

Socialism and Spiritual Progress

A Paper Read by Comrade H. Strinsky Before the S. D. P. of San Francisco, at the Anatomy of Sciences April 18, 1901.

It has been said that Socialism would check spiritual progress. Great men like Herodotus, Spencer, Matthew Arnold, Robert Ingersoll, and Dr. David Starr Jordan have expressed themselves as not favoring the radical change which Socialism would bring about.

Socialism, they say, proposes to educate the children to provide employment for the individual, and even to equalize, to a certain extent, the remuneration for labor performed. This, they fear, would retard spiritual progress. On the one hand, the care that a well-governed society, such as the Socialists propose to establish, would bestow on the individual would diminish, or perhaps destroy, the stimulus for individual effort.

It is the aim of this paper to discuss and to ascertain the truthfulness of the foregoing assertions. Is it true that poverty tends to stimulate human energy? That the fear of becoming poor calls into play the latent powers of the individual? Is it true that the best work done for the human race is due to the incentive of gain? And is it true that in the struggle for existence (in the manner it is being conducted now) the best, the ones who render most valuable service to society, survive?

If it were true that poverty stimulates human energy and that the fear of destitution calls forth intellectual activity, it would necessarily follow that the greatest number of great men would have sprung from the ranks of the poor. That the greatest number of poets, writers and scientists would have sprung from humble origin. But it is not so. It is true that every now and then we come across men like Oliver Goldsmith, Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, Whittier, and others, who have grown from poverty to eminence. But it remains for the opponents of Socialism to prove that it is because of poverty that they were great, that they would not have been as great, or greater still, had they lived under more favorable conditions.

I was anxious to ascertain whether it is true that the greatest men were the masters of their fate. In order to find out whether the circumstances and opportunities of great men helped them to develop their faculties, I have collected the names of thirty volumes, edited by Charles Dudley Warner and entitled "World's Best Literature."

There I have found that the great men who came from the poor are far and few between; that, as a rule, the greatest of men were those who had the opportunities to develop their talents. I have taken out a few of the names they are most known to us and have placed against every name, in an abridged form, their respective material positions: Dante—the son of a well-to-do citizen; Aristotle—the son of a scientist; William Harrison Ainsworth—the son of a prosperous merchant; Matthew Arnold—the son of Thomas Arnold, a celebrated man of letters; James Matthew Barrington—a man of means; James a successful attorney; Edmond Burke—the son of a successful attorney; Francis H. Burnett describes her own life as an English girl in a comfortable Manchester home, leading a well-regulated existence with brothers, sisters, nurse and governess; Robert Browning—his surroundings were typical of English moderate prosperity; Sir Richard Burton—a nobleman; Lord Byron—a nobleman; Tennyson—his boyhood was passed in an atmosphere of poetry and music; Kipling—birth, education and early experience were such

as to qualify him for his elected work in this world; Shelley—the son of a gentleman who had inherited a great estate; Adam Smith—the son of a well-connected lawyer; Hegel—the son of a well-to-do official of Public Revenue; Henry Thomas Buckle—the son of a wealthy merchant; Goethe—an aristocrat; Henrik Heine—the son of a wealthy merchant; Victor Hugo—the son of a wealthy official; Arthur Schopenhauer—father, a merchant of prosperous circumstances; Henrik Ibsen—a nobleman, a successful business man; Dostoevsky—a father; Count Tolstoi—a prince; Ivan Turgenev—a wealthy land-owner; Lowell, Longfellow, Wendell Phillips, Oliver Wendell Holmes—of fine stock and favorable conditions; and our own Karl Marx and Lassalle—sons of wealthy merchants.

Thus we see that the majority of great men have been educated by their own people, that they have been helped by their greatness, that they had the opportunities to develop their genius—in short, that they have lived under most favorable conditions.

That the incentive of gain is the underlying cause to which we owe our civilization is also untrue.

The greatest men—those at the zenith of our civilization—were not advanced men—men who were helped with them, by extraordinary effort, the train of human progress. "Even a dead fish can go with the stream," said Smiley, "but it takes a man to swim against it." The martyrs of civilization were those who swam against the stream. And a hard task it was! We know what they suffered; and we know that the world has been benefited to persecute any advanced movement, any new discovery or scientific theory. To say that the incentive of gain called forth true greatness is not only a falsehood, but an insult to the best and noblest spirits of mankind!

It was not the incentive of gain that made Christopher Columbus venture, at the risk of his life, to explore unknown regions; that made Newton think, and it was not the incentive of gain that made Galileo assert the truth. The incentive to gain invented no new machine, produced no work of art, wrote no good book, sang no true poem. On the contrary, the greatest of men have worked at the cost of their material welfare, have labored in the face of prosecution. They had to fight the blindness of the masses, the ignorance of the superstitious, the intolerance of the religious, and the tyrannous tactics of the powers that be. But the human race is destined to grow, and nothing in the world can check that growth!

The great man needs no incentive for the exercise of his faculties other than the love for his work. His very happiness consists in so doing. Arthur Schopenhauer reports that Aristotle, in his "Politics," tells us that the free exercise of any power means happiness. And Goethe declares in "Wilhelm Meister" that a man born with a talent which is meant for use, finds his greatest happiness in using it.

The artist needs no more inducement to paint, the musician to compose, the poet to sing, than does the mother to embrace her child, or the lover to visit his beloved.

The assertion that in the struggle for existence the fittest are those who are of greater value to the human race is equally untrue.

If this were true, then it would follow that those who have rendered better service to the human race should have been the successful ones. But this is not the case. A few examples will suffice.

In the words of David Allyn Gorten, M.D.: "The inventor of the steam engine made a fortune. Sickles, the man who perfected the steam-engine that bears his name, died in penury. Jenner, the discoverer of vaccination, died in moderate circumstances. The man who discovered the anesthetic quality of ether, a few examples will suffice. Gibbs, the inventor of the sewing-machine that bears his name, died poor. And the inventor of the little attachment called the hemmer, on which Singer made a fortune, lived in extreme poverty. Gerard Sickles, the man who invented the first envelope machine, had made other people immensely rich. The man who revolutionized the cotton industry (out of which fortunes have been made) never made anything out of his invention for himself. Franklin and his coadjutors in electro-dynamics never made anything but fame for themselves. Even Morse, whose inspired genius developed telegraphy, never greatly enriched himself. On the other hand, men who contributed nothing to either science, letters or inventions possess colossal fortunes. How did they do that? Simply by taking advantage of the genius and industry of the other man. The struggle for life is being fought in a shameless and treacherous manner. Cunning, deceit and exploitation are the weapons. The one who is better equipped with such weapons is the fittest and therefore the most successful. Thus are the Socialists justified in their assumption that today the survival of the fittest means the survival of the toughest. And Huxley says well in his "Evolution of Ethics" that "whatever the difference of opinion may exist among experts, there is a general consensus of opinion that the ape-and-tiger methods of the struggle for existence are not reconcilable with sound ethical principles."

So far we have seen that what Socialism would undo would not demoralize the growth of spiritual progress. We will now see what Socialism would do to promote it.

The development of talent needs a field for its activities. An appreciative society forms the fertile ground on which talent and genius can grow to better advantage. The appreciation of a people constitutes the encouragement for intellectual ambition. A

just appreciation can be rendered only by the intelligent and cultured. The intelligence of a people, the degree of intellectual development, the amount of culture and refinement of a certain society will form the essential factor that will determine the moral, spiritual and intellectual vigor of that age.

Says Henry Thomas Buckle, in his "History of Civilization of England": "Whatever the moral and intellectual progress of man may be, it resolves itself, not into a progress of natural capacity, but in a progress, if I may say so, of opportunity—that is, the improvement of the circumstances under which that capacity comes into play. Here, then, lies the gist of the whole matter. The progress is one not of internal power, but of external advantage. The child born in a civilized land is not likely as such to be superior to one born among barbarians, and the difference which ensues between the acts of the two children will be caused, so far as we know, solely by the surrounding opinions, knowledge, association—in a word, the entire mental atmosphere in which the two children are respectively nurtured."

The question, therefore, of whether or not Socialism would promote spiritual progress depends on whether or not it would improve the circumstances "under which the capacity of man, after birth, comes into play."

Now, what will Socialism do to improve the circumstances to bring about the "external advantages"? Socialism will ultimately do away with commercialism and extreme poverty. Commercialism and extreme poverty are the most corrupting and degrading influences in society today.

A story is being told of Fourier, the great French Socialist. When he was a child his father kept a store. Once in the absence of his parents he was called to attend a customer. The little boy, in his innocence, told the customer the true price of the article. For this he received a beating from his father, and was told never to do so again. When he grew to manhood, and recalled the incident of his childhood, he concluded that a system under which children are beaten for telling the truth is not a good system.

Many great men are unanimous in their denunciation of the spirit of commercialism. Alexander Dumas tells us that merchants and thieves serve the same God. Herbert Spencer admits that a man who cannot tell a lie with a straight face is not fit to stand behind a counter. And Tennyson asks, "Who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?" Yet the merchant is today the most successful man, which means that we are rewarding liberally the one who engages in the most dishonest occupation. The one who shows special aptitude in that capacity is the fittest and is the one to survive. The result is a corrupt class of "ape-and-tiger" looking individuals of petty ambitions and vulgar desires.

Adjacent to that most corrupting spirit of commercialism lies poverty.

Not only are these two demoralizing factors closely connected, being the offspring of a common progenitor, known as Capitalism, but they seem to have one common object—that of degrading and vulgarizing mankind. What commercialism fails to do is left for poverty to do. Poverty is the punishment for those who have failed to embrace commercialism. Besides producing the criminal, the swindler and the highwayman, poverty fosters ignorance and super-

(Continued on Page 4.)

THE TRADE UNION POLICY.

By T. E. Zant.

The trade-union movement has grown so rapidly as to be almost cumbersome and unwieldy, and to lose much of its force. To obviate this disability something must be done to systematize its efforts and conform it to more definite methods. Here I would like to state that the reason this feature has been neglected is that the movement was not great enough to impress its importance on the public, or even on many of its members. So the time and energy was spent in getting the craftsmen together. If too strict a system and too much discipline were rigidly enforced it would have been difficult to get numbers enough together to give the movement the required prestige, respect and dignity.

Now we have reached a point that makes it absolutely necessary to adjust the movement to a comprehensive and adequate system.

First, to secure harmony and uniformity of action. Second, to protect individual members, locals and groups of locals against unnecessary hardships, sacrifice and expense that could be avoided by adjustment through centralized efforts.

Third, to adjust differences without the use of the strike whenever it is possible. Fourth, to systematize and subdivide the work and jurisdiction of the movement and all its parts. (This subdivision is necessary because of the present great amount of work, which inhibits the separate bodies from attending to all the details of the movement in the limited time they can be away from their usual occupations.)

We must not confine ourselves entirely to what exists, but fully comprehend the situation, and devise a means; formulate a system and make laws that will get the movement well in hand, and accomplish its purpose with the least possible hardship to the workers.

And we must understand that there is but one trade-union movement, not several. There may be

and are several parts of the whole.

The solidarity of the movement is absolutely necessary as a counterpart to the trust formations. All laboring people have one and the same interest: shorter hours and more pay. That interest is best served and more secure by affiliating with the American Federation of Labor, and every link of the chain from the American Federation of Labor down to the local. So long as the movement was small and easily controlled it could go along in a loose kind of way and be successful to a degree; but a large movement cannot be proportionately successful because of its awkwardness and more or less conflict arising from separate, large local bodies.

There are three ways by which a trade-union may enforce its demands: First, striking or the threat of striking, which is the direct and immediate means; secondly, boycotting; thirdly, public sentiment and sympathy enlisted on the side of the union.

Thus they become as one large local, so far as trade-matters and trade demands are concerned, though leaving complete autonomy to the local. These allied trades have their councils and these councils have complete control of trade-matters, and none other.

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Now, if a union of two thousand members takes upon itself the levying of a boycott, the concern boycotted figures the number of its dues-paying members, and then figures the number of persons boycotted, and estimates the proportion of those that are likely to buy his commodities, the risk being small he does not fear the boycott and disregards it, but if fifty thousand are engaged in it the very highness of it gains the respect of many outsiders and is likely to cause one hundred thousand to take similar action, and the effect is immediately felt. We now see not only the necessity of thorough organization to make the boycott a great power, but also the need of preserving it in its strongest form and not injuring its usefulness by injudicious and too frequent use, for it can be made to settle disputes almost entirely without the use of strikes, which are a great hardship at best.

When such ability on the part of the trade-union to protect its interests is made manifest the public will respect it and popular sentiment will set in, favoring the claims of labor, that will make its struggle lighter.

To get into proper channels and subdivide the work of the movement, and each subdivision staying within its own jurisdiction, does not imply the giving up of any of our rights but is really the securing of more rights with less effort. Some men think they are giving up their personal rights when they yield to general government, but the fact is they are exchanging only small privileges for greater protection and security. It is the same in the adjusting of the trade-union movement to a system.

Any man or men in the labor movement who can, and who do see the possibilities of such results to the laboring people that may relieve them of much hardships, waste and sacrifices, and neglect or refuse, or endeavor to prevent its accomplishment, for either personal reasons, vainglory or petty spite and revenge, are traitors to the movement and mere self-seekers, and should be marked by every true trade-unionist.

The boycott is the legitimate work of the central body and should be conducted and controlled by it, and every subdivision of the movement from the local up should respect it and abide by its decisions, and the time will come when the movement will have to insist upon this discipline. The sooner the unions learn this the greater will be their power. Not yet, though, is the movement cemented well enough together to insist upon this too strongly.

When we realize the many thousands of people whose welfare is staked upon the action of the central body and the untold hardships, loss, sacrifice, worry and hunger that could be avoided by our complying with this necessary regulation, we are constrained to be careful and to think seriously before committing ourselves to any definite action.

A duty we owe to every trade-union which aids us by its prestige and otherwise, is to apply ourselves to such regulations as will insure the best results with the least effort and greatest security to all.

INTERNATIONAL MAY DAY

Grades Unions Social Singing Societies Sunday, May 5th

GERMANIA GARDENS Grand Orchestra till 12pm Admission 25 cents

GRAND BALL Socialist Band of San Francisco The Temple, 117 Turk st

O. Swenson Boots and Shoes TRY OUR \$1.50 SHOE

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CALDWELL College of Oratory and Elocution

A School of Socialism. If you wish to understand Socialism...

may even go further and show us that these smashers of the trust find a parallel in history in the smashers of the machine.

About fifty thousand dollars have been pledged by the merchants of this city to fight the unions.

An effort was made last week to show the necessity for consideration by the trades-unions nationally.

From all appearances the union that has been selected to bear the brunt in this fight of the merchants is the Cooks and Waiters.

To give a faint suggestion of the kind of men who compose the Restaurant Keepers' Association, a brief notice of just one—the head and front of the whole concern—will not be amiss.

It always leaves a bad taste in the mouth to have even remote dealings with a hypocrite.

are the anchor in the troubled industrial and economic seas. Without the great working class the world would be as a stagnant pool from which miasmas would arise that would overwhelm humanity.

In that union a proposition was carried through to fine a fellow-member five dollars for wearing shoes without the union label and another the same amount for reading the "German Democrat," a non-union publication.

A GREAT FEAST. Tuesday evening, April 30th, the Russian Club of Oakland gave its first annual Socialist Dinner.

After this James Andrew lead off with a speech on "The Ideals of Socialism." He was followed by E. J. King, Jr., of ADVANCE staff, followed with remarks on "The Socialist Press."

A GAS PIPE WITH AN EPITAPH. Poor Hickey is no more. His demise occurred on a date that has escaped the memory of his dearest foes.

LOCAL OAKLAND of the Social Democratic Party, holds regular weekly meetings every Friday evening at 8 o'clock at Becker's Hall.

THE SOCIALIST DEBATING CLUB holds regular 80 day evening meetings at Pythian Castle, 500 Market street, beginning at 7:30 o'clock.

The Executive Board of the United Mine Workers of America has decided to continue the strike in the bituminous coal fields.

A GRAND Entertainment and Dance. Social Democratic Party SATURDAY, MAY 4, 1901

DON'T BUY AFTER

O'CLOCK HAUCH'S Cash Stores

Ernest Rehor Artistic Tailor Suits Made to Order. Fit guaranteed.

VINCENT'S MEAT MARKET TELEPHONE MAIN 31

LOCAL ALAMEDA of the Social Democratic Party, holds regular weekly meetings every Friday evening at 8 o'clock at Forester Hall.

THE SOCIALIST DEBATING CLUB holds regular 80 day evening meetings at Pythian Castle, 500 Market street, beginning at 7:30 o'clock.

WIRTH & JACHENS BADGES CHECKS STENCILS SEALS RUBBER STAMPS

Dr Christensen DENTIST MAIN OFFICE Cor. Mission and 23rd sts.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE. Comrade: I hereby advise you of the result of the vote of the member of our party for secretaries of the National Executive Bureau at Brussels, Belgium.

Local No. 1 has been organized at Bishop Hill, Ill. Warren, Ohio, New York and other places.

Meeting held April 28th at 1077 Market street from A. P. Stahl, Secretary Local No. 1.

Whereas, our Comrade A. Levin has been appointed as one of the speakers at the Bureau, Comrade Levin has a vigorous and energetic character.

Ordered paid, 60 cents. State Secretary's expense, 10 cents. Postage stamps on letters of April 8, 1901, 60 cents.

Ordered paid, 1000 envelopes and 1000 letter heads ordered to be printed. Warrant ordered drawn for 1000 mile railroad tickets.

J. M. Reynolds, Sec'y

X-RAY Laboratory. Dividends on Your Regular Household Expenses

The San Francisco Rochdale Company (co-operative), incorporated September 22, 1900, is doing a general grocery business at 1515 Market street.

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Presswork for the Trade

Correspondence. The following is Comrade Charles H. Vail's reply to Comrade Thomas Bersford's criticism...

VAIL'S REPLY. St. Louis, Mo., April 16th. Editor Advance: A friend has just called my attention to Comrade Bersford's letter in the "Advance"...

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ethics and tactics. Our methods spring logically from our premises. The laborer alone are entitled to the product...

The Council met in regular meeting on April 26th. President Goff in the chair. Applications for admission from Tamers Protective Union, Core Makers, Street Sweepers...

The Milk Drivers reported that the Holstein Farm dairy continues to oppose the union; that the Retail Clerks who quit the 3rd Street hat store...

The hall committee was authorized to rent Pioneer Hall for 200 seats for the 15th for \$25 per month. A motion was carried that council discontinue the use of "Organized Labor"...

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