





# A REVIEW OF ESSENTIALS

One Type of Socialist.

The soul of the new convert is prophetic—his energy, his interest in novel surroundings, his impatience for results, his first realization and philosophical acceptance of the fact that "Rome was not built in a day," and that if he is made of the right stuff, his grim determination to settle down for a long hard fight. There are few of the tried workers in the Socialist movement who have not passed along this road. In the enthusiasm following their discovery of what they consider to be a panacea for the ills of society they have plunged into propaganda and proclaimed in a military song the glad new tidings. They have expected all those who love their kind to pass entranced at the sweetness of the new song. They have expected the oppressors of the poor to stand at first appalled when their infamy was proclaimed in the market place and then in confusion and dismay into the darkness of oblivion. They have expected the light to shine upon the new convert. He hears the bitter lesson that the world has no particular interest in abstract justice; that the electorate doesn't generally vote "yes" or "no" on the simple right or wrong of a given policy. This lesson learned, the convert, if he is persistent, begins to re-examine his ground—his Socialist philosophy—and discovers some of the meaning of "economic determinism," realizes that it is a mild and propitious to him, but that the things that are realized the Socialist movement has a valuable worker, a veteran who, while not despising the advantage of the moment, knows it is more important to emerge victorious from the war than to win an isolated battle.

Another Type

There is another type of Socialist recruit almost equally familiar. This is the "reform" politician who has expended some time and energy, voice and money, in pushing the movements whose bleaching bones strewn the political battlefield. He has been able to arouse great enthusiasm; he has swept certain sections like a prairie fire; he has won victories and captured public powers, only to see his fond hope for humanity go glimmering. Undismayed and with beautiful courage he has sought the reason for his failure, determined when it was found, to push on again. He has decided his weakness was in a mistaken apprehension of the exact cause of economic, political and social evils. He has said it was this, that or the other, only to fail, and so he has embarked on the Socialist position. He has been told that part of it which indicates the wages system as the basic cause of poverty in the midst of plenty, serfdom in a "sweet land of liberty." Apprehending so much the reformer buckles on his harness again and sallies forth, determined to "whop 'em up" and "set the woods afire" with his new battle cry. He is experienced in the manner of the majority of the membership. He is a generalizing enthusiasm, he expects to work up "the people," go lickety split to Washington and usher in the Cooperative Commonwealth with a "hip, hip, hurrah."

The reform politician—no approach in the word "politician," for he is a good fellow—hasn't had the opportunity yet to fall on his new tack, but the old Socialist—the believer in evolution and economic determinism—knows that failure is as sure as death. And the old Socialist, even if he makes himself disliked by saying it, must utter his warning cry and proclaim the necessity for adherence to the classical Socialist position—a position taken after a critical study of all history by master minds, a position which has proved impregnable through fifty years of bitter assault.

Majority Must Know Essentials.

As eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, so is a clear comprehension of the essentials of Socialist philosophy an absolute necessity in the minds of the governing power in the State—the majority of the membership. It is only by a knowledge of what it is fighting for, a knowledge of the historic means by which social changes are effected, that the party can achieve its great mission, avoiding the pitfalls of an alluring opportunism and the traps set by a crafty, resourceful and unscrupulous enemy. With a rapidly swelling party membership it became a matter of vital importance that the members understand the conditions of the fight they are to wage. A casual conservatism must see to it that neither the new convert, impatient for results, nor the reform politician, with an unassimilated knowledge of Socialist essentials, is allowed to dominate party councils or direct party activities. This must be done from motives of common prudence and with absolute no reflection upon the honesty or capacity of the friends who come bringing to us rich gifts of mind and heart.

All our civilization has not been able to eradicate that human credulity, which is always looking for the miracle, that impatience which chafes under the slow operation of natural laws. We see the trait in the faith curist, who, disdainful of the science of the century regarding the treatment of disease, jumps with avidity at a theory according to which it is only necessary to say "Presto!" and that which is not. There are other amiable "new thought" people to whom the process of ratiocination is too slow and who spend hours prayerfully contemplating the ends of their noses in order that they may cultivate a power higher than mind and ratiocination independent of the syllogism. But in spite of these amiable people the world is not yet ready to cut loose from logical, scientific methods and substitute for law, ascertained by painful investigation, a supernaturalism whose sacred word is abracadabra.

The type of mind which these credulous supernaturalist exemplify is restrictive under the scientific method, but its impatience to make and make us forget that according to our scientific Socialism social changes are accomplished in a certain way.

No Mere Dogmatism.

We believe that the "history of mankind has been a history of class struggles" and that men as a rule have fought on one side or the other to serve their immediate material interests. Any other than the economic interpretation of history is as archaic and useless as the theory of special creation and it must be abandoned in order to our interpretation of current party events and the basis of our party organization. Never before were the great classes in conflict so clearly defined and never before was the necessity so urgent for a strict adherence to the class struggle plan of campaign. It is not mere dogmatism to assert and insist upon this. It is only a recognition of scientific facts which have been so clearly demonstrated and ignored or disclaimed by advocates of an invertebrate philosophy of universal brotherhood. Of course we all concede the essential unity of the human race and the desirability of harmony in social relations, but as "the words better no parsnips," so do platitudes about fraternity fall to advance the day of peace on earth. Humankind is arrayed in hostile camps, and if we want peace we've got to fight for it—the class struggle must be waged to its logical conclusion before the final emancipation of "society at large" from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles.

As hard and cold as these facts may be—and science is never alluring to the sentimental temperament—they are not inconsistent with the most enlightened propaganda we have ever known. They are not in the future kept from us as individuals, who, though their immediate material interests are with the capitalist class, are yet able to judge the trend of events and desire to fight for the cause which means a larger liberty, comfort and happiness for the race. History is irradiated by the example of men who have battled, and suffered, and died for the cause of justice. The scientific method of argument today owes much to the men of education and ideals, but their usefulness is largely due to the promiscuity with which they apprehend the fact of the class struggle and the faithfulness with which they adhere to their perception of scientific truth.

"American Mathematics."

It would be idle to deny that there are differences in the Socialist movement today as to the wisdom of certain features of organization and methods of propaganda. It is not necessary, however, that these differences should bring from the adherent of this or that idea vigorous statement and heated retort, but most of us philosophically recognize that we can't have perfection, even in debates between Socialists, in this sadly imperfect world of ours. However, we can insist that every proposition advanced for the good of the movement, be it proposed according to the narrowest or the broadest fundamental principle and demand of all men, that a more full recognition of the essentially proletarian character of our movement. The cry for "American methods for an American movement" is all right in so far as it takes into account our peculiar political conditions, but there can no more be a distinctive "American Socialism" than there can be an "American mathematics." The American nature is just like any other nature and the law of economic determinism rules in the United States just as surely as it rules in the countries of the old world. So the conclusion is irrefragable that when the cry for "American methods for an American movement" is not merely an expression of the restiveness of the impatient recruit it is either dangerously

or the evidence of a chauvinism abhorred in the light of our boasted internationalism.

"Sanguine Camp Meeting Exhorter."

One sometimes hears the sneer that some Socialists are "attracted the movement will get too big," and there are proposals that the so-called "military character" of the movement be abandoned. Of course no one fears big things when big things mean solidly, but we may well fear and fight against the signing which represents more hot air which will vanish at the prick of a pin. The so-called "military character" of the movement, in so far as it means a pledged and dues-paying membership, is our source of strength, and proposals that the party "simply pledge to everybody, and to everybody alike, the collective ownership and democratic management of industry" is the straw Utopianism of a sanguine camp-meeting exhorter, who imagines the movement can be adequately supported by having the brethren to step up to the contribution box. We must have organization, and a well disciplined organization at that. We can't achieve or eat the fruit of victory with a mob. The Socialist Party organization, in giving to every member a voice in the discussion and settlement of questions of policy, cultivates individual initiative and self-government, and is about the only organization which has many signs of atrophy under the so-called representative, but rather machine system. A membership thus actively participating in party affairs is the strongest bulwark against the ever threatening political vampires—the tricksters, bosses and grafters—seeking a new and vigorous body whose blood they can adequately support by having the brethren to step up to the storm that threatened to destroy the party and there is no evidence of its incapacity to settle right present and future problems. There have always been well intentioned men who have thought they could do better for the people than the people could do for themselves, but that is the theory of benevolent despotism of monarchy and democracy and we want none of it. We shall have to have already a honest, astute, and masterful men whose influence will intensify the effectiveness of our efforts, but it is a delusion to think that we are sheep without a shepherd, a helpless mass waiting for some Moses to lead us out of the wilderness. The working class must emancipate itself, and while it welcomes the assistance of all those in sympathy with it, the Socialists at least certain no delusions and must prepare for the work ahead as prudent, practical men.

CHARLES DOBBS.

National Commitment from Kentucky, in "Int. Soc. Review" for September.

"THE ANGEL CURE."

In our camp are men of talent, and these men have high aspirations, noble ambitions. Among them is a trained lawyer who has an abiding faith that fame is becoming him on. He is confident that all are free and equal in this great country, and he bitterly resents any and all attempts to explain the wrongs which produce so much that he laments in society. He insists that we must first get the individual right and then society will be all right. He fails to perceive that if all were as perfect as angels are supposed to be, we would not need the Socialists, but under capitalism, some sweet angel would revel in wealth at the expense and the degradation of other sweet angels. As a result we should have the war of classes and all the ills that this implies.

His exuberant confidence in the potency of law reminds me painfully of the simplicity of the child when first introduced to a hot poker.

There is a big difference, however; the ordinary child learns from his experience, but our lawyer does not so profit.

But I am not relating my experience with this lawyer to show you how to produce conviction in the minds of the lawyers, for I do not regard it as at all necessary to convince lawyers, preachers and other prostituted parasites. When the working class acts as a unit it will make no difference what the parasites force. We can then act without regard to their false opinions. We shall then be in a position to say "We have nothing to arbitrate," and, besides, these same parasites are furnishing us almost innumerable precedents for such conduct. Let us profit by their example and act in our own interest.

D. BURGESS.

P. S.—The angel cure is no good.—D. B.

"WE ARE ALL EQUAL."

Whatcom, Wn., Aug. 8, 1903.  
Editor, Socialist—Small incidents often illuminate large principles. In our camp there worked an ex-Philippine soldier. He was creating wealth for a small fraction thereof, but he was as serene as a mill pond on a summer evening. When I sought to convince him that he was entitled to all the wealth he created, he said, laconically, "I am satisfied with this government," and with much emphasis he said, "We are all equal in this country."

In a few minutes he got into an heated argument with the proprietor, and it is needless to say he got the worst of it. For the proprietor ordered him to the office to get his time. The ex-soldier obeyed orders, as he had been trained to do, but he wore a discouraged look and complained at his treatment. I said to him, "We are all equal in this country," but he seemed to realize that the owner of machinery is more than a match for one who owns nothing but labor power. He had just had a demonstration vivid enough to satisfy at least one patriot, and he seemed to have never traveled out of his early possessions, a sadder but wiser wage-worker.

One other incident I will relate, and then I shall go out into the capitalist world for some more material to work on. An agent dropped into our camp. He was a ready talker and the opposite of bashful. He opposed Socialism; said it would destroy all our social institutions; would turn the world into a sad and dreary waste. He seemed to realize that the owner of machinery is more than a match for one who owns nothing but labor power. He had just had a demonstration vivid enough to satisfy at least one patriot, and he seemed to have never traveled out of his early possessions, a sadder but wiser wage-worker.

When any of the bystanders would seek to enlighten him, he would make positive and forceful denials, if frothing at the mouth could be so denominated. Finally he became so wrought up as to call one of the members of

Fairhaven, Wash.

THE PATH TO VICTORY.

If these 200,000 boot and shoe workers and 150,000 printers will really and truly unite with those 100,000 tobacco workers, if the 1,000,000 railroad employees will unite with all three, if the 2,000,000 men of the building trades will unite with the others, and if the iron and steel workers, the miners, the wood workers, the shipbuilders, the farmers, the cotton mill operatives, and the granite cutters, if the whole working class would unite, what power is there in the world to oppose us, much less defeat us? Unite, not only in the economic fight which still leaves many men without a job, no matter what the hours or wages for those who get work; but UNITE IN THE POLITICAL FIGHT. UNITE AT THE BALLOT BOX. From Ben Hanford, "What Workingmen's Votes Can Do," 5 cents, Comrad Press, Co. 11 Cooper Square, New York.

KNOCK ON

Hark! a strange knocking we hear. In fact it is been knocking for over a year. The sound comes from the center of Hooseworld. In fact there's no where else from where it could come.

And if it's a fact that a knock is a knock, then the knocker is preparing a way. The mill chock the wind from him and his ilk, and not from those he's trying to blirk.

By his loud knocking he's preparing a way. So that all can have something to say. Knock on knocker, just hammer away. You're giving the Socialist a chance to make hay.

This old sock is quite contrary. And he's known by the name of Barry. Let him knock and let him sound. Now to his name I've told.

—Elliott F. Anderson.

THE TEN BEST.

The Washington local quorum has been so busy the last week that the "Ten Best Definitions" of Socialism sent in during August are not yet set forth. We are sure, meanwhile, send in your 25 word definitions for September. Every 25 cent subscription to "The Socialist" will receive ten best, entries to one 25 word answer to the question, "What is Socialism?" For 25 cents two definitions and so on.

238 TO 20.

Bernstein Refuses to Vote—German Socialist Convention Downs Compromisers.

Dresden, Sept. 16.—The Socialist congress after two days of discussion of the literary activities of members of the party, decided at noon today to close the debate and the personal explanations of various writers began.

The roll call on a motion that the party's executive committee prohibit the members of the party from contributing to the "capitalist press" resulted in Herren Von Vollmar, Deinek and eighteen others voting against it and 238 for the motion. Herrens Bernstein aroused a storm of mockery by refusing to vote.

Herrens Heibel, Singer and Kautsky formulated tonight their resolutions on the proposed revision of the party program. The resolution contains the proposition that the party accept a vice presidency of the reichstag, and calls on the congress to disassociate itself from the "endeavors to replace the so-called workers' and class-conscious warfare and the proletarian fight with the capitalistic policy of reconciliation with the existing order of things."

The consequence of such a policy, the resolution states, would be to convert Social Democracy, which is revolutionary in the best sense of the term, into aims at the transformation from a capitalist to a socialist state into a party content with mere reforms of the existing system. The resolution also instructs the Socialist members of the reichstag to employ the increased power ruthlessly in combating militarism, naval increases, colonial expansion and the so-called "world policy" and to further political freedom and the interests of the working classes."

"HYPNOTIC SPELL."

Fairhaven, Sept. 12, 1903.  
Editor of The Socialist—I could not get a report of Labor Day in your issue for this week's Socialist, but if you have space it may be the means of showing the unions up before the error of their ways.

The parade in this district, headed by the mayor, J. N. Griffin, also representative from this district, issued a proclamation that labor was entitled to one day of rest in the year, and called on his class, the business men who live on profit, interest and rent, to close their places of business and make Labor Day a success and an heeded except saloons.

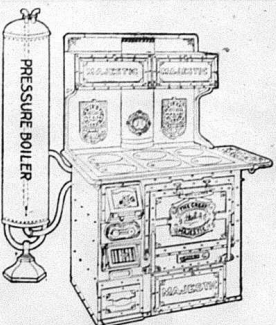
The parade was headed by a band of music, then carriages occupied by the speaker of the day, Judge Phillips, and the four socialist members of the city, the mayor and councilmen of Fairhaven and Whatcom and Democratic Senator John Earle. From this district, who loves labor two days into year, Labor Day and election day, and refuses to recognize the Shingle Weavers' Union all of the rest of the year. Then came the different mixed unions, composed of men and women with mixed ends, the majority wanting no politics in their unions. The minority objected to the unions furnishing a bribe for their masters to ride, while they trod down the road, carrying the refused to walk in the parade they were subject to a fine of \$5 or \$10, so they have no union.

The aim of the committee was not to have a Socialist talk to the multitude, but they let some of the Socialists of the two towns say to that they had Mrs. Squires, of Whatcom, hand and she took the lead as soon as the old judge finished and his audience cheered her when she got through.

All men and women who read and will use by themselves. They will be an eye witness that organized labor in this northwest part of Washington has never been so well represented as soon as the old judge finished and his audience cheered her when she got through.

WM. H. DANIELS, Fairhaven, Wash.

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