

# Boneheads

By F. W. Moore

W once heard a soap-box orator refer to that section of the working-class that took its inspiration from capitalistic tradition, as "Boneheads."

We ourselves, at that time, not knowing anything of the class struggle, instinctively decided that he included us in the definition, and straightway felt intensely proud. Had not our school-master often told us that our head was made of wood; and was not bone a superior substance to that?

Now in discussing boneheads we admit that the name must be applicable to ourselves in many ways; therefore as brother boneheads we claim the privilege of being allowed to expose some of the foibles of our own large family.

For instance, when we hear men say that unemployment is the workingman's own fault; that unemployed men, as a rule, don't want to work; and that hoboism is not an effect of capitalism, but mere cussedness on the part of thousands of tramps, we are driven inexorably to the conclusion that we are in the presence of unmistakable brother boneheads.

Our judgment on this point is confirmed by an extract from a report prepared from the annals of five years of social research—the report of the "Russell Sage Foundation." The excerpt is as follows, and is quoted from the "Social Service Bulletin" for October 15th, 1924: "In the United States 'the right to work' is being denied to from 1,000,000 to 6,000,000 persons for weeks and even months at a time. In fact a survey of the period covering good and bad years, shows that our capitalistic system keeps from 10 to 12% of all our workers out of employment ALL THE TIME."

And since the cause of these conditions is embodied in the capitalistic system grown decrepit, the effect must be felt, more or less, in every country where the development of industry has reached a high state of efficiency.

So much for the fallacies of the first class of boneheads.

Those of the second are not less absurd: indeed, if anything, they are more so.

Did we not often hear men, the contents of whose craniums were obviously ossified, talk as if it were possible metaphorically to endow the capitalistic Pullman car with a limitless span of life, and to run it along lines built on sleepers of moral reform, while its unmoral environment, born of anarchy in production, must necessarily persist? And in reference to the unmoral environment we would like to present the following statements by Messrs. Wells and Loria. The former has this to say on page 825 of his "Outline of History": "It is the keynote of private enterprise to mind one's own business, secure the utmost profit, and disregard any other consequence." The latter comments on such, and similar, conditions in these momentous words set down in his "Economic Foundations of Society" on page 22: "The necessity of reconciling the social conscience to the existence of economic forms which are essentially corrupt leads by a systematic falsification of logic, to the institution of a settled sophism."

In view, then, of the existence of these powerful agencies, born of habits incidental to the requirements of modern business methods, it is not hard to see that one might as well try to develop the habit of gill-breathing in circus mermaids by repeatedly dipping their heads in salt water, as to attempt to develop morality in a world, compelled by circumstances to breathe the vitiated atmosphere of a decrepit capitalism.

And now we come to fallacy number three which is really the most idiotic of all: "There are too many people on earth," says the Crown Prince of Bonehaddington, "and what we want is a war-lord or two, or a plague, to wipe them out. Nature provides for the destruction of the surplus wild creatures, and why should not man benefit by her good intentions?"

To which atrocious bosh we would reply, that as far as sustenance is required the resources for the support of many extra millions are already at hand. Suppose we take no account of the millions of acres of unused land in America, Africa, and Australia, nor of the immense estates in Europe, at present uncultivated, there could still be set free by an international federation of the world... "such an increase of human energy," says H. G. Wells (ibid) 1095 "as to open a new phase in human history. The enormous waste caused by military preparation and still more enormous waste due to underproductiveness of the great masses of the people either because they are too wealthy for stimulus or too poor for efficiency, would cease. There would be a vast increase in the supply of human necessities, a rise in the standard of life and in what is considered a necessity without any change in human quality but merely its release from the present system of inordinate waste; history justifies this expectation."

Under proper conditions, therefore, the immediate danger of over-population would not exist unless, indeed, we regarded the births of the progeny of so many boneheads as a menace. At the present moment the recorded membership of the family is quite voluminous—too much so to discuss them individually. We shall therefore bring this article to a close with a few remarks about each of three types of useless men whom distorted judgments relieve from the embarrassment of being ashamed of themselves. There is, for instance, a particular kind of plutocrat (the one referred to by Tennyson as fooling the crowd with glorious lies) who encourages the dissemination of pernicious propaganda, and in other ways, does everything in his power to retard human progress so that he may wallow in such pleasures as are compatible with the tastes of a bonehead. Such a man often loves his children dearly, but by broadcasting the seeds of discord and class hatred he is extending aid that is essential to enable our cousins, "The International Association of Boneheaded Militarists" (not necessarily soldiers) to prepare a shambles in which, amongst millions of victims, his sons will most likely be offered up in sacrifice to satiate the greed of the carnivorous God of Rapacity. Poor old fellow! No doubt the flint of his brain is so adamant that no idea could strike it sufficiently hard to conjure therefrom one little spark of reason. His further biography, therefore, could not be interesting.

Our next relative will be introduced by Mr. Wells, although we must confess his language shows little respect for our family. On page 1096 (ibid) he remarks: "We want to get rid of the militarist, not simply because he hurts and kills, but because he is an intolerable thick-voiced blockhead who stands, hectoring and blustering in our way of achievement."

How unkind of Mr. Wells to speak thus of our international kinsman!

We ourselves would have been content to refer to him as an unmitigated petrification of inexcusable stupidity; and even at that he is hardly such a duffer as our next, although he may be a more degraded example of moral turpitude. Indeed our next is the quintessence of boneheadedness. He is, par excellence, the natural-born genius of our family, the champion leatherhead of the world of today. His brain is so hopelessly akin to ivory that it is too weak to see any good in or appreciate in the slightest degree the beneficent activities of a labor union. He is unable or unwilling to reason, and is therefore incapable of realizing that the organization which he despises, is the embryonic form of the machine that will be instrumental in bringing about the consummation of human freedom—a machine whose scattered fragments in every country, will soon be assembled to form the massive political and industrial medium by which humanity will make good the respective prophecies of Tennyson

and Micah concerning the genesis of "The Parliament of Man; The Federation of the World" and of the time when "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

By that time the craniums of our cosmopolitan family ought to have undergone a great modification. Let us hope that the bony part of them will be confined to the skull, and that the petrified insides, made plastic by the lapse of time or the exigency of experience, may once more assume the normal functions that characterize the mental operations of intelligent human beings.

Then, and not till then will a long-suffering world have been liberated from the pernicious influences of the ubiquitous bonehead.

## ARE WE NEARING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PRESENT CIVILIZATION?

I N the issue of the "Clarion" of 2nd January, in his article "where is the Straight Issue?" "C" says, referring to Marx's dialectical conception of history: "Excepting one element in Marx's conception, I myself subscribe to it. That element, the preconception of the inevitability of socialism, as a Darwinian evolutionist who must consider the possibilities of change in any direction, I reject." And a little further on in the article he says, "I might, for instance, have to consider, by certain evidence, the possibility of the defeat of civilization once more."

Surely Comrade "C" has made a mistake in imputing to Marx the inevitability of socialism for he (Marx) points out the same alternative, or something very like it, when he says somewhere in "The Communist Manifesto," (somebody has my 'Manifesto' borrowed, so I cannot give the exact quotation, but in effect it is as follows) "All history has been the history of class struggles, which either culminated in the complete dominations of one class or the destruction of both." (note the alternative J.W.D.)

So, are we nearing the initiation of socialism, or, the destructions of our present civilization?

In view of the mad rush going on at present in all the first class nations towards the development of existing, and the invention of new agencies of destruction in the mechanical and chemical fields, and worse still, very probably in the bacteriological field as well, it seems to me that the balance of probability at present stands in favor of the latter alternative, especially when we consider the backwardness of our class in the knowledge of our own interests as opposed to those of the other class; therefore it behooves us comrades to push the enlightenment of our class, by any and every means to the end that, when the test comes, we will know enough to utterly refuse to re-enter hell for our masters' benefit, but will wrest from them the power to wreck civilization and apply it to the development of socialist conditions of life, and, in spite of themselves, save them from their own insanity; for verily, as the ancients used to say, "Whom the Gods wish to destroy they first make mad."

J. W. D.

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