

THE WORK OF MARX

It is first necessary to grasp the importance of what Marx expounded as the "materialist conception of history." He meant, briefly, that the course of historical development is governed primarily by economic facts, and only in a quite secondary degree by political or moral or religious facts. In other words, men do this or do not do that, because such a course of action, or inaction, is best adapted to the industrial, or agricultural, or commercial requirements of the day. That is, all social systems are governed by the need of producing most easily the necessities of life. Society is really governed by the laws of manufacture, agriculture, and trade. As Engels puts it: "The materialist conception of history starts from the principle that production, and next to production the exchange of its products, is the basis of every social system. The ultimate causes of all social changes and political revolutions are not to be looked for in the heads of men, in their growing insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes of the methods of production and exchange; they are to be looked for not in the philosophy, but in the economy of the epoch in question." For example, we gave up the slave system not because we thought it inhuman, but because the slave owners found the wage system more economical. When we had discovered that slavery was uneconomical, then we discovered that it was inhuman. Progress is governed by the laws of political economy. Marx brought down politics from the airy realms of vague sentiments, and translated political problems into the terms of material loss or gain. It was by teaching that society is ultimately governed by the production of bread and butter that Marx stands as the leader of the politics of Reality, and has stamped Socialism as the doctrine of practical affairs, leaving its opponents as the preachers of sentiment and romance.

Such being Marx's conception of the basis of history, the materialist basis, his next contribution to Socialist thought was to show that Socialism is coming to pass not because people consciously strive for it and hope for it, but just because it must come as the next step in natural evolution. Primitive communism, production by slaves, feudalism with its serfs, the medieval yeomen and craftsmen, the age of the Elizabethan-merchant adventurers, the industrial revolution, which manufactured paupers and millionaires at the same time—all these systems, passing from one into the next, were the result of a mighty law of social evolution, against which it was useless to struggle, had any one wished. The urgent impulse to proceed with the business of creating wealth drove mankind from one system, as it became old and unsuitable, to another which was possible under modern conditions. And now the Capitalist is, in its turn, becoming impossible, rapidly tending to chaos instead of organization. So it will pass into something better; and the next step is to social co-operation, or collectivism. Marx proved that Socialism is just as inevitable as every other phase has been—just as much beyond the control of those who fear it, or of those who deny it. Since Marx expounded the laws and facts of historical evolution, we Socialists can take the haughty stand that we are the expounders of nature; we can taunt our enemies that they are vainly waving their arms and wagging their tongues in a childish attempt to turn back the destiny of the ages. The Capitalist is weaving his own shroud did he but know it. The Utopians had marshalled to their aid the forces of humanitarian goodwill. Marx placed the laws of science at the disposal of socialists. He wrote: "Their work could have no tenable theoretical basis except that of a scientific insight into the economic structure of society, and that this ought to be put into a popular form, not with the view of carrying out any Utopian system, but of promoting among the working classes and other classes a self-conscious participation in the process of historical transformation of society that was taking place under their eyes." Marx said, and proved, that socialism is part of the "historical transformation." He besought men, as it were, not so much to work for socialism, he rather begged them to be conscious of it, to meet the inevitable with open eyes.

The third great work, which Karl Marx did for socialism was to analyse the Capitalist system in its domestic details, to find the place of Capitalism in the social order. In his materialist conception of history, in his statement of the laws of historical evolution, he always had the great fact of Capitalist

production in the front of his mind. It was in his work on Capital that he went behind the enemy's lines, so to speak, and came back with plans and information which laid the opponent's position open to the first army of organized Labour which had wit enough to attack. He tore out the secrets of the employer's methods by the very roots, it was the most ruthless investigation which the world had seen. He tracked Capital to its den; he demonstrated that the rich man's wealth came from one single source—the labour of his wage slaves. The Capitalist paid his men just enough to maintain them in a tolerable, or intolerable, state of existence; sometimes did not even pay that, so that the sweating slave died off prematurely, and was replaced by another. These servants worked all day producing "value." A quarter, a third, a half, perhaps two-thirds of this "value" which they had created was returned to them as wages; the "surplus value" (i.e. all that remained over after the wages were paid) was seized by the master. After the analysis of Marx there can be no doubt as to the verdict against Capital. Proudhon had already declared that "property is robbery." Marx proved it by scientific reasoning; he proved that Labour, physical or mental, alone creates value; Capital is value which the master takes, by economic force, from the men who created it. In short, Marx seized the master "by his pigtail" and branded him as a thief. Of course the victim "squirmed and struggled and gurgled and guggled," declared that his capital was "the reward of abstinence," "the rent of ability," legitimate interest or profits or some sweeter sounding name than "robbery." It may even be admitted that Marx's theory of value will not fit every exceptional case; it may not explain the value of potatoes during a famine, or the value of a house in Park Lane; but in ninety-nine cases in a hundred the Marxian snickersnee reaches the heart. As Engels said: "The theory of surplus value struck home like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky."

—G. M. TAYLOR in Leaders of Socialism.

Brilliant Chips From Brilliant Minds

"Neither despise nor oppose what thou dost not understand."—William Penn.

"Only by studying all sides of all questions can we arrive at truth."—Wendell Phillips.

"The time has now come when no man deserves to be called intelligent who neglects to inform himself about the socialist movement."—Upton Sinclair, author of "The Jungle."

"Socialism being the product of social evolution, the only danger lies in obstructing it."—F. M. Sprague.

"Socialism is undoubtedly spreading. It is, therefore, right and expedient that its teachings, its claims, its tendencies, its accusations and promises should be honestly and seriously examined."—Prof. Flint.

"The capitalist is no more essential to society than the feudal baron of the middle ages or the slave owner of antiquity."—Prof. Clark.

"Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not existed first. A few men own more capital and that few avoid labor themselves, and with their capital hire or buy another few to labor for them."—Abraham Lincoln.

"The question no longer is 'Is Socialism practicable,' but 'how soon will Socialism be realized.'"—Eugene V. Debs.

"He that cannot think is a fool; he that will not think is a bigot; he that dare not think is a slave."

"A thousand men aglow with faith and determination are stronger than a million grown cautious and respectable."—Upton Sinclair

The Modern Refrain

(Acknowledgements to Tennyson)

Let Whigs and Tories both unite,
There must be stormy weather;
And 'gainst the Socialist's rising power
All parties work together.

W. R. S.

When Suffragettes are brutally assaulted by gangs of Liberal toughs in Great Britain no one is arrested and no fuss is made. But when in answer a Suffragette dog whips a Cabinet Minister, a great uproar is created and the woman is sent to jail.

If a man can corner wheat or get a cinch on a big area of real estate, he is looked upon by the plutocrats as a god and the editors of the plutocrat press fall down and worship him. The Socialists smile scornfully and dub him a parasite.

In Anglo-Saxon countries the class struggle is not recognized so clearly as it is on the continent of Europe. Nevertheless every strike and every demand on the part of the wage workers for shorter hours, higher pay and better conditions, proves the class struggle to be a fact.

A SYNOPSIS

On the Fundamental Cause of the Breakdown of Capitalistic Rule, and the Inevitable Establishment of Socialism.

By Walter Sheppard, Toronto

If you are unbiased and seek honestly for a remedy for the awful ills which are destroying the body politic to-day, we must first apprehend the importance of natural law versus legal law, for it is by the former law only that the human family can continue its existence. But if we wish to understand the cause of 99 per cent of our social ills, we will find that cause has its root in a privileged class who are sustained and tolerated by "legal" laws enacted by their political and griggish hirelings. Now the structure of the social philosophy must demarcate between these two laws. The proletariat rights are sustained by natural law, and the privileged parasitic class justifies its existence by its own mythical mystical legal laws. Now natural law is God made, and legal laws are man made. If we draw a logical deduction from the foregoing premise, we will clearly see that this privileged "upper" class has never accomplished anything justifying its existence as such.

Now some, perhaps, most people have a hazy idea as to the organization of the curse of "privilege." If I was asked the question, I would unhesitatingly say, when man first put his brother in bondage. There we see the inception of the upper and lower classes, and right from this ancient system of body-snatching through out all history there have been poor and rich, upper and lower, educated and uneducated.

What is causing this stealthy stir in society to-day? And what caused the agitation in the days of the lowly Nazarene? And why didn't the latter ultimately in the salvation of the poor?

If we perceive aright we will see that nineteen hundred years ago the proletariat were opaque through their illiteracy, and it was because of this that any signs of revolt were soon stamped out. But let us imagine Jesus with his own newspapers, and an intelligent educated working class behind him as we have them to-day, and it is safe to predict that ere another moon went down, this immortal sentence of Jesus: "I have not come to bring peace, but a sword," would be put into effect. Well then we can safely deduce that all preceding revolts have failed because the workers have not been educated, and through this they have not realized clearly and demarcated precisely the worker and shirker. But a little reflection into modern life or a little logical reasoning with himself, ought to convince the most hide-bound human ass, that there is one class, who get what they don't earn; and another class, who don't get what they do earn; and that this glaring injustice springs from the curse of privilege to manipulate the laws which griggish and political hirelings are paid to enact. Now the moral I am trying to force home is, that the worker has a choice of two roads. One will lead him into untrodden fields of contentment and happiness consequent upon the soul being freed from its insidious bondage of capitalism; and the other road is but a continuation of this present system, which condemns and sentences the many to be but mere harvesters that the upper privileged parasites might have life which retrospection tells us will have an ending in a bloody and chaotic insurrection.

But socialists maintain that by acting now in a class conscious manner, the workers can by voting the Socialist ticket bring a revolution in society that will mean salvation to them and death to the privilege and predatory operations of the upper class. All who will study for themselves will see that no matter which road we take, socialism is inevitable through a total and general collapse of this system; but the best road to take is to work out our own salvation through the social philosophy.

Municipal Socialist Preamble

The following is from the preamble of the Municipal Platform, Socialist Party, Portland, Me., published in pamphlet form and widely distributed. This preamble shows how educational work can be done for Socialism in municipal elections.

"Another winter faces us, with the prices of coal, food, clothing and many other necessities of life very high and still tending to rise, and with wages stationary, or best, only slowly advancing.

What is the end of all this? What are we going to do about it? As all intelligent, thinking people to-day admit, our present difficulties are in main due to the control, by private monopolies, of the means of producing and distributing the necessities of life. In other words, the Trust System is to blame.

No more Tariff Revision, no half-way measure will avail. Nothing can fundamentally remedy the evil except the program of the Socialist Party.

Since the trusts are responsible for present evils, we stand for the people's ownership of the trusts, and of all social means of producing and distributing wealth, i. e. food, clothes, fuel, etc., &c.

Both the Republican and Democratic parties, whatever their claims, are alike in supporting the Capitalist class in those privileges through which we, the people, are robbed.

We declare that these evils together with graft in all its forms, in City, State and Nation, spring from the environment and customary practices of the capitalist system and that they cannot be cured by the election of so-called good, or independent candidates so long as that system continues. Neither can freedom nor the general welfare exist under it.

We further declare that the unbiased conscientious study of the capitalist system, with the aim to know its real character, and its comparison with the proposed socialist system, is the most urgent duty of every citizen."

Carl Harvey (editor "North American Review")—"The time has now come when no man deserves to be called intelligent who neglects to inform himself regarding the Socialist movement.

Prof. J. H. Moore (p. 189 "The Universal Kinship")—"The only proper attitude to assume towards this growing Socialist movement is the attitude of perfect willingness to investigate its claims."

Archbishop Vaughan (London, England)—"The leaders of Socialism to-day are for the most part clever, and honest men, who fight a severe and unrelenting battle against great odds, and for the sake of humanity and truth."

THE FERNIE ELECTION

John D. Harrington made a clean, honest fight from start to finish, but he lost. However, his loss must make some of the workingmen of the city and district thoroughly ashamed of themselves and it certainly brands them as traitors. In a three cornered fight, such as we had in Fernie, Harrington, with a reasonable amount of support should have had an easy victory, but whisky was predominant. It is seemingly always a factor in the working class and catches more votes for the unscrupulous politicians than honor. It is ever thus. Time and again we have seen the effect, and this election certainly had all others backed of the map. Nearly every saloon, and hotel in the country flowed with the deceptive fluid, supplied no doubt from friends and supporters of Ross and the McBride administration. However the fact that John D. Harrington was defeated (dishonestly) does not for a moment dampen the ardor of the Socialists of Fernie riding, and already they are after new members and new supporters. The Socialist party does not wait until a few days before an election and then spring into the political arena with claws outstretched, and with policies of no end to gull the ignorant and easy going workers; it is always preaching and teaching the doctrines of the betterment of mankind. It is a doctrine of evolution, a doctrine which if properly understood by the men it tries to defend, would reach from pole to pole. It is accustomed to defeat, but so far every defeat has meant a victory. The capitalist parties are realizing more and more every day that Socialism has come to stay and must be reckoned with us.—District Ledger.

Alice in Wonderland, and Through the Looking Glass are stories for children. Nevertheless there are good thoughts in them for grown ups. In Through the Looking Glass little Alice wanders into a strange country where there are kings and queens and knaves. These are queer people and put out funny ideas. She gets into all sorts of trouble with them and finally they try her for treason or something and are going to kill her. She becomes indignant at the injustice of her trial and in a flash of inspiration cries, "You are all nothing but a pack of cards."

With this declaration the knaves and queens and kings all tumble down and she awakes with the pack of cards before her with which she had been playing before she went to sleep. In the same way the worker lives surrounded by lawyers and capitalists and rent collectors who put forth funny, funny ideas as reasons why the worker should allow them to run the country. They shut the worker out of his job and out of his home. They make him go to the city office and pay taxes. And if he does not do just as the lawyer and rent collector and capitalist say he should, he is tried and condemned as a criminal. When is the worker going to awake and tell the judge and the lawyer and the rent collector, "You are nothing but a pack of foolish paper bogies." When labor gets mad and says that, he will awake from the nightmare of capitalism into the pleasant sunlight of socialism.

The labor thief has culture. Have not you wage slaves been set to slaving to print books for him that he may read? Have not you wage slaves been set to toiling long hours that he may have boats and railways to transport his carcass from city to city that his eyes may be feasted with strange sights and that he may talk learnedly of distant cities? The labor thief is physically well. Have not you wage slaves been set to work to produce good food for him and turkish baths and warm houses? The labor thief is sleek and prosperous. You wage slaves are that much the poorer because of his sleekness. Yet the labor thief looks down upon you wage slaves as not being in his class. How long are you wage slaves going to stand being robbed by him in order that you may be held in contempt?

The Appeal to Reason is showing up the corruption of the American Courts in grand style. In the United States the courts are corrupt even from the capitalist standpoint. In Canada we do not have that added corruption. The courts over here are the instruments of the capitalist masters and follow the laws. They are instruments of repression but that oppression in the majority of cases is exercised according to rules of law. Our courts are better than the American—as yet.

LOCAL OPTION

(The following letter is a clipping from the Vancouver World. We wonder how such an article, advocating Socialism so plainly, ever crept into the columns of a plate paper.)

Editor World—Will you permit one who has not previously "spoken" to the question, and who will not be permitted to vote upon it, a word or two in regard to local option.

From the attitude of leading Socialists in this province in regard to this measure, and from the fact that the Rev. A. W. McLeod, of Nanaimo, was recently expelled from the Socialist party of Canada, because he would not sever his connection with the Local Option league, the inference is logically drawn that Socialism and Local Option are fundamentally opposed. It is likewise inferred that Socialism and the liquor traffic are on very friendly terms.

Neither of these inferences is correct, insofar as the international Socialist movement is concerned. In Germany the Socialists have just voted a national boycott on whisky—for political reasons, to be sure, but they have previously on frequent occasions advocated temperance propaganda in their ranks and advised alliance with the temperance workers as a means of advancing the interest of the working class.

In regard to local option itself, it is a fact that the principal of referendum is embodied in the platforms of every Socialist organization of any note in the entire world—with the exception of the Socialist party of Canada and the Independent Labor party of Great Britain, and the latter is not admitted by the former to be a Socialist organization. It is only just to announce that the Canadian Socialists are not affiliated with the international Socialist movement. If the name is not entirely a misnomer, local option merely means that the matter in question shall be referred for decision to the voters in any given locality, and that is the principle of referendum—that measures, not men, principles nor persons, shall be the subjects of election. Surely nothing is more reasonable, more just, more democratic than that! The people themselves shall decide whether the licensed saloon shall be abolished or not; those who pay and those who profit to sit in equal judgment upon the "poor man's club" as a revenue producer for the community; those who would be prohibited to unite with those whose interests lie in licenses to settle the burning question, "Does prohibition prohibit?" If, indeed, prohibition does not prohibit, why do we find the liquor interests ranging themselves against any measure even looking in that direction? If more liquor can be disposed of by a "blind-pig" than in a licensed shop why this desperate distaste for the sightless rooster? But this is beside the question. All that is asked is a referendum in the matter and, while personally, and as a Socialist, I am firmly convinced that so long as the profit system of production prevails there will be little or no alleviation of the evils of society (the liquor traffic among them), yet I am more than willing to let the people decide whether these evils exist by and through their consent and cognizance.

Why stop at the liquor question, however? I should like a ballot on the social evil. Shall this desperate iniquity continue to brazen itself in our midst or shall it be prohibited? And there is little doubt that such a referendum would decide sweepingly to abolish the evil; but the social evil would refuse to be abolished until such time as these people who voted for its abolition should learn that the means by which people make a living cannot be abolished by popular vote. Other means of livelihood must be substituted first. Another pertinent matter for referendum is the slaughter of the millions of workmen each year by corporate greed and indifference to safety in workshop, mine, railway and ship. If the people were asked whether these things were with their consent "No!" and when the red blood of the workers continued to flow, after their dietum just as freely as before, maybe they would begin to think and decide that no longer must profit be the basis of human industry and undertaking. Socialists generally admit that education is the one thing needful to the success of their cause, and surely it is not logical to deny to the voters so fine a school of experience as that provided by these measures thrusting responsibility upon the back of every man with a vote. Social lessons are learned only by social experience, and every experiment in social action leaves its lesson written fair that all may read whose eyes are unblinded by economic interest or personal prejudice. Even the experiment that fails acts as a probe to the social conscience and awakens it to a search for the underlying cause of the deadly ills of society. The referendum is not Socialism—no, not even when prefaced by the initiative (the right to initiate such measures as may seem desirable to a given number of citizens, but it is a way, perhaps THE way by which Socialism may be promoted and developed in the midst of capitalistic decadence—and it is none the less such a way because introduced by persons of an anti-Socialist tendency. Let us, therefore, have the referendum, local option and as much more of the same sort as may be thrown within our reach. Let us have it and use it, even though it may come to a given agency of persons who have stolen a splinter from a Socialist plank in the hope to ride upon it to some fair haven of office or preferment. The splinter is too little. Bye and bye some wiser body will ask for the entire plank, and finally the corporate wisdom will demand the platform itself. True Socialists for local option.

BERTHA MERRILL BURNS.
561 Cordova street east, Vancouver

SUB PRICE OF COTTONS
One Year, 52 copies 50c
Six Months, 26 copies 25c
Three Months Trial, 13 copies 10c

The chief cause of all misery lies in the fact that the capital and land is possessed by a few thousands, unlike formerly in this country. In all slave systems, those who held the means of labor were the masters; all who did not were the slaves. No mere capitalist reforms can cure, or even alleviate this great misery; the revolutionary workers will not go back to primitive production and leave the social resources—the modern capital—the result of labour of brain and brawn, of this and former ages—in the possession of useless parasites, who have plundered the workers by profit and interest, and have shown themselves thoroughly incapable of carrying on the affairs of society in an orderly way. Neither will the workers leave the natural resource—the free gift of nature—in the hands of a useless few, to plunder them by rent. No; the only reasonable and progressive alternative for the disinherited workers of the world to take is to unite and gain possession of government, the agent of society, by the revolutionary Socialist ballot, and in uncompromising, class conscious manner to accomplish the historic mission of their class, the overthrow of the last and meanest form of human slavery, the wage-slave system of capitalism; then to institute in its stead the system with the kind of ownership indicated by the present kind and use of the instruments of labor, and by the growing spirit of the age, collective ownership, and also fraternal management of the great monopolies in the means of wealth production, distribution and exchange. Then all useless toil, panics, poverty, starvation, adulteration, and most of the ignorance crime, intemperance and other miseries will be banished from the earth; the hours of labor reduced to one-half, or to one-fourth their present number, the production of wealth be greatly increased, and the introduction of improved machinery be a blessing to all.

Then, and not till then, will true civilization reign, literature, art and the sciences be more general, class distinction be eliminated, the brotherhood of man become a fact, morals take a higher plane, and life become something better and nobler than a weary struggle for mere mere existence.

COLLECTIVIST.

THE BASIS OF MORALS

The old idea was that citizens were subjects because the ruler was a king. The modern idea is that the ruler is a king because the citizens are subjects.

The two viewpoints are diametrically opposed and produce the opposite practical effects when taken as maxims of political conduct. The old idea was that the king was the cause and the subject the effect. The king had royal blood in his veins and was ruler by divine right. His station in life was fixed and stable. He was the cause.

As a result the subject could do nothing to change his position. He was merely an effect and an effect cannot but follow the cause. Therefore, it was useless to struggle to break the power of the king. Nay, more. It was impious and flying in the face of the established order of things.

But when the subjects began to reason that the king was king because they were subjects, they changed the process of reasoning. They said that they were the cause and the king the effect. As a result the king would have to do as the cause wanted. If the subjects were the cause of the kingdom then the subjects could establish a republic and do away with the king who was merely an effect of their wills. The republicans today show that the latter reasoning was correct.

The same process of distinguishing which is the cause and which the effect is being gone through at the present time. The conservative Christian and the moralist take the reactionary viewpoint while the Christian socialist and the materialist take the other viewpoint. The moralist says that a man lives in bad surroundings, wears poor clothing, is weak and dirty and gets poor wages because he is immoral and does not love God. The materialist and Christian socialist declare that a man is immoral and does not love God because he gets poor wages, lives in bad surroundings, wears poor clothing, is weak and dirty, or because he has too much riches and not enough labor.

Just as the king idea worked out in practise in diametrically different ways according as the viewpoint was altered, so the moral idea results in a different line of conduct according as the moralist or socialist viewpoint is adopted. The moralist holding that morals are the cause, sends missionaries and bibles and tracts to the slums. The socialist holding that the material conditions are the cause, works to raise wages, to give the workers all they earn, to abolish the politician and the financier and banker and dividend receiver and rent collector, in short to take the only measures that will effectually abolish poverty, slums, poor clothing, overcrowding and all the physical degradation attendant upon the crowding together of wageworkers to the profit of the parasites.

Socialism will give good homes to the workingmen and women. It will not give palaces to the useless while the useful live in hovels.