

# The Science of Socialism

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Article No. 7.

## THE TREND OF SOCIAL EVOLUTION.

In order to complete our analysis of the existing social order, and to appreciate to the full the task of future statecraft, it is essential that we examine the trend of social evolution today.

My last article revealed the necessity of close analysis of the economic structure of society, and traced the evolution of human society from ancient society to modern capitalism. It is now our task to submit modern capitalism to the searching rays of economic determinism, to ascertain the trend of the economic structure of modern society.

The change from Feudalism to modern Capitalism was an industrial revolution. As we have seen, the advent of machine production spelt the doom of individual production. Instead of the individual craftsman working with his own tools on his own raw material in his own home, we have large factories, elaborate machinery and vast masses of workers under one roof and one management. In other words, the change from Feudalism to modern Capitalism was the painful evolution of society from individual production to social production. But although Capitalism brought social production, it maintained the old concept of individual ownership of the essentials of wealth production, so that this contradiction between socialised production and individualist possession manifests itself, as Engels ably states, as "the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie."

**This antagonism between workers and capitalists resulting from the individual possession of the machinery of wealth production, prepares the death-bed of modern Capitalism. Just as Capitalism was born in the death throes of Feudalism, so Socialism will come from the womb of decadent Capitalism.**

Everywhere can we find ample evidence to justify this assertion.

We saw, in a previous article, that the tremendous economic gulf between the House of Have and the House of Havenot is the inevitable result of the private ownership of the machinery of wealth production. The individual ownership of that machinery compels the wage-earners to hand over to the possessing classes a very considerable portion of the wealth which they produce. **Surplus-value, created by the workers and appropriated by the capitalist class, is the means whereby the capitalist class live and have their being.**

Let us examine this socialised production and capitalist appropriation a little more closely.

The worker works for eight hours, but, for the greater part of that time he is laboring for the especial benefit of the capitalist class. He produces, that is, a greater quantum of wealth than he receives in wages. **All that he produces, over and above his wages, is divided among the capitalist class as rent, interest and profit. In other words, the working class produces more than it consumes.**

In Feudal society practically the whole of this Surplus-value was consumed by the class which appropriated it. This is not so today. A very considerable proportion of this Surplus-value is employed by the capitalist class to form new capital. There is a gradual and steady accumulation of capital, and, de facto, a greater and greater production of use-values, or commodities.

**The inexorable law of capitalism is accumulation of capital, increase in output of wealth. But the consuming power of the workers is less than its productive power, so that we find the wheels of modern industry checked and even stopped by an over-supply of goods, which cannot be sold by the possessing class at a profit. Since the year 1825 these "industrial crises" have visited modern society at fairly regular intervals and with greater misery and**

suffering with each industrial depression. Says Engels:

"In these crises, the contradiction between socialized production and capitalist appropriation ends in a violent explosion. The circulation of commodities is, for the time being stopped. Money, the means of circulation, becomes a hindrance to circulation. All the laws of production and circulation of commodities are turned upside down. The economic collision has reached its apogee. *The mode of exchange is in rebellion against the mode of production.*"

These industrial crises which sprang from the antagonism between socialized production and individual appropriation prepare the way for other and still greater crises. During the financial panic and general industrial chaos which such a panic brings in its train, the principle of "natural selection" is operative. It is the survival of the fittest in the realm of industrial warfare. The strongest and most powerful industrial and financial concerns are able to weather the storm at the expense of their smaller and less powerful antagonists. In other words, **the crises which spring from the individual appropriation of the social production of wealth, result in still greater accumulations of capital, in still further increasing the economic gulf between capitalist and wage-slave.**

The economic antagonisms of modern society are still further increased by the absolute necessity of new and larger markets. The tendency of modern capital to accumulate at the expense of the power of consumption of the mass of the people, forces the capitalist to search for markets abroad. At first this was no very difficult task. Africa, Asia and parts of South America offered him a new and a vast market for his constantly increasing supply of commodities. But capitalistic methods of production, seeking new and greater markets for its over-plus of capital, cannot forever continue its mad race. The time comes when the capitalist system of production has established itself all over the world, when the difference between the capitalist's variable and his constant capital becomes acute. Overproduction has become chronic; the struggle for markets becomes more intense; industrial crises follow each other with greater rapidity—larger and more powerful combinations of capital crush under their iron heel the smaller and weaker organizations.

Trusts, Combines, Price-rings and Kartells—these are the inevitable result of capitalist accumulation. The capitalist class are forced to recognize the economic futility of industrial competition and the economic advantages of combination. These financial and commercial combinations grow in magnitude and in power, and the capitalists who preside over these cosmopolitan combinations take to themselves powers which no Feudal king possessed.

The Trust is the last refuge of demoralized Capitalism, as it is the finest example of socialized production. In such a combination the problem of the social production of wealth has been completely solved, and the highest plane of economic evolution heretofore has been reached.

But we must not forget that if the Trust is the last word of economic evolution upon social production it is certainly the last word upon industrial monarchy. **The Trust is the best example of Capitalism of the inexorable antagonism between socialized production and individual appropriation.**

Feudalism gave place to Capitalism, and as the result, individual production made way for social production. So do we find that Capitalism gives place to Socialism and as the result social production and, individual appropriation make way for social production and social ownership.

Let us hear what Karl Marx has to say upon this all-important phase of scientific Socialism. He says: "That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the laborer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many laborers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization of this ex-

propriation of the many capitalists by the few, develops on an ever extending scale, the co-operative form of the labor process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labor, the entanglement of all peoples in the world-market, this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The land of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."

**The Trust or Society—that is the choice which lies before us.** On the one hand the class ownership of the machinery of wealth production for the purpose of class possession of surplus-value: on the other hand the social ownership and social control of that machinery for the well-being of all.

The antagonism inherent in modern Capitalism speeds the day of economic emancipation. Industrial crises, world wars, financial panics, increased capitalist combinations—they spell the doom of capitalist appropriation. More and more does the State encroach upon the powers of capitalist and landlord. In many cases, the State has deemed it essential to assume the ownership of great monopolies. And there are not wanting those people who see in this State ownership of industry a form of Socialism.

It cannot be too often proclaimed that the Socialist Commonwealth does not consist of State owned and operated factories and mines. Capitalism, it is true, forces on more and more the transformation of the vast means of production into State property, but those State owned industries can, by no stretch of the imagination, be called Socialized Industries. But it does show the way to accomplish this revolution. It gives the workers political power, it enables the mass of the people to direct and guide the government of the State, and it will be the next step in social evolution when the workers of the world unite, throw off the chains of economic servitude, and turn these Trusts and State-owned industries into **Socialized means of the production and exchange of wealth.**

In other words, **Socialism is the historical sequence of modern Capitalism.**

Next article: "The Soul of Man and Socialism."

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