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Public Opinion

"He who will not reason is a pigot,
"He who cannot reason is a fool,
"He who dares not reason is a slave."

THE time worn expression we hear so much about from time to time uttered by the politicians, labor skates, newspaper men, university professors, and the whole host of others who compose the jackals who voice the sentiments of the ruling class.—It may not be amiss to touch the rough spots and examine what this expression really means to the position of the working class, who are conscious of their exploitation by another class who own and rule.

We of the Marxian school have a different outlook on life from the great mass of the working class who never do any thinking outside of their immediate wants, i.e., a job and a pay envelope, wherewith to buy the eats and other necessities of life. We, then, claim that we have a great deal of knowledge (backed by scientific research) of human society, and its development through the ages, from a time when man was but slightly removed from his brute ancestors. Haphazard catch-phrases and the empty piffle that is spread broadcast by the tools and hirelings of the master class among the mass of wage slaves with an avowed purpose, is subject to be analyzed by the Marxists from a scientific point of view. In order to do this effectively we have to delve into the realms of sociology, economics, history, biology and other sciences, and view them all from the standpoint of change. In other words we tackle the sciences, equipped with a knowledge of the evolutionary process going on in nature. We go further than that; we observe and understand the direction in which nature works her "forces," and discover the laws of their motion, which enable us from time to time to give a fairly accurate account of what is likely to happen in the future, sometimes with something akin to mathematical precision.

If we are scientific, if we are able to put up arguments which the university professors and other intellectuals of our opponents, are unable to combat without resorting to trickery and lies, then we must have "the goods," and we must be deemed competent to analyze all the bunk that emanates from the class who exploit the workers.

Respectable "Public Opinion" varies in time and area. It is not uniform. It is something plastic that is subject to change from time to time, especially among those who have come within the pale of capitalist civilization. As conditions warrant, the machinery that creates public opinion can mould such to suit its own end. During the great war all the churches, politicians, the press and all the resources of capitalist ingenuity were set to work to create the patriotic fever, to stir up instincts that were once deep rooted in the kinship of ancient society. Millions of the most virile wage slaves of all lands have responded and manured the plains of France and Belgium with their dead bodies. Poison gas and other atrocities of capitalism, were voiced against from thousands of pulpits when used on one side. The sanctity of the marriage vow went by the board when the Bishops and other champions of law and justice were hollering to legalize war babies and raise the status of the unmarried mother. The Germans and their "public opinion machinery" were

shouting their heads off about culture, defence of their homes and civilization. Lloyd George and his host of squealers were shouting to hang the Kaiser and spoke of having to go back to Barbarism if the Allies were defeated. Meantime the scheme was working, and the slaughter went merrily on.

We have heard of the angel that was hovering around the Canadian soldier boys; we have heard weird stories of our men being crucified by the wicked Huns. One could write volumes on the various methods and devices that were employed to mould public opinion by the unscrupulous master class of both opposing camps. Each camp fighting with all the weapons at its command, to hold their place in the sun and conquer and dominate the world markets.

After the holocaust of war new weapons were wielded to lull the unthinking into sleep. Production and more production was one of the slogans used and heralded over the width and breadth of the land where wage slavery held its sway. Retrenchment, economy, eat less and work harder was the S. O. S. that the hirelings of the profit mongers sent broadcast to all the wage slaves of Christendom. They told us that greater efficiency in production and consuming less of the necessities of life would bring our tottering civilization back to normalcy at a time when the world markets were already glutted with hoarded war supplies that were no longer necessary. The bald Canadian prairies were turned over, and during the war hundreds of thousands of acres of virgin soil were brought into cultivation by tractors and modern machinery. The banks loosened up in the name of patriotism to help the farmers produce mountains of wheat for the saving of our civilization,—and all that means. Those were the days when any 2 x 4 cockroach hayseed could gain access to the sanction of the bank manager and borrow enough dollars to make a substantial payment on a "Tin Lizzie" or a quarter section of land to increase his misery. War markets warranted generous facilities to the soil slaves, who did not require a whip to drive them to work in the fields 12 to 16 hours per day.

Today the tide has turned; a new code of ethics has come into being to suit the reaction of changed conditions, on which I would like to write at some future time.

Public opinion must necessarily be the voice of the ruling class in any epoch in history. Such opinion in modern society must conform and harmonize with the concept of private property, which is based on the exploitation of wage workers.

This thing is set in motion and is inoculated into the children of the working class in the public schools, and all the other institutions of capitalism are merely pillars built to uphold the Grand Arch of property rights. In other words, the working class live in an environment of property consciousness around which their concepts of rights and wrongs, fairplay, etc., hinge.

The vanguard of the industrial proletariat who are guided by an understanding of Marxism must have a viewpoint which opposes the Shibboleths and bunk disseminated by the master class and their henchmen, and replace this rubbish and vast ignorance among the workers with real knowledge and understanding, by the route of positive science. Capitalist civilization has evolved the formidable

weapon of science to solve its own problems during its struggling development. We are of the working class are learning how to use the same weapon in our struggle for economic freedom. We who have discarded property consciousness for class consciousness are few among the vast hordes of our class; but we are hopeful of the future, knowing that historical development is in harmony with the Socialist movement. The process may appear slow to the uninformed, but to the Marxian student, the driving forces are doing their work. The wheels of time move forever onward, the velocity of change may vary, but it never ceases.

New slogans to delude the workers, or rather to keep them deluded, will grow less effective as time goes on. Capitalism will awaken more slaves from their slumber than we can, but the scientific socialist movement is here to clarify and work in conjunction with conditions. A time will come when the bulk of the working class will have an opinion of its own, which will centre around class consciousness and the struggle for emancipation from wage slavery.

D. MACPHERSON.

The Manufacture of Public Opinion in England

EVERY child knows by this time that the "Bolshevik Dictators," have among other crimes, suppressed the freedom of press. This charge has been repeatedly brought up against Soviet Russia in the past few years, by the liberal and radical bourgeois press, and even by the workers' organs. Well, let us see what this much-vaunted freedom of the press is worth in old, "liberal" England, which boasts of its wise Constitution.

2300 periodicals are published in England. Of this number, the workers (15 million men according to the official statistics of the Social Insurance Bureau) dispose of 45 weeklies, and 75 monthlies, with rather limited circulations. Of 180 dailies, the workers control but one, the Daily Herald, which maintains a precarious existence.

Let us pass over to the circulation. In London are sold 6,500,000 numbers of the daily newspapers. Of these 6,500,000 copies, 150,000 represent the issue of the Daily Herald, the only labor organ. Add to this that the evening editions have a circulation of 3 million, and that there is no evening labor daily.

But this is not yet sufficient to make "public opinion." The bourgeois system of news-feeding is much more extensive; to the daily publications, we must add the 6,000,000 numbers of the bourgeois weekly press, served every Sunday morning to the London population.

And here we have the picture of the contending forces. On one side the heavy artillery of the bourgeois press, and on the other the bean shooter of the proletariat.

Now let us look a little closer at the organization of the bourgeois English press. Let us make a little tour through the malodorous factories where the public opinion of a modern democracy is manufac-

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