

The Science of Socialism

(By H. M. Bartholomew.)

FOREWORD.

The readers of the "Clarion" will remember that the present writer wrote a series of articles on Socialist Philosophy in 1915, and that he did not complete that series. Another attempt is now made to present a summary (more-over a somewhat imperfect one) of the fundamental and basic principles of the Socialist movement.

The writer does not claim to be an authority on Socialist philosophy, but he believes that an attempt should be made to present to the thinking public of Canada a clear and reasoned statement of the Socialist position, and the series of articles of which this is the first, is a modest and very imperfect attempt to fill this pressing need.

ARTICLE No. I.

THE SOCIAL EVIL & SOCIAL REFORMS.

It is fashionable these days to talk about the social problems. Everywhere there is a spirit of unrest abroad. People are not contented with their position and with their conditions. Strikes and rumors of strikes spread through the world with the rapidity of a prairie fire. Riots, and unlawful assemblies; grumbings and growlings are the order of the day. Well might a prominent statesman say at the conclusion of the Great War that "there is a new feeling stirring in the hearts of men."

Why all this discontent and noise and confusion worse confounded? Why, when so many lives have been sacrificed in a world conflict to make the world safe for democracy, do we find, in every country, discontent with conditions as they are?

The answer is not far to seek. Conditions are such that they call for discontent, and engender a spirit of revolt. The conditions under which the mass of the people live and have their being in every country are a disgrace to ethics, and revolting to the best that is in men.

It matters little whether we look to countries which enjoy the blessings of a monarchy such as England or whether we look to countries which are basking in the sunshine of a Republic like France—we find—do we not?—that the vast majority of the people are engaged in a wild and cruel scramble for a crust of bread. Highly protected countries like the United States as well as Free Trade lands like England all have this cancer of social discontent, all alike possess a population struggling to make both ends meet. Poverty, unemployment, bad housing condition, long hours of labor, women forced to sell their bodies for a crust of bread—these conditions obtain in every country irrespective of the form of government and the fiscal systems which prevail in these countries.

There is small need for me to labor the point and no necessity for me to give long and complicated statistics in order to show how prevalent is this destitution. The reports in the subsidised press and the observations of ordinary men in any industrial centre will suffice to prove that **the great mass of the people live and have their being in conditions which find no sanction in ethics and which constitute an outrage upon freedom and justice.**

The politicians admit that all is not well in the body politic, and are exceeding busy formulating new platforms in order to—well, make the world safe for democracy! The leaders of the old political parties are falling over themselves in their anxiety to solve the "social evil," and they tell us that if we will but be faithful to them all will be well.

The great flaw in their argument is, of course, that these politicians and their forebears, have been saying exactly the same thing to the electors of Canada since Confederation and conditions have been rapidly getting worse!

By what means do these political wiseacres intend to solve the social problems which confront us today? Examine with care the programme of all these political parties and you will find that they all have one fundamental principle in common. Moreover, the platform of the old political parties possesses this fundamental and basic principle as much as the Farmers' and Labor Parties. Their past legislation and their intended legislation is based upon this omnipotent principle. And the whole of their legislation dealing with the so-called social problems fails and falls to the ground, because the basic principle from which all these acts have their being, is based upon a false conception of what constitutes and causes the social problem.

The statesman of the world, almost without exception, look upon the social problem as a series of small problems. He thinks of the miserable wages which fall to the lot of the majority of the workers—and he rushes to the Legislature and passes a Minimum Wage Act. Or he visits the homes of the wage-earners (at election times) and is horrified by the deplorable conditions which obtain. Such smells, and human rat-holes, fill him with holy indignation, and off he goes to the Seats of the Mighty, talks long and loud about infant mortality and passes—a Housing Act. Or maybe, during a period of depression in trade, the ranks of the unemployed swell to gigantic proportions, riots take place—and Lord Bloated seeks for legislation which will enable the unemployed to dig holes and fill them up again.

That is a fair picture of the "methods" which constitute the "stock-in-trade" of the average politician when confronted by the terrible and increasing poverty which greets him at every turn. The only solution of the Social Problem of which he can think is in terms of—more wages, shorter hours of labor, housing acts, soup tickets and coal coupons, He has neither system or logic. He knows not what he does.

When a portion of the populace become especially discontented with their conditions, what do the statesmen of all political parties do? Without exception they arrest the leaders of the movement of revolt, order out the military forces of the country, pass hurried legislation which will enforce Arbitration Boards, or increase wages or better housing conditions.

They are **Social Reformers**, so they tell us. And I submit that they have called themselves by the right name. They are **Reformers**. The futility of their legislation proclaims the final futility of reforms.

Examine, with care, the social reforms of these political wiseacres, and the result of such an examination will reveal a total lack of system and of idealism. To the reformer practical politics means chance legislation, the application of a gambler's chance to the domain of statecraft. Not for him a co-ordinated body of political and economic thought, not for him an ideal as to what he intends the social life of the nation to be. Abstract reasoning; the cold, lucid deduction of the scientist; the careful application of the laws of cause and effect—these essentials to good statecraft find no place in the politics of the reformer. He is, above all things, a gambler and an opportunist—and the results are writ large in human tragedy.

Such an one shrinks from abstract disquisition of any kind as he shrinks from the plague. It is useless to tell him that abstract inquiry lies at the bottom of nearly all the practical work done in the world; useless to point out that but for the abstract inquiries of the old geometers into the properties of conic sections, the science of navigation could never have attained its present stage of development. It is quite beside the mark to tell him that if it were not for the abstract theories of atoms and volumes, half of our present chemistry would still be undiscovered. No! he is quite content to continue his chance politics, oblivious to the fact that progress can be made in any sphere of human activity only by the possession of a co-ordinated body of abstract reasoning and thought.

I submit, and it is the purpose of this series of articles to prove, that the only sane and logical and effective means by which the social problem can be solved is by the careful application of the methods which are pursued by the scientist in the laboratory. The scientist, in his laboratory, leans over his test tubes, his crucible and his microscope. To him there is but one sane method of procedure—the working from **cause to effect**.

Apply this method to social problems and we shall realise how futile are the efforts of the social reformer. The law of causation does not apply, so far as he is concerned with social problems, he has no conception whether bad housing conditions and low wages are a cause or an effect—all he knows is that when the cry of the workers for justice

becomes too insistent he must pass hasty legislation called Housing Acts and Minimum Wage Acts.

Practical statecraft does not constitute blind working upon any and every symptom of disease in the body politic. The doctor who comes to you when you are sick, sees some pimples on your cheek, pulls his lance from his bag and proceeds to cut out each and every pimple, is a quack. He knows not his business. He is a doctor who looks for the basic cause of those pimples, who strives to diagnose the complaint by the law of causation, and who prescribes treatment which will deal with the basic, underlying causes.

Thus it is with social problems. The social reformer is a quack. He is very busy lancing the pimples, but he leaves the basic, underlying cause untouched. Progress can only be registered when we realize the necessity for a co-ordinated body of thought which works through the laws of causation; when we realise that bad housing, low wages, long working hours and the like, are not distinct, individual diseases, but are **the many symptoms of a common disease**.

It is useless to pass Minimum Wage Acts when we leave untouched the operating causes of low wages. It is criminal folly to enact legislation to "reduce the high cost of living" when the existing social order fosters high prices. But that is what the social reformer is doing in every country. He is lancing the pimples when the blood is impure, he is busy **mopping up the floor whilst the tap is turned on**.

Society at the moment resembles a town which has been the scene of a terrible earthquake. Human lives lie in all directions in a tangled mass of wreckage, which has been bent, twisted, and broken by the tyranny of economic conditions. The social reformer is busy putting putty into the crazy windows, trying to plaster up the tottering walls, placing a new coat of paint upon a falling house. How the gods must laugh!

The necessity of the hour is men and women who have the courage to move out and beyond the petty futilities of patchwork, who will leave behind them the imbecility of the political quack, who possess a clear vision of what they intend the life of mankind to become—who will build afresh the foundations of society, and advance mankind towards the New Jerusalem.

And in the following articles I shall endeavor to show how best this can be done.

Next article:—**Production of Wealth—Value.**

THE SCIENCE OF SOCIALISM.

1. The Social Evil and Social Reform.
2. Production of Wealth—Value.
3. Production of Wealth—Capital.
4. Production of Wealth—Surplus Value.
5. Rent, Interest and Profit.
6. The Nemesis of Nations.
7. The Trend of Social Evolution.
8. The Soul of Man and Socialism.
9. Social Control.
10. Towards the Goal.

The Importance of Definition

TO a Socialist, words and phrases are useful only insofar as they possess a definite meaning according to the facts. They are a means of conveying thought, whereas to the defenders and apologists of capitalism, they serve to conceal thought and to distort the facts. Being the only subject-class in existence today, the proletariat are the first class since the beginning of class society whose philosophy and method of explaining the facts of natural and human history rest on a scientific basis. That is, the proletariat have no incentive to explain the facts other than they are, for their object is not as that of other classes in the past, to impose their rule on and live off the labor of another class or classes, but on the contrary, being the last subject class, their emancipation means the end of exploitation or privilege.

Socialists, therefore, have nothing to hide, but wish to analyze and make clear every phase or point that throws light on the history of natural or social development.

In the United States, a highly developed capitalist