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Prohibition

IF the space devoted in the daily press to Prohibition is any indication of working class interest, they must be in an awful stew about it. Innumerable tall, thin, sinister-looking high-hatted gentlemen—the dries—are daily shown in cartoons, gloating over the poison rum deaths and enforcement victims, alongside of opulent, corrupt politicians waxing prosperous through the illicit trade of bootlegging. Long accounts, with tables, are given, showing the high costs of attempted enforcement, its failure, and how it is always the taxpayer who pays and pays. Then again, on all sides complaints are heard as to the very bad quality of the “stuff they sell you nowadays.” In fact one could almost come to the conclusion that America is verily the land of the free, everything is “Jake,” and that the only existing problem is a liquid one.

The use of intoxicating liquors is generally indulged in for the ostensible purpose of having a good time, forgetting oneself, or for energy stimulation. Members of the wealthy class having little else to do but to purchase luxury commodities, and pass their leisure in vacuous enjoyments, seem to have taken quite a serious interest in the many fancy drinks. They are authorities on that subject, if on nothing else, in fact the elaborate concoctions were devised primarily for their delectation. The material conditions of life of the workers are such that alcoholic stimulation, or even inebriation, appears to give them some surcease from their toilsome, monotonous lives.

The working class tolerates a wages system which permits them access to only the cheapest kind of commodities. They live in cheap homes, wear cheap, shoddy clothes; eat cheap, adulterated food, and are forced to confine themselves to cheap enjoyments. No great protest is made against these conditions of their daily life. No organ of capitalist propaganda stimulates them to protest on this score, for no capitalist interests are to be served, but, on the contrary, the workers' docile acceptance of these conditions is essential to all the various capitalist interests. With Prohibition, or its repeal, it is different. There are many sections of the owning class who would benefit from its repeal, such as the manufacturers and dispensers of alcoholic drinks, landlords for store rental purposes, newspaper owners as receivers of liquor advertisements, restaurant and night club proprietors, etc. Also the enforcement of Prohibition costs the taxpayers large sums of money. The workers, as a class, pay no taxes, but as taxes come from the pockets of all property owners, they are necessarily concerned over the high costs. Then there are the professional politicians, who are ever ready to seize upon any issue to enable them to gain office, with the concomitant emoluments.

All these cross currents of conflicting interests have

drawn members of the working class into this fray. The only thing worth fighting for, so far as they are concerned, is the abolition of this form of society which keeps them a subject class, and supplies the need for most forms of intoxicating liquor. Under Socialism, if they do still desire to drink, there will be no interests to serve to keep them from doing so, except the best interests of society as a whole.

During the war and immediately following, there was relatively little unemployment, and the intensification of industry demanded efficient workers. In a speech before the House, Representative Fort said the following concerning the economic causes of prohibition:

... With high speed machinery and increased specialization in its use alertness of mind and body became essential for both the safety of the worker and the efficiency of his work.

With factories organized so that processes were continuous and a break at any point in the handling chain slowed all the wheels and hampered all the work, each workman's presence and correct performance must be assured. Midday drinking by one man might cause someone to slip and injure either his fellow-workman or the whole system. So, too, the plant must be fully managed every day, each specialized workman at his appointed task. No longer could our industries proceed with 50 per cent attendance Monday, 80 per cent Tuesday and 100 per cent, perhaps by Wednesday noon.

In the old days of one or two men shops it had not been so serious. If necessary, the delinquent could work later when sober and make up his lost time. But eight-hour days and dependance of one man's work upon the other's made that impossible.

... Then, too, machines were fast replacing horses. Now a horse would get home with a drunken driver, but a railroad train, a trolley car or an automobile might not. ...

The swelling power of our new economic era, therefore, had to match its sword against the saloon.—The New York Times, Feb. 2, 1930.

Charles A. and Mary R. Beard also point out that, “... employers of labor in quest of efficiency gave money and support to the new crusade, for drunken workmen were a danger as well as an economic loss to machine industry.”—“The Rise of American Civilization,” Vol. II., Page 733.

Therefore employers of labor, excepting those who profited from the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors, etc., favored prohibition because the liquor traffic interfered with smooth, continuous flow of profits. Accordingly they freely supported the dry organizations and religious bodies which were working toward that end prior to 1920. Thus the whole question was raised from a primarily moral issue to the status of an economic and political one. In the past ten years gigantic strides have been made in the efficiency of the industrial technic, and the greater productivity of labor. Even during the so-called prosperous years of 1928 and 1929, there was an army of unemployed variously estimated at between 2,000,000 and 5,000,000.

This reserve army of unemployed stands as a threat to all employed workers, serving not only as a means of keeping wages low, but also to keep them sober on the job, for the boss can easily replace them. So at the present time Prohibition could be abolished with no material loss to the capitalist class.

All the propaganda given to this question is so much dust in the eyes of the workers. It keeps them interested in issues which are of no vital concern to them, but which serve to distract them from the basic and important ones that confront them—their economic problems. B.

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Do We Need a Labor Party?

IN 1923, the Workers Party and the Proletarian Party struggled hard in convention assembled in Chicago, for the formation of a Farmer Labor Party. The P. P. have always blamed the W. P. for the failure of that convention. Remembering Bruce and the Spider, and still bearing in mind, no doubt, some thesis of the Communist International, another attempt was recently made in Chicago to give birth to a Labor Party, and the instigators of it were the executive of the P. P. in conjunction with German and other scattered elements and individuals. Much secrecy shrouded the movement, no doubt to prevent the wreckers from the Workers Party getting in their work again. It is wonderful how suspicious the "true representatives of Moscow" are of their brethren, the recognized Moscow party, the W. P.

At a meeting during the summer, the National Secretary of the P. P. was asked if he considered the formation of a Labor Party would be a step forward for the workers of America, and should revolutionaries aid in its formation. Keracher frankly replied to both questions in the affirmative, and his position is supported by practically the entire Pro. Party membership. Here we have then, the revolutionary communists advising the working class to get into a Labor Party, and abolish their ills by a step-at-a-time reform policy. This is stating the case simply—the Pro. put it much more ambiguously. They know, oh my yes, that a Labor Party is futile, but the workers don't know, therefore give them one, so that they may find out its futility for themselves. The lives of the workers are spent chasing rainbows, and at the end of the chase they are disillusioned and without hope. They go up one blind alley after another, and the Proletarian Party, following the tactics laid down by the Communist International, are leading them into yet another. The new organization did not survive the formative period, but died in embryo. We are therefore denied witnessing some comical situations that probably would have arisen. British communists, reding Lenin's Left Wing Sickness and following instructions from the Third International, made application for membership into the British Labor Party, and were refused. What a farce it would have been to see the Pro. receiving a swift kick in the pants from its own baby.

Labor Parties are the same everywhere. They are all parties of reform. Names mean nothing. The Social Democratic Party of Germany, The British Labor Party and the Socialist Party of America—where the P. P. came

from in 1919—are Labor Parties, whose purpose is to reform the capitalist system. They gather into their ranks all kinds of cranks and misleaders voicing hazy notions of a land of promise somewhere in the future. Their history shows that their leaders were ever willing to betray the workers. During the war all the Labor Parties supported their respective governments. Even now in Britain where the Labor Government rules, nothing has or will be done to endanger the steady flow of profits into the coffers of the capitalists. They are carrying on just as ably as the Conservative Party in maintaining the system, and are being highly complimented for their successful foreign policy. Phillip Snowden scored a great victory for the capitalist class of Britain over the reparations deal and became a hero. Illustrations of this kind could be given in abundance.

Maybe a Labor Party will sometime be formed in this country—we do not know. But we do know that if it is a fine crowd of politically ambitious labor skates will be milling around at the swill trough for easy pickings. Its leaders will not try to educate the working class, but will simply play upon their ignorance in order to realize their own ambition of a place in the sun. Their sentimental slosh and political clap-trap will raise the hopes of the workers, but in the end will leave them more perplexed and apathetic than they are now. Do the Pro call this a step forward?

No, fellow workers, it is not! Those who advocate a Labor Party in this or any other country, display a lack of understanding of the Marxian position. If that position is correct the workers cannot move toward their historic mission until they understand it. Without that understanding they are like mariners at sea without a compass, tossing on the waves of illusion. With it they will be able to steer a clear course to the Socialist Commonwealth, and will not be hoodwinked into supporting any will-o'-the-wisp such as a Labor Party. It is the function of the Socialist to give the workers this understanding. A. S.

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Marx and the Intellectuals

We are still told by members of pseudo working-class organizations, Greenwich Village intellectuals and bourgeois professors that the workers are ignorant and incapable of understanding Socialism. Consequently leadership by an intelligent minority of "great men" is still thought to be necessary. Marx thought just the reverse.

"The working class . . . have no ready-made utopias to introduce. . . . They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending, by its own economic agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant. In the full consciousness of their historic mission, and with the heroic resolve to act up to it, the working class can afford to smile at the coarse invective of the gentlemen's gentlemen with the pen and inkhorn, and at the didactic patronage of well-wishing bourgeois-doctrinaires, pouring forth their ignorant platitudes and sectarian crotchets in the oracular tone of scientific infallibility."—From the "Civil War in France" By Karl Marx, 1871.

The Commune of Paris

FRANCE was at war with Prussia. On September 4th, 1870, Paris proclaimed the Republic. A similar proclamation immediately followed throughout France.

The real leaders of the working class were in the Bonapartist prisons, and Thiers, one of the foremost men in the Bonapartist regime, was allowed to act as their statesman, and Trochu as their general, on the one condition that they held these posts for the sole purpose of national defense only against the Prussian invaders.

Now Paris armed its workers to defend itself against the Prussians, but here a difficulty presented itself to the capitalist class. If the workmen of Paris should gain a victory over the invader, they would undoubtedly take the Government of the town into their own hands—a thing most undesirable to the master class—and as the Manifesto of the International puts it, "In this conflict between duty and class interest the Government of National Defense did not hesitate one moment to turn into a Government of National Defection."

Thiers and Trochu, playing the game of the capitalist class, did all in their power to assist in the fall of Paris. From the first Trochu admitted that Paris could not stand a siege, yet Thiers, Trochu, Favre, and the rest of the so-called Government of National Defense, had bombastic and lying manifestoes issued, declaring that "the Government of Paris will never capitulate," "Jules Favre, the Foreign Minister, will not cede an inch of our territory nor a stone of our fortresses." But Favre admitted in a letter to Gambetta, that they were defending Paris against the workers, and not against the Prussian army.

Documentary evidence has since been produced which plainly shows that, amongst those in command, it was well understood that Paris should capitulate, and on January 28th, 1871, the Government of National Defense fully exposed the treacherous game it was playing by assuming the title, with the permission of Bismark, of "The Government of France."

When the Commune was established a good deal of evidence of the treachery was discovered, to regain which, says a manifesto of the Commune, "these men would not recoil from battering Paris into a heap of ruins washed by a sea of blood." This prognostication proved to be absolutely correct.

Paris was invested, and five months later the gates were thrown open to the besiegers. The National Guard (consisting chiefly of workmen) had been provided with armaments by public subscription, and their weapons therefore were their own property. As such they were recognized and exempted in the general surrender. On the eve of the capitulation the Government took no precautions to safeguard these weapons, but cunningly left them where they would be most likely to fall into the hands of the enemy. The National Guards had elected a Central Committee, and they had the guns removed to Montmartre, out of the reach of the Prussians.

Prior to this Thiers had travelled Europe in an endeavor to "barter the republic for a crown." The great obstacle

in the way of the restoration of the monarchy was armed Paris, the stronghold of the republicans, and "Paris armed was the Revolution armed." This in itself explains why the guns of the National Guard were left to be captured by the Prussians. This move having failed, the question that presented itself to the arch-traitors, Thiers & Co., was how to disarm the Parisian workers. So, under the pretext that "the artillery of the National Guard belonged to the State," Thiers ordered them to deliver it to the Government.

The National Guards refused to comply, and, thwarted in their trickery, the National Assembly sent regular troops in the night to take the 250 pieces of ordnance from Montmartre. This was nearly successfully accomplished, but, with astonishing lack of foresight, no means of transport were provided, and the delay which ensued enabled the citizens—men, women, and children—to surround the guns and fraternise with the soldiers. General Lecompte ordered his men to fire upon the people. Four times the order was given, but when they did fire it was to dispatch Lecompte himself.

So sure were the Government of success that they had beforehand printed their bulletin of victory, and Thiers held ready the placards announcing his measure of coup d'etat; but now these had to be replaced by an announcement that he had resolved to leave the National Guard in possession of their arms, with which, he said, he felt sure they would rally round the Government against the rebels. "Out of 300,000 National Guards," says the Manifesto of the International, "only 300 responded to this summons . . . The glorious workingmen's revolution of the 18th of March took undisputed sway of Paris. The Central Committee was its provisional Government."

If the Government blundered in the attempt to seize the guns, an even worse blunder was committed by the revolutionaries in allowing the National Assembly to escape when they had them at their mercy. Instead of arresting them they allowed them to march to Versailles, which town they made their headquarters. And here, with the assistance of the Prussians, who released the prisoners of war on condition that they fought against the Communards, they were enabled to get together an army.

On the 18th of March the Central Committee issued a manifesto which said:

The Proletarians of Paris, amidst the failure and treason of the ruling class, have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of Public affairs. They have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies by seizing upon the Governmental power.

The Commune was proclaimed, and its officials, elected by universal suffrage, were the acknowledged representatives of the working class. The police were converted into the responsible and revocable agents of the Commune, as were all the other officials. All services were rendered for workmen's wages. "The vested interests and the representation allowances of the dignitaries of State disappeared along with those dignitaries themselves." The

Church was disestablished. All Educational institutions were thrown open free to all. The Post Office, placed under the direction of a workman named Theisz, raised the salaries of all its employes and reduced their hours. Night work in bakehouses was abolished. A labor exchange was established which recommended the return of pledges to all necessitous persons, and the suppression of the pawnshops, as the Commune intended to give guarantees of support to workmen out of employment. All offices appear to have been most ably administered, except the War Department, which made a series of blunders. But with the Versailles army being reinforced by Bismark, Paris was doomed.

Sunday, the 21st of May, saw the Communards gathered in the Tuileries Gardens at a concert held in aid of the widows and orphans of the National Guards slain in the defense of Paris. A similar concert was to take place the following Sunday, but already the Versailles troops were in the city, having entered by the gate of St. Cloud without opposition. And in a few hours black smoke was pouring over Paris from her blazing buildings, and her gutters ran with the blood of her workers.

Consternation reigned among the Communards when the news was announced, and the sitting of the Commune then in progress—the last as it proved—was soon afterwards dissolved. The one thing that now seemed to occupy the minds of all was how to defend their own particular quarters. Barricades were erected at all points, men, women and children assisting in the work—but all was hopeless endeavor. One by one the barricades were battered down and their defenders butchered.

Hundreds were taken prisoners by the Versailles Government. The London Daily News said that General Gallifet ordered hundreds of men, women, and children out of a column and had them shot down without even the pretence of a trial. The correspondent of the same journal says:

It was not a good thing on that day to be noticeably taller, dirtier, cleaner, older, or uglier than one's neighbours. One individual in particular struck me as probably owing his speedy release from the ills of this world to his having a broken nose. . . . Over a hundred being thus chosen, a firing party was told off and the column resumed its march, leaving them behind. A few minutes afterwards a dropping fire in our rear commenced, and continued for a quarter of an hour. It was the execution of these summarily-convicted wretches.

No great care was taken to see that life was extinct before the bodies were buried. Owing to groans issuing from the spot where burials had taken place exhumations were sometimes made, only to reveal the fact that the wounded had been buried alive. The Paris correspondent of the Evening Standard says in that paper on June 8th, 1871:

That many wounded have been buried alive I have not the slightest doubt. One case I can vouch for. When Brunel was shot with his mistress on the 24th ult. in the courtyard of a house in the Place Vendome, the bodies lay there until the afternoon of the 27th. When the burial party came to remove the corpses they found the woman still living and took her to an ambulance. Though she had received four bullets she is now out of danger.

But enough! Let us no longer dwell upon the terrible atrocities perpetrated by the party of "Order."

All the powers of the lying Press were directed against

the Communards. All the terrible deeds enacted by the agents of the capitalist class were laid at the door of the Communards themselves. Yet the only crime that could be truly brought against them was that they had been far too lenient toward their enemies.

While the Versailles Government were massacring their prisoners wholesale, the workers were treating theirs with respect, and not until thousands of their comrades were slaughtered did they retaliate.

Then, acting in accordance with recognized principles of warfare, they took a few of their hostages, including Archbishop Darboy, Judge Bonjeau, Jackers (a high financier), and some gendarmes, and had them shot. Thiers could have saved the life of the prelate, for he, with four others, was offered in exchange for one of the Communards, but the ogre refused.

And what a cry was raised by the capitalist Press over the execution of the archbishop! Ten thousand proletarians could be butchered in cold blood, and with every detail of barbarity—men, women, and children—without a protest being raised, but an Archbishop! And to think he had been shot by the working class, too! Yet the man who was responsible for his death was Thiers, the blood-thirsty gourmand of the capitalist class.

Incendiarism is another charge brought against the Communards. But the buildings of Paris were burned by both sides. The workers used this as a means of covering their retreat, a resource recognized as legitimate in warfare.

For over twelve months the slaughter of the prisoners continued, until the total reached the appalling number of 30,000.

Many are the lessons taught us by the Paris Commune. Remembering the price paid for those lessons let us not forget them.

We have seen two sections of the capitalist class at war with each other join hands immediately the working class rise against one section, and together turn to crush them.

The revolution of the 18th March, 1871, was a failure from the first, as all such local or national uprisings must be. The capitalist class is international, and all its force will be brought to bear to crush any uprising if necessary. The working class must organize like the master class—internationally. Remember the significant words of Professor Thorold Rogers: "They [the masters] are an organization, and the workers are too apt to be a mob."

Fellow workers, be no longer a mob. Get to understand your true historic mission. Organize with the wage-slaves the world over, with one object in view—the emancipation of your class by the establishment of Socialism. —H.A.Y.

—Reprinted from The Socialist Standard of March, 1911.

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To English Readers

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Fifty-nine Years Ago

ON another page will be found a brief account of an historic event of great importance to the working class—the Commune of Paris.

That was the first and only example of rule by the working class. From it the workers of today can learn several lessons.

The first is that when called upon to do so working men can run, and run efficiently, the administrative affairs of a complex modern community. It is a matter of historic record that those posts which the Commune allowed to fall into the hands of bourgeois intellectuals were generally mismanaged—the army, for example—while those under the control of plain, hitherto obscure working men were run with efficiency, though at the shortest of notice, and with the interests of the working people constantly in mind.

A second lesson is that the proletariat must not be misled by the current cant of liberal humanitarianism, but must realize that, when their property and power are threatened by any move of the workers, the business men of today and their political executives, will be as ferocious in their thirst for repression and vengeance as any swash-buckling barons of the Middle Ages faced by a revolt of their serfs. Any attack on their sacred privileges is to them a crime that stinks to high heaven, whilst in their hands any weapon, any foul means of torture and annihilation used against a revolt of their wage-slaves is justified by every canon of civilization: law-and-order, religion, culture, and all the other gods in their ideological pantheon.

A third important lesson is that the exploiters are internationally united against the workers. Note how Bismark, representative of the German ruling class, rushed to the aid of the French bourgeoisie, their foes of yesterday. One touch of proletarian revolt makes the whole bourgeois world kin.

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Boston Study Class

A Study Class, under the auspices of the Socialist Educational Society, meets every Sunday at 10:30 A. M., at the International Hall, 42 Wenonah Street, Roxbury, Mass. Admission is free.

A Dangerous Precedent

THE recent referendum under which police and firemen got the voters' sanction for pay increases was a method "open to serious criticism," the City Club today declares in a message submitted to the consideration of the Board of Estimate.

... Admitting that the people overwhelmingly supported the police and fire pay increase referendum, the club points out that a dangerous precedent was established.—The New York Telegram, Feb. 10, 1930.

Here is food for thought. Dangerous to whom? and how? Surely this is not a dangerous precedent to the firemen or policemen, or to carpenters, printers, bookkeepers, textile workers, or other wage-slaves. We can think of only one kind of people that feel endangered by the example of the pay referendum: the kind that are members of the City Club, the people of the capitalist class. From their point of view the vote should be used by the "people" of the working class, only for the purpose of electing to office bona fide political representatives of the capitalists. The vote is meant for use as an expression of popular support of the profit system, and any action that tends to suggest that it can be used for anything else, is promptly suspected of being dangerous. The pay increase digs into the pockets of the taxpayers, for one thing.

How much more embarrassing if the workers should take the hint from pay referendums that it is possible to use the vote not only to raise wages, but to do away with the wages system altogether, and retain the whole product of their social labor.

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Sinews of War

SINCE publication of the first issue of THE SOCIALIST our membership in New York has almost doubled. Subscriptions, sales and bundle orders have increased, but slowly. That THE SOCIALIST, and the proclamation of our position, has aroused keen interest amongst those workers we have been able to reach, is clear.

Yet, sales of the paper do not cover the expense of publishing it. We are still faced with the vital problem of how to keep going until circulation builds up to a sustaining point. More workers must be reached. More copies must be sold. But in the meantime there is a serious shortage of funds.

Fellow workers: if you are desirous of helping in our work, assist us practically by every means in your power; make us known, push THE SOCIALIST, get subscriptions for it, and send in whatever cash you can spare to enable us to maintain the paper and enlarge it. You can be sure that it will be used effectively in the only cause worth while.

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This and That

"Two Washington dispatches in the same paper; and each one makes you think of the other. One refers to a half million dollar donation to the Anti-Saloon League by a big 5-and-10 cent store owner, and the other says the 5-and-10 girls are starving on \$12 a week . . ."

—The New York Telegram, Feb. 10, 1930.

Science: A Weapon for the Workers

And How to Use It

IV.

Historical Materialism

THE social science that, unlike the theories emanating from the professional sociologists, can aid the workers to solve their class problems, is that which, for three-quarters of a century has withstood all criticism in essentials and has proved itself indispensable to a sound understanding of working class problems: Marxism, the theory of society developed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

Marxism is the only view of society that is consistently evolutionary and materialistic and thus meets the two essentials of modern science. It recognizes, first, that all social organizations, customs and ideas change, develop by adaptation, and can only be understood through a knowledge of their evolution; second, that man's ideas, his imaginative flights and his crudest delusions, result, and can only be explained, from the material conditions of his life, his environment acting upon his bodily structure.

The professional sociologists, with rare exceptions, dare not be consistently evolutionary. They declare that capitalism, though preceded by other forms, is itself the final goal, capable of reform in details, but that is all. Drastic change can only be a step backwards. Nor are they consistently materialistic, in contrast with their fellows in the sphere of natural science, who with the exception of some psychologists and a handful of biologists, are thorough materialists in the field of their science. Existing society, they assert, rests upon certain ideas, the desire for property, the idea of liberty, the "moral faculty." Many of them still hold that social developments are largely the creation of men of genius, statesmanship and great ideals; others maintain that what they call the social and spiritual value of religion is the real foundation of social life. Whatever their differences these "sociologists" unite in discountenancing any suggestion to disturb existing property rights and hence the domination of capital over the worker.

To the worker-student such "science" holds out no hope of solution to his class problems. To the individual it says "get out of the working class if you can" but, to the vast mass who obviously can't, it offers no hope of anything other than perpetual subjection to capitalism. The intelligent worker cannot, in the present age, swallow such "science" as this; cannot accept the dictum that the evolution of man and his civilization has ceased at such a miserable zenith, and that man, who has measured the distant nebulae and harnessed the lightning, cannot use his intelligence to control his own social organization. He cannot be blamed if he suspects that the so-called science of society taught in the schools is largely "hokum."

More and more workers, therefore, are turning to the one scientific analysis which, beyond refutation, reveals the basis of society, past and present, places capitalist society in its real perspective in historic evolution, shows the forces within it operating towards its decline and end and, finally, the active part the workers themselves will

play in this process and in the erection of a new social order.

Marx's great achievement was to reveal the structure and dynamics of society and thus to turn history, which is but the study of social machinery in action, into a science.

Natural history discloses regular sequences of events which it formulates as natural laws. But human history, it was long believed was very different. In this sphere, it was held, there exist no such laws. Chance and caprice were supposed to have a play in history that, in nature, was unthinkable. The extreme complexity of human affairs, the belief in the freedom of the will, the spectacular doings of great men, all combined to hide the essential character of history. It is, therefore not surprising that history was regarded as a hopeless jumble of intertwining forces and clashing wills in which accident and fate played opposing roles; a record of dynastic squabbles, lost causes, dead ideals and movements, working out a troubled and meaningless trail until this planet is no longer a human habitation.

'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

In solving the riddle of history Marx rendered all hitherto accepted views fit only for the museum of speculations alongside alchemy and astrology.

The theoretical system of Marx, is usually divided into three divisions; the Materialistic Conception of History, or Historical Materialism; the view of the historic role of Class Struggles; and Economics, an analysis of capitalist production. In reality, however, historical materialism is fundamental and embraces the other two which are its applications to special stages of social growth. Engels tells us that:

The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of the things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders, is dependent upon which is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the PHILOSOPHY but in the ECONOMICS of each particular epoch.—"Socialism: Utopian and Scientific".

This conception rendered possible an explanation of all past history—more or less complete in proportion to the knowledge of economic conditions available. Political conflicts, such as the American Revolution, are seen to be the result of conflicting economic interests. The American Constitution, as Prof. Charles Beard points out is "an economic document," and was drafted deliberately to safeguard the interests of the wealthy propertied class, principally the financial, manufacturing and trading interests.

The Civil War was a struggle between two economic classes, the slave-owning planters of the South and the industrial and commercial capitalists of the North. The Great War was, in the main, but a particularly violent episode in the struggle of rival capitalist imperialisms for markets, trade routes, and raw materials, a conflict that existed before the war and is still going on. The materialistic interpretation has indeed cast a searchlight on every aspect of the social scene.

History for the first time was placed on its real foundation: the obvious fact, hitherto totally neglected, that first of all men must eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, and therefore must work, before they can struggle for supremacy and devote themselves to politics, religion, philosophy, etc.—this obvious fact at last found historical recognition.—Engels' *Memoir of Marx* quoted in "*Karl Marx, Biographical Memoirs*," by W. Liebknecht. page 49.

Because the materialistic interpretation is the theoretical basis of the Socialist movement and is inextricably bound up with it, it was for long ignored, then ridiculed and misrepresented by the bourgeois historians of the universities who accept the permanence of the capitalist regime. In recent years however, particularly in America, there has quietly come about a complete change of attitude. Those historians who really take seriously their work of explaining the past, as far as possible, scientifically, have been compelled to utilize more or less thoroughly the only scientific sociology in the field.

A fine tribute to the historical work of Marx by Prof. J. T. Shotwell of Columbia University appears in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (11th and 14th Eds.) At the close of his remarkable article, "History," he reviews earlier efforts at interpreting history, he outlines at some length the Marxian thesis and concludes, "the whole science of dynamic sociology rests upon the postulate of Marx." Even the relatively conservative J. H. Robinson announces that the Marxian view "serves to explain far more of the phenomena of the past than any other single explanation ever offered."—"The New History," page 51.

Good applications of the doctrine from academic circles are not numerous. Charles A. Beard's "Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States," and his "Economic Basis of Politics," are noteworthy. The student could find few better, brief treatments of the social forces behind the English and French revolutions than in the latter work.

But the materialistic conception has inescapable implications that can hardly be admitted by historians who maintain the sanctity of capitalist private property. One of these implications is the inevitability of the modern class struggle; another is, that the whole trend of events today points towards the culmination of this struggle in the overthrow of capitalism and the institution of Socialism by the politically victorious working class.

Accordingly, therefore, even the most progressive of historians, those who can fully accept Marx's explanation of the past, find it difficult or impossible to endorse his interpretation of the present and forecast of the future; and this in spite of the fact that Marx knew far more of capitalism than he could possibly do of earlier systems and that his view of history resulted not so much from his-

torical study as a close analysis of the social forces he saw around him.

For thorough applications of historical materialism the student must turn to those works based upon an acceptance of all its implications. Let him read the historical chapters of Marx's "Capital," and his historical monographs "Revolution and Counter Revolution," "The Eighteenth Brumaire" and the "Civil War in France." Engels' "Origin of the Family" and "Peasants War in Germany" should also be on the bookshelf of every worker-student. "The Foundations of Christianity" by Karl Kautsky is a masterly application of Marxism to ancient civilization.

(To be continued)

Suggestions for Reading:—There are few good and simple introductions to historical materialism in English. The beginner should read chapters IV, V, and VI of the pamphlet "Socialism" published by The Socialist Party of Great Britain. Then, "Vital Problems in Social Evolution," by A. M. Lewis, chapters I and II. More advanced studies will be suggested later.

R. W. H.

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The Socialist Educational Society holds free lectures on alternate Saturday evenings, eight o'clock, at our headquarters, Room 9, 132 East 23 Street, New York, N. Y. The subjects of forthcoming lectures will be:

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132 East 23 Street, New York, N. Y.

The Hunting Season Opens

MANY workers of the "white collar" variety, who delude themselves that they "use their heads" to make a living, now seem to be vigorously employing their feet hunting for opportunities to put their heads to use—for a boss, as usual.

The New York Times of Feb. 27th carried an entire column dealing with the unemployment epidemic "among 'white collar' workers, including office employees, clerks, stenographers and technical men." The following comments are from officials of some of the largest employment agencies specializing in this type of placement:

In January, 1929, . . . there were 299 male applicants for every 100 jobs available as compared with 657 applicants for every 100 jobs available in January, 1930. In the case of women the demand for every 100 jobs was 167 in January, 1929, and 610 in January, 1930.

We have never seen so many girls looking for jobs. . . . We have fewer demands for workers and the tendency has been for wages to drop.

. . . Occasionally we hear of drastic salary cuts, such as the man with a \$15,000 job who was asked to work for \$3,500.

. . . It was estimated that wages for office workers have suffered an 8 per cent reduction since the situation became acute. The opinion was expressed that employers were taking advantage of the law of supply and demand and "shopping around" because "so many clever people are unemployed through no fault of their own."

The demand for jobs is twice what it was a year ago and the supply is low. The average period of unemployment is from two to three months, as compared to one month last year.

We have not seen anything like it for six years. . . . The situation now is worse than in December.

Positions offered by employers are about one-quarter the number offered last year. . . . The number of applicants for positions was estimated as three or four times the number of applicants last year.

The "white collar" slaves, far from the dirt and din of industrial production, like to think of themselves as members of a middle class, aloof from the manual industrial worker in social and economic status. The conditions of life of all those who live by selling their labor-power are determined by the same economic forces. White collars and greasy overalls are not marks of class distinction.

. . . What does it matter whether the worker is well paid or ill paid, or whether he wears a black coat or corduroy, the clean linen of light duties, the grimy linen of office toil, or no linen at all?

The essential thing is that the member of the working class has to sell his labour-power in order to live. Beside this salient fact all else pales into insignificance. The differences of dress, pay, education, habits, work, and so on that are to be observed among those who have to sell their working power in order to live are as nothing compared with the differences which mark them off from the capitalists. No matter how well paid the former is, or how many have to obey his commands, he himself has a master. He has to render obedience to another, to someone who can send him adrift to endure the torments of unemployment. Because he has to sell his labor-power, his whole life must be lived within prescribed limits. His release from labour is short and seldom; he has no security of livelihood he has always to fear that a rival may displace him.

On the other hand, the capitalist, because he is able to deny others access to the means of living, and is, therefore, able to compel them to surrender their labour-power to him, is altogether relieved from the necessity of working. His life conditions are entirely different from those of the worker—different, not in one or two particulars, but in practically every particular. The ease and

Declaration of Principles of The Socialist Educational Society

The Socialist Educational Society holds:

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i. e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labor alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interests of the working class are diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

THE SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY therefore, declares its purpose of carrying on Socialist educational work to the end that this political party be formed, determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the working class to organize under its banner in order that a speedy termination be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

luxury in which he basks, are only the most obvious features of a life which has nothing in common with that of the working class.

For him are leisure and freedom—for others the fetters of constant toil; for him are the Riviera and the Alps—for the others, the office prison, the weary workshop, the choking town, or the drab country labour-yard.—"Socialism," S.P.G.B. Pamphlet No. 9.

As capitalism continues its inexorable development and more and more lays bare its social relationships, the laundered worker may begin to use his head in reality, realize that he is a member of the working class, without reservations or distinctions, and get into the Socialist movement, where he belongs.

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