

Destiny

WHEN Columbus headed westward, in expectation of finding a new trade route to the Orient, he took unconsciously the initial step towards the socialisation of world resources. That historic voyage aroused to action the latent energy of the young giant capital. This lusty offspring of the world drama was, henceforward to be the potent arbiter of human destinies. Struggling with the trammeling bonds of an obsolete system of society, opposed by its unwavering traditions; hindered on all sides by its appeal to ancient use and want; still, the fated ruler grew in strength and stature, cunning and resource. And although then, as now, absolutely destitute of understanding, of the reason and nature of the tremendous struggle thrust upon it, nevertheless it was driven inexorably along its crimson path of tragedy by the compulsion and growth of its inherent necessities.

Since production is for profit, under capitalism, its necessity is for the widest ultimate of expansion. The competitive form of this expansion, (the reflex of its individual ideal), involves centralization of authority, the complete harmony of its ramifying social relation, and the interdependence of its productive units. Capitalism for this reason, early came into conflict with the historical condition from which it sprang. Chafing under the decentralized chaos and antique regulation of feudal economy, it set about the task of freeing itself from the hampering shackles of tradition. To accomplish this, it was compelled to evolve its own peculiar methods of modern industry—not only broadened and ending upon the sanctity of custom, scorning precedent. With its banners of "individual right," "freedom," and "opportunity," it has brought into being social forces of production that not alone diverted the course of civilization, not only changed the methods of medieval communalism into the fevered orgy of modern industry—not only broadened and enriched the standards of social well-being, but which involve world revolution, the fall of the cause that engendered them.

But the craftsmen of the new opportunity, with their watchword of "freedom"—to trade and adventure—neither knew nor foresaw the mighty drama of their economic ideals. Simply that the foredoomed sequence could not be evaded. Speeding through the alluring ways of opportunism, its ascendancy has been won through many a frantic scene of blood and agony; and now, triumphant, it is sped, the shuttlecock of its developed forces through cimmerian deeps of duplicity to certain, and possibly violent ruin.

A political society, therefore a slave society, its sole aim is the so-called accumulation of wealth. It alternated between the lurid fury of aggressive industry, and the shivering nakedness of enforced idleness. Its life is exploitation, the breath of its nostrils—profit. It sees not beauty; thrills with no passion; cares not for honor; feels no shame; cold, callous, pitifully blind; sacrificing all things on the altars of its only god—mammon. Foetid with mendacity, foul with deceit, stained with murder, bloated with tyranny, corrupt with inordinate gain—yet is it sateless—hungry as the devouring sea.

But bloody as its service has been, it has fulfilled its destiny, and accomplishment that fulfilment well. It has taken the simple tool from the hand of the craftsman and replaced it with a god-like creation of machinery. Transferring production to the factory, it has dispensed with the drudgery of home industry. Gathering the producers together in industrial communities, it has fostered the consciousness of our slavery. The ideal of property, consummated, finds its reflex in the civilized commune. Commanding the forces of nature, it has stricken the fear of famine, abrogated all necessity of poverty; abolished the weariness of labor. It has studied and toiled, planned, dictated, organized and collected, co-ordinated and concentrated under the spur of compulsion, driven with the impulse of interest, it has unified the world's resources, socialized the world's productive forces, made the earth ready for our habitation. That completed, it comes to halt; faces the impasse of limitation. There the sceptre

of dominion passes to the new society; there the transformation of ownership takes place; the substitution of administration for government; the use of resource for the privilege thereof.

This consumation comes upon us like an armed man. The recent war of the nations has abolished the lingering relic of feudal barbarism and individual idealism, shattered the once honored "rights of man," and replaced them with the rights of society. International capital, with its imperialist urgencies must force international labor with its productive necessities. Everywhere are the economic lines tightening; everywhere, necessity becomes more imperious. Capital is everywhere concentrating, dispossessing the present for the sake of the future. The prospect is inviting. The proletariat will be augmented by the process, exploitation intensified if the productive machine can run at all, and bring us face to face with two irreconcilable necessities: Machine production demanding an ever-increasing consuming capacity, consuming capacity progressively lessened by machine production. Or in other words, a greater volume of surplus on a steadily shrinking market. Hence the frantic desperation of our masters. R.

Where are the Prophets?

WHEN the United States went to war the propaganda that deluged the country was particularly well studied. As is common knowledge with the average worker on this continent, a great love for the English was never very carefully tended by the American press. In fact, the Englishman was ridiculed to a great extent, that as there was always more or less a "type" suggested to the American, so that any individuals they might personally meet who did not quite agree in detail with this "typical" Englishman was just "different" from the average. However, a certain number of good points were discovered to satisfy certain objections to being involved with this unhappy Englishman in war. The ones they particularly wanted the American to idealize, though, were the French—brave, democratic, revolutionary France. So great became their love for France that Joan of Arc was resurrected, and the soldiers sang eternally (or infernally) of how they hear her calling them. Some of them would even get maudlin with sentiment when they sang the refrain. And this from materialistic Uncle Sam.

The heroine is necessary to the American mind. To a great many people in the United States, the theory of the great French writer of detective fiction—"cherchez la femme" (find the woman)—applies in politics. As a result, we have all kinds of literature in popular demand which can show the wiles (or beneficent influence) of woman at work in the courts of Europe in political circles, and even scanning the tactics of war. Having no warlike heroine of their own, and as France had a more extensive history to search for the "idol"—Joan of Arc—a legend known to all—was just the thing. A good "trade mark" in peace times, an excellent romantic medium for heroines during war time.

To those who could not hear Joan of Arc calling them, Lafayette would move them. A profound admiration was soon evidenced, for this French democrat belonged to an age when the American was himself a revolutionist. The American Constitution and Lafayette,—Tom Paine (was he mentioned?—no, he was an Englishman)—such a combination was irresistible among the more enlightened Americans. You may probably recall the astonishing effect the statue of Lafayette had on General Pershing, who is reported to have uttered the simple phrase, "America has come." This was part of a ceremonial,—a democratic ceremonial for the benefit of the people. At last America had a "soul"; it could respond to the emotional appeal from French history. Absorbed in industry and the pursuit of wealth, a "spontaneous" emotion had shown the

world that America "understood." The "soul" had a great vogue in the United States, and this is always being thrust into all sorts of uncomfortable places. It is supposed by some that it insists in the relation between employer and employee, and probably comes out, in the pay envelope, on the coins which state, "In God we trust." Its effect on the exchange value of labor-power is one of its mysterious powers that even President Wilson has not succeeded in making quite clear yet. The American Federation of Labor has not even been successful in presenting it so clearly to the employers in the United States, so that it may be placed in "a closed shop."

The "briberies" of the last few years in France and elsewhere, have somewhat tarnished the "soul" of democracy. But there are "believers" yet, and their disciples are even numerous. President Wilson has discovered the French "soul" was very businesslike.

All this harking back to the past, did not apply simply to the United States. Different characters for different countries. The particular interest in this centering the attention of the people on such standard-bearers of the past, brings out clearly one of the truths Marx gathered from his deep study of political movements, viz:

"At the very time when men appear engaged in revolutionizing things and themselves in bringing about what never was before, at such very epochs of revolutionary crisis do they anxiously conjure up into their service the spirits of the past, assume their names, their battle-cries, their costume, to exact a new historic scene in such time-honored disguise and with such borrowed language." (18th Brumaire).

The preface to the work quoted above, written in 1897 by De Leon, points out the closer connection between French development and American in contradiction of the erroneous impression that "Anglo-Saxon" ideas permeated the U. S. The propaganda used by the business interests in America during the war to sway the multitude with the battle-cries of "Democracy," has certainly given additional proof of the almost unerring certainty of masses of people moving in a given direction under the stress of certain forces which they fail to comprehend.

There are other striking parallels in the events happening today and those criticized by Marx in "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," but today on a more extensive scale than at that period. In Canada, at least Western Canada, the glories of the past are conjured up in the form of an idealisation of a body of men,—the irony of democracy—policemen. The symbol of scarlet and gold survives in Canada as the outward and visible sign that here at least "Democracy has been made safe."

One thing stands out in brilliant relief amidst all these heroes of the past in this exaggerated "lime-light." They are all very respectable radicals, now the heroes of the traders and middle-class. No champion of the "people" appears on the scene,—but the hand-picked heroes of the French Revolution—the Democratic business man becomes the idol of the people for a while—but how long?

The prophets prophesied many things for the workers when they worshipped the idols,—the day of fulfilment is here!! The worshippers are getting off their knees. H.W.

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