Robertson Hale's pamphlet written for the Foreign Policies Association, in which she makes the following statements in discussing the international issue at that time: "In England we have a devastated region, but it isn't a geographical one. We have between a million and a half and two million people out of work. . . . The one question in England is food for her people. She must see Europe economically restored so that she can do business with Europe."

Alas! How can we keep our promise when Mrs. Hale so forcibly reminds us of the solitary idea of the idealistic iconoclast? "England's one vital question, is the restoration of Europe," says she. In other words the countries of the world are so intimately associated that they are compelled to depend on each other. Some day they must, owing to this fact, bend to the inevitable, and form the only sort of union that would bring peace, happiness, and prosperity to the human race—the union of the world in a United States; similar and yet very dissimilar but much more freedom-fraught than the United States of America. Can it be then that the origin of the explanation of all maladies of political and industrial society, is involved in the solitary idea of our radiant radical? It is not for us to answer. We can only mention the fact to our readers in all humility that we ourselves found a wonderful enlightening influence in the study and application of the law of economic determinism, from which we found it impossible to escape the conclusion that if we wish to develop along progressive lines we must alter our institutions to suit new conditions, or endure stagnation, misery and final degradation.

PLATFORM

Socialist Party of Canada

We, the Socialist Party of Canada affirm our allegiance to, and support of the principles and programme of the revolutionary working class.

Labor, applied to natural resources, produces all wealth. The present economic system is based upon capitalist ownership of the means of production, consequently, all the products of labor belong to the capitalist class. The capitalist is, therefore, master; the worker a slave.

So long as the capitalist class remains in possession of the reins of government all the powers of the State will be used to protect and defend its property rights in the means of wealth production and its control of the product of labor.

The capitalist system gives to the capitalist an ever-swelling stream of profits, and to the worker, an ever increasing measure of misery and degradation.

The interest of the working class lies in setting itself free from capitalist exploitation by the abolition of the wage system, under which this exploitation, at the point of production, is cloaked. To accomplish this necessitates the transformation of capitalist property in the means of wealth production into socially controlled economic forces.

The irrepressible conflict of interest between the capitalist and the worker necessarily expresses itself as a struggle for political supremacy. This is the Class Struggle.

Therefore we call upon all workers to organize under the banner of the Socialist Party of Canada, with the object of conquering the political powers for the purpose of setting up and enforcing the economic programme of the working class, as follows:

- 1.—The transformation, as rapidly as possible, of capitalist property in the means of wealth production (natural resources, factories, mills, railroads, etc.) into collective means of production.
- 2.—The organization and management of industry by the working class.
- 3.—The establishment, as speedily as possible, of production for use instead of production for profit.