

An Appeal to All Slaves

THE fast changing conditions that drive the proletariat to think, and in many cases to act in a certain direction, is the dynamic force of nature, working toward the economic freedom of all mankind.

Capitalist civilization has not come here because there lived through the ages, kings, rulers, schemers of various kinds, but because the objective conditions outside of us kept changing, nature's forces kept buffeting mankind hither and thither like a boat without a rudder on the angry billows. Man, being an animal and a product of nature, had from time to time to conform to the conditions outside of him or go out of existence. We can follow him back to the time he emerged from the primeval forest, and follow his career right until he arrives at civilization; we can clearly see that the conditions imposed upon him in different ages, in different geographical areas, determined his mode of making a living, his institutions, his morals, his religion or in short his general make up, including physical and mental characteristics.

It is from a viewpoint of change, or in other words "evolution" in its broad sense, that the antics of mankind today can be analyzed. His customs and habits can only be explained when we understand that his hunt for food in all history was the driving force; all animals have got to eat to live, even before they can reproduce their kind.

Man is conservative by nature. He clings to the ideology of the past after the conditions that brought his ideas have greatly changed. We therefore find a conglomeration of ideas, antagonistic and conflicting in character. The average American sincerely believes that the U.S.A. form of government is the most democratic and best in the world. An Englishman boasts of the roast beef of Old England even on an empty stomach; he also tells you of the Englishman's high sense of fair play, justice, etc., when millions of men and women are destitute and going hungry all around him.

Changes take place, and can only be noticed when the relationship of time and place is considered. When the mode of getting a living changes the other institutions will eventually change also, including the ideology of the people, which is generally the last to change.

With the development of capitalism science had to make great strides in the competitive struggle. The operatives that built the great factories and ocean going greyhounds, etc., had to be taught and educated by their masters, that they be enabled to produce the maximum of profits.

Science has given man control over nature. To enable those who control the productive forces of society to glut the markets in a short space of time, it extends its usefulness to the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat in their great struggle for

economic freedom. It is the golden key that opens the door that has for years obscured the vision of fettered slaves in all lands. Yesterday it was the tool with the aid of which our masters accumulated untold wealth, and exploited their slaves to the full limit of the world markets. Today it is the weapon being wielded to free mankind from the last form of slavery. The proletarian Science, clarified from the impurities of superstition and reaction is here now to carry out its historical mission.

To those who understand capitalism and see its ugly aspects, its contradictions, its chaos and bankruptcy, they don't become alarmed, as knowledge can only come through understanding the laws and forces of nature. We see capitalist civilization in all its gaiety and culture; we also see the dark, ugly sores planted and inherent in it. We see its carnage of blood and murder, with its prostitutes, intellectual and otherwise, with its fould smelling slums, hunger and privation, disease and death, yes, with its pie and mansions in the sky, but only for the slaves after they are dead. The benevolent charity of those who own the earth and the fullness thereof, meting out doles to hungry slaves. Silk clad females of the bourgeois giving out their cast-off clothing and kind looks to the wives and children of the damn poor. We see the bread line and tickets for soup to the hungry unemployable.

Fellow workers, exert your thinking tank, if any be left, and learn to understand why your misery becomes more miserable. Understand why members of your class do jail sentences and are persecuted by those who rule in all climes.

You who build mansions for those who control your life, you who build beautiful limousines and never ride in them, you who fought your master's battles, who have bled for them in all past wars, get down to business and learn to understand the first time in your hungry lives why your babies go hungry and half naked.

The old earth is bountiful, with your aid all appetites can be appeased if you will only understand the barrier that stands between you and the grub pile.

You slaves of the ages, learn that history is in your favour; cast aside the shackles that tie you to a master class. Read the message of Socialism. Listen to those who expound the knowledge that leads to emancipation and happiness to the whole human race.

Your masters can't solve their own problems. The voice of the industrial proletariat is calling for your help, from the four corners of the earth; they alone can solve society's problems; their's is the historic mission to fulfill. Arise out of your lethargy and help in the great strife for freedom.

D. MACPHERSON.

"G.B.S." Takes the Veil.

Back to Methuselah. A Metabiological Pentateuch. By G. Bernard Shaw. (Constable.)

LIKE ourselves (and Wells) Shaw regards education as the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. Unlike Wells, who, if too advanced in years to be a revolutionary, is an earnest thinker and courteous in controversy—at least to unbarred contemporaries—Shaw has a transcendental disregard for fact which prevents him becoming anything but a boisterous rebel. If Wells's views on education are warped by the miasma of social solidarity, he must at any rate be credited with singularly profound insight on the less directly political aspects of teaching. Shaw's brisk excursions into the political issues of education leave him with no residual energy for useful comment in other directions.

Being politically an apostle of social solidarity he sees in deficient social education the sources of our political and economic evils; and being professionally an epigrammatist he contrasts this with the diabolical efficiency of our technical instruction, the gross defects of which (unlike Wells) he elects to ignore. Having overlooked the class structure of society he fails to recognise that our present system of social education—which sends young men in unthinking thousands to the shambles, keeps up a constant supply of labor leaders who preach increased production in the teeth of company reports showing hundred per cent. bonuses, and so befogs the minds of a large section of the community with celestial glories as to inhibit any intelligent attempts towards material benefit—is in point of fact most damnably efficient in fulfilling its function, i.e., in serving the needs and policies of the governing classes of Europe.

As the Play itself has neither coherence nor conspicuous dramatic power, the Preface chiefly invites comment. This is certainly not dull, since the author rarely uses mere argument where vituperation can be conveniently substituted. It contains a

religion, an ethic and an epistemology, combining the more sinister defects of Christojudaic mysticism upholstered in the new mythological outfit.

The crux of the matter is that Shaw feels compelled to inflict a moral consciousness on the universe. Disregarding the objection of Dietzgen and the modern scientific philosophers (Ostwald, Mach, Whitehead et alia) that such a procedure lies outside the limits of verifiable knowledge, the only difficulty Shaw finds is the seeming imperfection of the works of God. This he contrives to get rid of (along with poor old Helmholtz's eye) by introducing evolution as likewise overcargoed with moral endeavour and purged of materialism. The latter achievement rests on the revitalisation of Lamarck, whose views on evolution are about as germane to modern biology as a discussion of what Christ would have thought about Einstein and the Morley-Michelson experiment if he had lived in the same house as Lord Haldane.

No experiments hitherto performed, Shaw declares (by that you understand since the eighties, when Weismann entered the lists and Shaw found the further pursuit of current scientific advances tedious), dispose of the Inheritance of Acquired Characters, because they consist of mutilations that have no regard for the animal's own moral preoccupations; therefore they are not habits—also not requirements. If you can follow this suggestive train of thought you may be able to understand why the mere disposal of certain experiments performed in the eighties (supposing they are discredited by this ingenious dialectical artifice) and the disregard of any evidence that has since appeared constitute a reason for accepting the Lamarckian principle. Presumably—evidence or no evidence—we must believe in Lamarck, because of the "humane conclusions" of Shaw's incorrigible fellow dilettante Samuel Butler, and while "possible to many for whom Nature is nothing but a casual aggregation of inert and dead matter" is "eternally impossible to the spirits and souls of the righteous."

But it would be an injustice to Shaw to state that he belongs to the nineteenth century merely in his total inability to throw off the teleological outlook. His attitude to truth is that of the eighteenth century in its remoteness from working values. Indeed, it leads him to insist that artists get there before the scientist. Nor does he pause to note en passant that artists get into so many surprising (and inconvenient) corners that the occasional success of an Empedocles in anticipating a scientific theory is inevitably lost sight of in the general confusion till experimentalists come to the rescue. Along with the mechanism of Modern Science, Karl Marx is brightly and summarily dropped into the tempestuous waters of inchoate invective. Marx was one of our materially-minded comrades, too gross to envisage the vital bond between the working-class demand to control its destinies and the revolt of Bayswater spinsters against chloroforming cats.

The indecency of coupling the proletarian movement with all these anti-vivisectionist—anti-vaccinationist—uric-acid—free-diet—sun-cooked-food and kindred reactions of the bourgeoisie to forces it has itself liberated, is only exceeded by the improbability of the working class ever achieving its emancipation until it throws off the slave ethic of humanitarianism for the robust and conscious Will to Power of men themselves about to become a governing class. When a younger man Shaw himself expressed this with vigour and dramatic force in the gospel of St. Andrew Undershaft. But the new Shavian ethic is a condensation of the decadence of Androcles. And if inspired by the earlier Shaw you will assuredly have no pity to waste on the author of Major Barbara living to witness his own intellectual putrefaction.

Thus Shaw, like his master Tolstoi, turns to end his pilgrimage in the convent. He accepts. He has become his old bogey, "the just man made perfect." To this, at last, has his unrepentant amateurishness brought him!

"THE PLEBS"