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Sidelights on
Contemporary Socialism

John Spargo



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Contemporary Socialism

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BY
JOHN SPARGO

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To
VICTOR L. BERGER
*FAITHFUL INTERPRETER OF MARX
AND LOYAL COMRADE*

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FOREWORD

THE present volume, like several of the author's earlier works, is made up of lectures delivered from time to time, somewhat revised to meet the requirements of publication in book form. The lectures differ from all the author's lectures on Socialism heretofore published in that, instead of being addressed to non-Socialists in the interests of the Socialist propaganda, they were addressed to his fellow Socialists and deal with various problems within the Socialist movement itself. They are fairly typical, in spirit and substance, of the lectures which responsible Socialists are constantly delivering to their comrades.

While the problems discussed primarily concern and interest those who are avowed Socialists, and especially those who are members of organized Socialist bodies, they are

of interest and importance to every thoughtful student of Socialism. Otherwise, the publication of this volume would not be justifiable.

The term "liberal Marxian Socialist," is fairly accurate as a description of the author's attitude toward Marx and the Socialist movement. He believes that the teachings of Marx, interpreted in a liberal spirit, such as Marx himself would approve, rather than in the narrow, dogmatic spirit which Marx condemned, constitute the best basis for successful Socialist agitation and policy.

There are to-day in the Socialist movement, as there were in the lifetime of Marx, those who would interpret Marx's teachings in such a narrow and dogmatic manner as to prevent the progress of the movement beyond the limits of a sect wedded to a dogma. That they are false to the spirit of Marx himself is the burden of the three lectures here published.

The first lecture, *Marx, Leader and Guide*, was prepared as a memorial lecture to com-

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memorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Marx's death, and delivered in many cities under Socialist party auspices.

The second, *Anti-intellectualism in the Socialist Movement*, was delivered to an audience of Socialists at the Rand School of Social Science, New York City, at a time when the membership of the Socialist Party was much disturbed by controversy on the subject. It was the author's contribution to the disputation.

The third lecture, *The Influence of Marx on Contemporary Socialism*, was prepared for a convention of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, in January, 1910. Owing to unforeseen circumstances, it was not delivered before that body, however. It was first delivered in Chicago, at the Garrick Theater, and then repeated in many cities, always under Socialist auspices. The election of a new National Executive Committee gave rise to a good deal of animated controversy among Socialist Party members concerning the relative merits of the two wings of the move-

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ment, broadly designated as "opportunist" and "revolutionary." The author, being a candidate for election, desired to set his views clearly before his fellow Socialists, so that the lecture might almost be described as a personal manifesto. It has already appeared in print in the *American Journal of Sociology*, and thanks are due to the editor, Prof. Albion W. Small, for his kind permission to reprint it here.

JOHN SPARGO.

"Nestledown,"
Old Bennington, Vt.,
February, 1911.

I

MARX, LEADER AND GUIDE

I

ON the fourteenth of March, 1883, Karl Marx died in his armchair in a simple cottage near the northern height of Hampstead Heath, London's famous playground. Shortly before two o'clock he fell into a comatose state, and his daughter Eleanor and Helene Demuth, the nurse, at once sent for Friedrich Engels, the friend who was more than blood-brother to Marx. When Engels arrived and went to the plainly furnished study he saw through his tears that Karl Marx was no more. Seated in his armchair, the great revolutionist had passed beyond the bourne of time and place with a smile, and Death had frozen the smile upon the silent lips.

Three days later he was buried in Highgate Cemetery, in the grave where his beautiful and devoted wife already lay. Among

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the mourners at the graveside were some of his trusted comrades and friends, men and women whose deeds fill a large place in revolutionary annals. For the cause of Socialism, under the inspiration of the dead leader, they had sacrificed comfort and pleasure, accepted ignominy and endured poverty, prison and exile. Over the open grave Engels spoke, declaring with a sobbing voice that Karl Marx had done for sociology what Charles Darwin did for biology, and that the two names must forever be linked together.

Twenty-five years have elapsed since Engels in his grief uttered that estimate of his beloved friend and coworker. Within that period, the fame of Marx has steadily grown, and the scholarship of the world now accords his name the high honor which Engels claimed for it. The discussion of his sociological and economic theories has produced thousands of volumes, and each year the number of them grows. No longer the idol of a small sect of worshipers merely, Marx is now recognized as a great and brilliant

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thinker as unreservedly by those who oppose his theories as by those who advocate them.

Had he no other title to fame, the fact that his thought has so profoundly influenced the development of the great international Socialist movement that the movement may almost be said to rest upon his theories would assure Marx an honored place among the great figures of the wonderful nineteenth century. Quite regardless of the value of those theories when tested in the great crucible of experience, the fact that they have played such an important part in one of the greatest movements in the history of the world elevates their author to a plane far above that of ordinary mortals.

For "Marxism" and "Socialism" are practically synonymous terms in the literature relating to modern Socialism. Most of the leading Socialists of the world proclaim themselves Marxists. Marx is the great master mind of the movement. Professor Veblen well and justly said, in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, that "the Socialism that in-

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spires hopes and fears to-day is of the school of Marx. No one is seriously apprehensive of any other so-called Socialistic movement, and no one is seriously concerned to criticize or refute the doctrines set forth by any other school of 'Socialists.' ”

II

IN view of the place he occupies in the history of the Socialist movement, and the manner in which his teachings have dominated the movement, it is remarkable that so little is known of Marx the man, even by those who are his confessed disciples. It is at once remarkable and regrettable, I think, for Marx was in many ways a lovable man, in whose life story there is much to inspire the earnest and thoughtful Socialist.

It is regrettable, too, for another reason: Much of that *corpus* of criticism and theory which we call Marxian doctrine was never systematically formulated or elaborated by Marx. This is true even of the great theory of social evolution upon which his claim to an equal place in history with Darwin rests. Whoever would consider the whole body of theoretical Marxism must have patience.

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He must study carefully Marx's minor writings, the fugitive essays, letters, pamphlets and addresses in which many of his profoundest observations occur. A sympathetic insight into his personality and life will greatly ease the student's task.

Important as this is to the student of Marxian theory, it is even more important to the Socialist who regards Marx as his leader. Within the Socialist movement, alike in Europe and America, the greatest importance is attached to Marx's utterances upon practical matters, such as the policy to be pursued by the Socialist parties, and, especially, their relation to other working-class organizations like the trades unions and the coöperative societies. Naturally, the views of Marx upon such matters are regarded with great respect by his followers. Indeed, it is an ancient gibe of the enemy that the Socialists regard Marx as an infallible pontiff, whose every opinion is law. Mistaken as this criticism may be, it is true that Marx's opinions often exercise decisive

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influence in shaping the policies of the Socialist movement, nationally and internationally. This "practical Marxism," if I may be permitted thus to designate the principles and precepts Marx set down for the practical guidance of the movement, exerts a far greater influence to-day than the principles and theories which are commonly designated by the word "Marxism."

Now, it is apparent to every thoughtful observer and student of the Socialist movement that the amount of authority with which the word of Marx is thus vested exposes the movement, in some degree, to certain dangers which have crippled other great and promising movements in the past. In the first place, there is the danger of stagnation and decay through a too complete reliance upon the wisdom of the Master, and particularly, failure to realize that principles of action which were sound and wise when advocated by Marx may be unsound and unwise as principles of action in the changed conditions of to-day. Candor compels the admission

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that there is hardly a country in which the Socialist movement has not suffered from this besetting evil of movements which owe much of their success to individual genius. Paraphrasing one of his own sayings, we might fairly say that the genius of Marx has at times weighed like a mountain upon the brains of his disciples.

It is for this reason that, regardless for the moment of its particular claims, the rise of the much-misunderstood "revisionist" school within the Socialist movement is to be welcomed. It is the best safeguard we have against intellectual dry-rot and political decadence. Primarily a restatement of certain economic doctrines, a criticism and a revision of some of the theories and forecasts of Marx in the light of present conditions, revisionism has its practical side. It liberates the practical policies of the movement from the shackles of theories that are outworn and, therefore, untrue. To name only one example of these: The present successful appeal of the Socialists to agricultural workers

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was made possible only by the overthrow of Marx's exceedingly plausible generalization concerning the concentration of agricultural industry.

Secondly, there is the danger that, in their zeal and devotion to the letter of Marx, Socialists may be the victims of the deceptive parallel, with serious consequences to the movement. It is so easy to declare, when confronting a critical situation and the need for a careful consideration of party policy, that Marx faced an exactly similar crisis forty or fifty years ago, and laid down this or that principle for our guidance. But exact parallels rarely or never occur in history. Even though the same superficial conditions exist, there are almost invariably great fundamental differences hidden somewhere beneath the surface. And such differences cannot be ignored with wisdom or safety.

It is futile, and even dangerous, to argue, as many do, that a condition existing in England, let us say, in the first decade of the twentieth century, which seems to be a par-

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allel of a condition existing in Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century can be treated as an exact parallel. Differences of national temperaments and traditions and a hundred other more obvious factors, conspire to make anything like a real parallel impossible. Equally absurd would it be to insist that the policy which was successful in Germany must therefore be adopted in England — absurd and extremely dangerous.

Finally, there is the danger of demagoguery. Every popular movement in history which has tacitly or avowedly bowed to the authority of a great teacher or leader has suffered from this danger. On the one hand, honest but ignorant propagandists, whose sole equipment consists of their enthusiasm, a certain glibness of tongue and a plentiful supply of texts, soon acquire prominence and influence out of all proportion to their merit. This is especially true of Socialist parties in their formative periods. While it is true that in the national parties the ablest men and women are usually found in the places

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of prominence and power, it is only too tragically true that in the towns and cities able men and women are often pushed aside to make way for ignorant demagogues.

In the main, these demagogues obtain their power and influence through their continuous and vociferous professions of orthodoxy and loyal allegiance to Marx. As the Devil is said to quote Scripture, so they quote Marx. They elevate the letter and kill the spirit! A text is a text. Marx having said thus and so, nothing else remains to be said. Let him who denies or doubts be branded as a heretic! Such men are too ignorant to consider calmly the circumstances under which the words of their texts were spoken or written. The mental process necessary to a proper valuation of the words they shout with such oracular pride is too complex and wearisome for them. But when their texts are answered by other texts, taken from the same "holy book," they are forced to perform mental gymnastics worthy of disputing theologians.

On the other hand, there are the demagogues who cannot be called honest but ignorant. Self-seeking charlatans and ambitious political adventurers find it easy to achieve distinction in movements composed of earnest men and women who can be moved by appeals to textual authority. It is easy to fortify almost any position by quoting an appropriate text; the blackest treachery can be made to appear innocent by the refulgent light of a few well-chosen texts. Just as it has been said that there is hardly a folly or a wrong which men have not attempted to justify by quoting texts from the Bible, so it may be said with confidence that in the Socialist movement demagogues have attempted to justify many a folly and wrong by quoting texts from the writings of Marx.

Does the ignorant demagogue, with the impatience characteristic of his kind, chafe and fret at the slowness of parliamentary action, and shout desperate counsels of insurrection and appeals to force, he fortifies his position by some apt quotation from

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Marx. He tears text from context, and disregards entirely the circumstances under which the words of the text were uttered. Or, he searches out some pessimistic passage born amid those fierce storms of unfaith and despair which at times overwhelm all men who, like Marx, devote themselves to the advancement of new ideas or unpopular causes. That the passage is belied by ten thousand other passages, and by the logic of Marx's life, is a matter of no consequence in the eyes of the demagogues.

Does the self-seeking political adventurer desire to destroy the influence of some tried and trusted leaders of the movement who are not actual wage-earners, thereby making his own advancement possible, he cunningly hides his real purpose behind the mask of the authority of Marx, and parades his "orthodoxy." He appeals to the worst passions of the mob, thunders invective against "middle-class men" and "intellectuals," and declares that none but actual wage-earners should have a place in the movement.

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He quotes Marx in support of this wild nonsense, regardless of the fact that Marx, who would himself have been excluded from the movement by it, condemned it with his splendid powers of satire and invective.

III

THESE, then, are some of the dangers to which the Socialist movement is exposed; dangers which have their origin in the supreme greatness of Marx. And the surest safeguard of the movement against those dangers is — a more thorough knowledge of Marx, the knowledge which can only result from a careful and conscientious study of his temperament, his struggles, his hopes, his fears, his failures, in a word, of his life. It is to be hoped that the world-wide celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death will result in a widespread diffusion of that knowledge among his followers.

That such a knowledge of the life of Marx as I have indicated would serve to protect the movement against the dangers outlined will hardly be disputed. When a perfectly

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sincere and honest Socialist opposes the propaganda of Socialism among farmers, because he is obsessed by the mistaken generalization of Marx that the small farmer is rapidly becoming extinct, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that if he really understood Marx, and had absorbed the spirit of his teaching, rather than the mere letter, he would accept the logic of the facts and adjust his opinions on questions of policy accordingly.

Likewise, it is impossible to believe that the absurd prejudice against the so-called "intellectuals" in the movement would be tolerated for an hour if the average Socialist knew the life-story of Marx, how the same sinister appeal to prejudice by unscrupulous demagogues hampered him in his great work. And, surely, no attempt to use the authority of Marx to exclude all other than actual wage-earners from participation in the Socialist movement would receive attention from men and women who knew anything of the lives of Marx and Engels, and many of

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their associates in the "International," for example.

When such attempts are made to restrict the Socialist movement the Socialist who has learned his lesson will not be influenced by a Marxian text or two which appear to justify the limitation of the movement to the actual wage earners. He will understand something of the impatience, the disgust, the disappointment and the despair which moved Marx to express his contempt for the entire bourgeoisie. But he will remember that Marx and Engels and many of their associates were of that class. And when he is told how, in the fifties, when Ernest Jones was trying to rekindle the ashes of Chartism in England, Marx ridiculed the belief of his friend that he could obtain many recruits from the educated middle class, the well-informed Socialist will not be dismayed, nor will he be convinced that it should be an article of Socialist faith to confine membership in the party to actual proletarians. He will turn back to the *Communist Manifesto*

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and find assurance in Marx's recognition of the fact that in every decisive class struggle of history there has always been a section of the ruling class which has joined the revolutionary class, and that the proletariat will be materially strengthened by the accession to its ranks of a portion of the bourgeoisie. He will recall, too, how, long years after his difference with Ernest Jones upon this question, Marx wisely availed himself of the aid of many who, while not proletarians, served the proletarian cause, through the "International," with ability and devotion.

In a word, the best corrective of that crude, immature, and sterile "Marxism" which tends everywhere and always to bind the movement to the limitations of a mere sect, is a sympathetic and thorough study of the life of Marx. We cannot hope otherwise to be able to distinguish between the pure gold of Marxian teaching and the base metal tendered by self-styled "Marxists." We must avoid the mischievous error of holding Marx responsible for the foolish

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vagaries of many noisy and narrow dogmatists who claim to speak in his name. Unhappily, there is always a tendency for the revolt against that which these dogmatists have named "orthodox Marxism" to lead to a more or less contemptuous and hostile attitude toward Marx. In the present stage of our development, we need above everything to guard against this too common error. We need to return to Marx, not to abandon him.

IV

WHILE Marx was still alive, and devoting his tremendous energies to the task of frustrating the Franco-Russian intrigues in Southern Europe, in 1858-1859, an unscrupulous enemy published an infamous attack upon him, a malignant caricature which, though easily and abundantly discredited by Marx himself, has greatly influenced the popular conception of the great Socialist's personality.

According to this caricature, Marx was a monster of depravity, an inhuman fiend. Marx was an autocrat, a dictator, a calumniator of his friends, a man utterly void of honor, corrupt and venal, living in luxury at the expense of the poor toilers who trusted him. Worse than all these things, he was the chief ogre of a fiendish conspiratory organization, the Brimstone League. The

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business of this secret society was to plan and carry out insurrections and assassinations. Its members were pledged by a terrible, blood-curdling oath, devised by Marx. They were also compelled to learn a ciphel language, likewise devised by Marx, and in which he had written a book instructing them in the arts of arson and assassination. In brief, the Marx described in this caricature was an utterly loathsome, bloodthirsty and inhuman monster.

How different was the real Marx! We go back to 1859, the time when this infamous story was concocted: we can see Marx almost any morning, walking in the neighborhood of his modest home on Grafton Terrace. A heavily built man, square shouldered, well above the average height, with a massive, leonine head covered with a thick mass of hair, once raven black but now plentifully shot with gray. His complexion is peculiar: naturally swarthy, it has yet the pallid hue that comes from ill-health, overstrain, and much servitude to the midnight

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oil. An immense, thick, bushy beard surrounds his face. Like the hair of the head it was once black, but is now grayer than it should be at forty-one. Only the mustache retains its original blackness unimpaired, and this adds a touch of peculiarity to his appearance.

He is the center of a group of laughing, shouting, happy children, who cling to his person and dress and impede his progress. His countenance is beaming with laughter, and the neighbors greet him with friendly smiles and nods. Surely, this is not Marx the monster, the ghoul, of whom we have heard so much! This man is not to be shunned or feared. The friend of the children is a man to be trusted and loved.

Could we follow him into his home and watch him in the midst of his family, our trust in him would not be shaken. The home is plainly, poorly furnished. Not a sign of luxury appears, but, on the contrary, everything speaks of a long-continued strug-

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gle of respectability against poverty. Even the wretched, tinkling piano, at which two young girls are practicing a duet, accentuates rather than disguises the poverty. The pride of the man in his charming wife and three girls, the oldest fifteen, the youngest three, and his tender affection for them, are apparent. And their every look shows plainly how wife and daughters worship him.

So much, even the casual visitor to the Marx home might see at any time. It was only the intimate friend and trusted comrade, privileged to enter without ceremony at any time, who was ever fortunate enough to surprise the husband and wife, sweethearts still, marching up and down the room, arm in arm, singing tender love songs in the tongue of the Fatherland, just as they probably did among the old Roman ruins at Trier in their courtship days. When caught thus, they were as abashed and shy as if they were still in their teens. Such pictures of his gentleness and tenderness toward children, and of

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his beautiful devotion to his wife, make it impossible to believe that the man is the ogre we have been asked to believe him to be.

It is true that there was another, less lovely, side to his character. Marx the revolutionist, the political leader, was not always an amiable person. That is evident from the sneering, contemptuous curl of the lips which is seen in his best portraits. These give the impression of a domineering, assertive man, tempestuous, scornful, perhaps vain at times, and exceedingly apt to be irascible and vindictive. The story of his stormy political career bears out this impression of the man. It is the story of a long series of rancorous quarrels, bitter controversies, and broken friendships. He quarreled with Arnold Ruge, Georg Herwegh, Wilhelm Weitling, Pierre J. Proudhon, Michael Bakunin, Alexander Herzen, Karl Heinzen, Gottfried Kinkel, Giuseppe Mazzini, Herman Jung, and even with Ferdinand Lassalle and Wilhelm Liebknecht. In the light of this list,

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his friendship for Engels, which lasted for practically forty years, unclouded by a single quarrel or misunderstanding, seems all the more remarkable.

V

HAVING said so much, justice demands that we recognize some important facts and set them down to the credit of Marx. The first is that the temptations of a life so largely given to controversy hardly ever induced him to resort to such dishonorable methods of attack as he was often the victim of. He might be abusive, even to the point of vulgarity, unjust, or relentless to the point of brutality, but he was careful to avoid anything like intentional misrepresentation or falsehood. He fought bitterly, but bravely and with a strict observance of the rules of honorable conflict.

The exception to this rule, almost the only one, so far as I recall, was his use of an infamous charge which he knew to be false and baseless, during his bitter strife with Bakunin. Although he knew that his ad-

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versary had amply proved his innocence of the charge that he was a spy in the employ of the Russian government, Marx stooped so low as to use it. The fact that Bakunin had availed himself of equally dishonorable weapons does not hide the stain upon Marx's record.

The second fact which we must perforce consider is that Marx never betrayed a trust. He demanded absolute loyalty from his associates, and in turn he gave absolute loyalty to his associates. Whatever might happen, he would not betray a confidence. Men who were intimately associated with him in early life, but afterwards became identified with what Marx regarded as the forces of reaction, marveled greatly that Marx never betrayed their earlier confidences, though he might have gained temporary advantages by so doing.

Finally, we must consider the fact that his quarrels were rarely due to personal pique or injured vanity. It is true that offended vanity led him to complain of Lassalle, and

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of Mr. Hyndman, the English Socialist who first expounded his theories in English. He felt that he was given too little credit. But his quarrels were almost invariably due to vital and fundamental differences of opinion upon questions relating to the policy and tactics of the movement. Even though he felt keenly the severance of valued personal ties, he did not hesitate to sacrifice the dearest friendships by bitterly attacking principles which seemed to him to be opposed to the best interests of the movement.

In view of the reputation he still has of having been a fomenter of violence and bloody revolt, it is somewhat remarkable that most of his quarrels with associates arose from his opposition to just such methods, and his determined insistence upon the methods of peaceful evolution. It was his opposition to a mad scheme for the invasion of Germany by an armed legion in 1848, proposed by Herwegh, which made that fiery poet his lifelong foe. It was his opposition to a like scheme in 1862 which ended his friendship

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with Lassalle. Weitling, Bakunin, Herzen, Mazzini and Kinkel all became his enemies because of his opposition to the various insurrectionary methods and plans they proposed.

Marx was intolerant, even to the point of actual fanaticism. Had he greater genius for political leadership, he might have convinced his associates and brought them over to his views, instead of violently quarreling with them. That fact, however, must not be permitted to obscure his devotion to the idea of peaceful evolution. He was fond of the phrase, "revolutionary evolution," which admirably describes his point of view. When, in 1850, he resigned from the Central Committee of the Communist Alliance, in London, which was then dominated by Kinkel and other impatient hot-heads, he rebuked these because they substituted revolutionary phrases for the idea of revolutionary evolution, and declared that it would take the workers *many years*, not to change the social system, but to *change themselves and make*

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themselves worthy of power! And this is the man whose name is still frequently associated with the ideas of insurrection, rapine and murder!

VI

THERE are numerous critics of small minds who are incapable of setting the logic of a great thinker's life, and of his thought as a whole, above the occasional, incidental utterances born of exceptional conditions. A wise man takes such utterances, weighs them, and soon discovers that their only value is that they indicate transient moods, which, however interesting they may be in themselves, must be held to be subordinate to the thinker's life and thought as a whole. But let the critic of small mind discover such utterances, and he will at once insist that the isolated text is the real basis for judging a man's thought.

If he is seeking a great thinker's sanction for a pet theory, and finds a single text to satisfy his desire, that text becomes the quintessence of the great thinker's best

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thought upon the subject. If, on the other hand, he is a mere intellectual buzzard seeking prey, one of those who read not to weigh and consider, but to contradict and confute, a single text upon which an attack can be based becomes the quintessence of the thinker's thought and purpose. All the rest of his work which is opposed to the text is to be dismissed as inconsistent, and, very generally in the case of such thinkers as Marx, as an evidence of insincerity and deception.

Few modern thinkers have suffered more at the hands of both classes of text hunters than Marx. There is a very wholesome French saying to the effect that in all research we must be careful how we search, lest we find that for which we look. Winnowing the books, letters and speeches of any great thinker, especially if his life was given largely to political controversy and struggle, as was that of Marx, will disclose some statements which are not consistent with each other.

To this rule Marx was no exception. A

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candid study of his life and work reveals that he had his full share of inconsistencies. But sometimes the inconsistencies are more apparent than real. In some cases, for example, the apostle of revolutionary evolution laid so much stress upon the revolutionary character of his thought that the idea of evolution seemed to be lost sight of altogether. At other times his emphasis upon the evolutionary side obscured the revolutionary side. There are sayings of his which, taken by themselves, indicate that Marx believed in a sudden revolution of society, a great cataclysmic upheaval of the old order and the immediate appearance of the new. But such sayings cannot be justly "taken by themselves." If we are to understand Marx, either as advocates or antagonists, we must consider, not isolated utterances, but the logic and spirit of the whole body of his teaching. And no one can approach the study of Marx in that spirit without realizing that his best thought rejected the notion of a sudden social transformation due to a *coup d'état* or an

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insurrection. The idea is as repugnant to his theory of social development as that of gradual change, revolutionary evolution, is fundamental to it.

VII

MARX himself regarded *Das Kapital* as his greatest achievement, and most of his disciples have agreed with him. That it is a very great achievement there can be no sensible doubt. A ponderous and difficult work on political economy, consisting of something like twenty-five hundred closely printed large octavo pages, it has been painfully and conscientiously studied by thousands of humble laborers. It has been regarded by many of Marx's followers exactly as the Bible is regarded by many Christians, as an infallible book. *Das Kapital* is distinctly one of the masterpieces of the world's economic literature, to be ranked with the works of Adam Smith, David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill.

Still, admitting all that, I venture to say that, fifty years hence, the fame of Marx

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will not rest upon his work as a political economist. While *Das Kapital* must always take rank with such works as *The Wealth of Nations*, it is by no means his greatest achievement. Far more important, it seems to me, is his work as a sociologist, his discovery and exposition of the fundamental law of social progress. Without minimizing the importance of his theory of surplus value, it can be said with confidence that his so-called materialistic conception of history is of far greater importance and value. It is in reality the foundation of Marxism, and upon it, rather than upon his economic theories, rests whatever claim Marx has to a place in history with Darwin and Spencer.

Oddly enough, this, the most important of Marxian theories, is also the most misrepresented, possibly because it is the least understood. Misrepresentation of it by Socialists who call themselves "Marxists" is hardly less serious or common than by the bitterest enemies of the Socialist movement. Exaggerated statements and crude interpretations

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of the theory have done much to discredit it, and to prejudice thoughtful minds against Marx and all his teachings.

It is impossible to enter here upon an elaborate exposition of the theory.¹ All that is possible is to give a brief and bald summary of its cardinal principles. Such a summary we have in the words spoken by Engels, in Highgate Cemetery, at the funeral of Marx:

“The production of the material means of life, and the corresponding stage of economic evolution, of a nation or epoch form the foundation from which the civil institutions of the people in question, their ideas of law, of art, of religion even, have been developed, and according to which they are to be explained—and not the reverse as has been done heretofore.”

As a summary, this concise statement is admirable, and it has not been improved upon by any of the host of writers who have

¹ For such an exposition, the reader is referred to an earlier work by the present writer, *Socialism, a Summary and Interpretation of Socialist Principles* (Revised Edition, 1909).

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succeeded Engels. Its meaning is perfectly plain and simple: it means that, in the last analysis, our social relations are, in the main, determined by our economic relations; that fundamental changes in the methods of producing and distributing wealth, sooner or later necessitate and cause changes in the organization of society, destroying old customs and institutions and bringing new ones into existence; that changes so profound, affecting all our material environment, influence the whole of life, our ideas of law, of ethics, of art, and even of religion. In a word, it means that the main determining force in social evolution is the growth of economic power and efficiency; that all intellectual and spiritual progress is ultimately dependent upon economic development.

So thoroughly has this conception of social development been accepted by the scholarship of the time, that it has become a commonplace, and Marx appears to the present-day student who encounters his work for the first time as a discoverer of the obvious.

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The man who does not see that the great economic changes involved in the break-up of feudal society, and the rise and development of the era of capitalism, resulted in social and political changes of vast magnitude, and in the development of laws, customs and institutions peculiar and essential to the new epoch, is mentally blind. He has not yet discovered the obvious!

It is unfortunate that Marx never developed this important theory with the elaborate care and thoroughness with which he developed his economic theories. It runs through all his work, like a thread, from the *Communist Manifesto*, written in 1847, to *Das Kapital*. It is the foundation upon which the superstructure of his whole system of thought rests. But there is often a notable lack of that patient, thorough analysis and argument which we associate with the name Marx. And there is always the danger that the over-emphasis due to the controversial temper in which he stated the theory may mislead us.

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In a letter written to a student of Socialism in 1890, and published shortly after his death,¹ Engels frankly explained that Marx and himself were partly responsible for the fact that too much had been claimed for the influence of the economic forces in social development — that the influence of other factors had sometimes been sweepingly denied. He explained that in meeting the attacks of their opponents Marx and himself had been under the necessity of emphasizing the dominant influence of economic conditions, and that they did not always have the time or opportunity “to let the other factors, which were concerned in the mutual action and reaction, get their deserts.”

There is a world of meaning in the phrase “mutual action and reaction.” What he meant by it may be plainly seen from another letter on the subject, in which he says that those followers of Marx and himself who interpret the doctrine to mean that the economic factor is the sole determinant of

¹ In the *Socialistische Akademiker*, 1895.

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historical development convert it into a "meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase." In the same letter he shows how "the political, legal, philosophical theories, and religious views . . . exert an influence on the development of the historical struggle, and in many instances determine their form." ¹

It is well that we have the words of the masters with which to confute and rebuke those of their disciples who, their zeal far exceeding their knowledge, interpret the theory to mean that the only power at work in human evolution is that of economic interest, that ideals, patriotism, religion and love have had no influence at all, and that even the conduct of the individual is wholly shaped by his material interests. Such views are "not only pedantic but ridiculous," to quote Engels once more; they are exceedingly dangerous to the movement because of the demagogic agitation which springs from them. To such perversions of a great theory, more than to any other cause, is due

¹ *Idem.*

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that sinister effort to exclude from the Socialist ranks all who are not actual proletarians, and the hatred and distrust of intellectual leadership reflected in the constant agitation against the "Intellectuals," agitation which would, were it to succeed, rob the working-class movement of an element of strength without which it must assuredly fail.

VIII

AFTER all, the life of Marx affords the best and most conclusive reply to those narrow dogmatists who proclaim that ideals count for nothing, and that men never respond to any motives higher than the desire for material gain. For Marx was essentially an idealist. For the sake of a cherished ideal he suffered a life of martyrdom. Does anybody in his senses believe that the man who suffered hunger and lived in a mean tenement, and who was grateful for the warmth afforded by the reading room of the British Museum, though he was often too hungry to study, was inspired by nothing higher than his material interest? Was it that or some nobler ideal, some unselfish passion, which led him to spurn the subtle temptations of a Bismarck offering a life of ease and luxury in exchange for services in-

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finitely less arduous than those he bestowed upon the working-class movement?

We shall utterly fail to understand the life of Marx, and much of his profoundest thought will have no significance for us, if we do not pay just attention to the spiritual side of his nature. Contrary to the opinion which generally prevails, even among his Socialist followers, that side of Marx's nature was highly developed. A pronounced atheist, he was not and could not be religious in the ordinary, accepted sense of that term. But in the larger sense of the word he was religious. Socialism was a religion to him, and the heroic and unselfish devotion with which he worked was the manifestation of a nature essentially and intensely spiritual.

Marx was a prophet quite as truly as Isaiah, Amos, Joel and Micah were prophets. He proclaimed the economic emancipation of mankind. With magnificent faith and courage he appealed to the workers of the world, inspiring them with his own belief that they were destined by the inexorable

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laws of evolution to banish poverty from the world, to put an end to the warfare of nations and of classes, and so make the great ages-old dream of universal brotherhood a reality. After all, his vision of a social order rooted in justice and equality of opportunity, and blossoming forth into the joy and peace of fellowship and brotherhood, was not materially different from that social vision which the great Hebrew prophets called "The Kingdom of God on Earth."

We who call ourselves disciples of Marx are unfortunately prone to forget the ultimate spiritual meaning of our movement. Marx never lost sight of that. True, he proclaimed the inevitability of the class struggle as a fact of social evolution, and urged the working people of all countries to unite in order that they might fight the master class successfully. But his thought went far deeper than that. He never forgot that the object of the victory thus secured was not to make the workers rulers of the class to which they had been subject, but to put an

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end to all class rule forever, by ending the conditions which make class divisions possible in society. Thus will human fellowship be made possible.

He bitterly assailed economic servitude, and fought for the emancipation of the world from material poverty, misery and oppression. But that was his immediate aim, not his ultimate goal. He was too big a man, too profound a thinker to look upon the gain of material comfort and plenty as an end in itself. He realized that the spiritual life of man depends upon the physical life, and that the highest development of the spiritual life can only be made possible through the highest development of the material life, of which it is the flower. He knew only too well that the chains which bind the body captive bind also the soul, and that the liberation of the soul can only be accomplished by breaking the chains that bind the body.

A personal experience may serve to illustrate how some of the followers of Marx lose sight of the ultimate goal in the midst

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of their struggles to attain the immediate aims we have formulated in our programmes. Some time ago I was announced to lecture on "The Spiritual Significance of Modern Socialism."¹ No sooner was the subject announced than it was severely criticized by some narrow dogmatists in our movement, even before the lecture was delivered. They rebuked me for my departure from the straight paths of Marxism, and denounced the title of the lecture as a serious heresy.

They did not know that the title had been directly inspired by a re-reading of that fine inaugural address which Marx wrote for the International Workingmen's Association, in which capitalism is condemned because it leads to the "spiritual degradation" of the workers. No one can read that splendid document with an open mind and fail to realize that Marx attached a great and vital spiritual significance to the Socialist movement.

¹ *The Spiritual Significance of Modern Socialism.* New York, 1908.

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Marx the philosopher and economist inspires and compels admiration. And, despite his occasional petulance, and the domineering and intolerant spirit he sometimes displayed toward other leaders of the radical movement, there is much to admire in his political life, especially his great courage and unflagging zeal. But it is only when we turn from contemplation of the philosopher and politician and consider his beautiful and tender devotion to his wife, and his passionate love for children, that we begin to feel anything like that affection which Lincoln inspired in the hearts of the people. As we get to know more of his life, and the calumnies which have obscured his real character from our view are dissipated, we shall find our admiration for Marx deepening into affection, and we shall love him for what he was in his person as much as we honor him for his greatness of intellect.

Personally, I love to think of the Marx whose youthful dream and ambition was to be the great poet of his country, whose love

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for Jenny von Westphalen found expression in lyrical outbursts, which, if they are not great poetry, prove that he felt the divine fire. I love to think that throughout his tempestuous career he enjoyed the friendship of great poets like Freiligrath and Heine, and that they recognized his kinship with themselves. Finally, I love to think of him as a faithful student and lover of Dante, turning to the great Florentine's immortal masterpiece, the *Divine Comedy*, for inspiration throughout his life.

This spiritual figure is the real Marx, the poet, philosopher and prophet whose achievements and services to mankind must be counted among the greatest of the glories of the nineteenth century. So long as we neglect Marx the poet and prophet, Marx the philosopher will be only half revealed to us, a dim figure wrapped in impenetrable shadows. Surely, it is not too much to hope that we shall pay increasing attention to Marx's life as the surest and safest guide to the essential meaning of his written and

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spoken word. For his is the greatest name in our annals: he kindled a beacon fire upon the hills of Time to guide the faltering feet of Humanity in its pilgrimage to the Promised Land.

II

ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM IN THE
SOCIALIST MOVEMENT: A
HISTORICAL SURVEY

I

FROM time to time the Socialist movement — especially in its formative stages — is disturbed by agitation directed against the relatively small body of trained thinkers and scholars who devote their gifts of superior ability, education and training to the Socialist cause. These “intellectuals” are, naturally, mainly recruited from the privileged classes. They are not themselves proletarians. With few exceptions, they either belong to that section of the ruling class which finds its existence menaced by the development of the great trusts, and so cast their lot with the proletariat, or to that small minority of idealists in the ruling class, who, in the words of Marx, “have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movements as a

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whole.”¹ In either case, they constitute a most important part of the Socialist movement. To quote Marx again, “they supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.”²

It is hardly necessary to say here that these “intellectuals” have rendered the Socialist movement service of incalculable value. They have furnished it with most of its philosophers, economists, orators, artists, poets and political leaders. If we take the great struggles out of which the present movement has emerged, such as, for example, the struggles in which Marx and Bakunin were the leaders, or the literature of the movement, it is hardly possible to conceive that there could have been a Socialist movement or a Socialist literature at all but for the “intellectuals.” Just think what the Socialist movement and its literature would have been without the work of Marx, Engels, Lassalle, De Paepe, Vaillant, Kautsky, Mehring,

¹ *The Communist Manifesto.*

² *Idem.*

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Jaurés, Vandervelde, Larbriola, Hyndman, Lafargue and Bax, in Europe, and Gronlund, Hillquit, and many others in America! Yet these are but a few names taken at random almost from the multitude that crowd the memory.

At all stages of its development the movement has depended largely upon its "intellectuals." They have given voice to the "unlearned discontent" of the despoiled and disinherited; they have formulated programmes for the movement, explained them to the masses, and defended them against the assaults of the trained and skilled intellectual retainers of the ruling class.

It is to the "intellectuals" that the proletariat owes whatever understanding it has of its position in social evolution, its mission and its opportunity. It required the learning and genius of an intellectual giant like Marx to comprehend the complex process of social development and formulate the theory of the class struggle. No proletarian, engaged in manual work, could have done it. Thus, the

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“intellectual” was necessary to the working class movement for the achievement of its first great task, namely, the elevation of its blind class instinct into an enlightened class consciousness. They who in the name of proletarian class consciousness hurl their glib phrases at the “intellectuals” in the movement, to tell them they are uninvited interlopers, would never have had the phrases to use but for the “intellectuals” who coined them and, by sheer force of intellect, gave them currency.

Anti-intellectualism is a curious phenomenon. In view of the loyal and efficient service which the “intellectuals” have rendered the Socialist cause, it would be natural to expect that every honest and sincere proletarian Socialist, realizing how easily the “intellectuals” could command rich remuneration for much less service to the master class, would regard them with especial honor and respect. It would be natural to expect that the devotion of all sincere proletarian Socialists to their cause would be

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enough to safeguard the movement against any demagogic attempt to instill into their minds distrust and suspicion and hatred of their better-educated comrades.

II

YET, the fact remains that, almost from its inception, the international Socialist movement has been infested with the evil spirit of anti-intellectualism. Generally, it has been a factional movement, fostered by petty, ambitious intriguers, aspirants to leadership devoid of the requisite intellectual equipment and training. Finding their ambitions blocked by the leadership of better educated and more intelligent leaders, they have tried to create antagonism between the proletarians and the "intellectuals."

Unfortunately, it is never difficult for a cunning and unscrupulous demagogue to do this with a considerable amount of success. "Has not Marx himself taught us to believe that the working class must achieve its own emancipation? Very well, then, why should you proletarians, whose brains are as keen

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as those of these self-constituted leaders, be content to give the leadership of the movement to men who are not proletarians, but middle-class 'intellectuals'? Is not this supposed to be a movement of the working class? What, then, are these people from the exploiting class doing in our ranks? And why should we make them our leaders? Surely, it is time for us to make it a working-class movement in fact as well as in name!"

Talk of this kind, plentifully interlarded with apt quotations from Marx, Lassalle, Kautsky, and other great intellectual leaders of the movement, may be made very convincing to a certain type of mind. Many perfectly honest and sincere Socialists, especially among proletarians of very limited education, are captivated by it. The fact that the leaders of the agitation are themselves very rarely proletarians but petty "intellectuals," is generally lost sight of, strangely enough. But such is the fact. The leaders of the anti-intellectualist agitation

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are nearly always unsuccessful "intellectuals" — lawyers without clients, authors without publishers, professors without chairs, ministers without pulpits, and so on.

Sometimes this anti-intellectualism assumes the dimensions of a crisis. Important elections in the party are fought upon the issue. At such times, the life of the movement is jeopardized, for if the demagogic element should succeed the "intellectuals" would either be forced to submit to the rule of the demagogues, and see the movement committed to suicidal policies, or leave the party and establish a new party upon broader and saner lines. And in that case it might take many years of fratricidal strife among themselves before the Socialists would be in a position to devote their attention to fighting the common enemy instead of each other. Fortunately, that stage is never reached, except in isolated localities. No matter how strong the feeling against the "intellectuals" may be, the great bulk of the party members are never so stupid as to force out of the

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movement the best writers, editors and orators it has.

It is not in times of crisis that the worst evils of this form of demagoguery manifest themselves, however, but rather in normal times. Crises thus precipitated are always followed by healthy reactions. What is most to be deplored is the fact that, year in and year out, often unobserved except by the thoughtful few, the sinister spirit is at work, sowing dissension where unity is so much needed; giving the organized movement in many cities into the hands of blatant demagogues who make Socialism a byword and a reproach; hampering the elected leaders of the movement by raising all kinds of foolish issues; lowering the intellectual and moral tone of the propaganda of the movement; and, perhaps worst of all, demoralizing the rank and file of the movement by setting ignorance upon a pedestal and discounting the necessity and advantage of education and culture.

I am ready to accept full responsibility to

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the party for saying here, deliberately, and with all the force at my command, that it is my sincere belief that the most unscrupulous and cunning enemies of Socialism could not devise anything more dangerous to the movement than this demagogic opposition to the "intellectuals" which finds so much favor within our own ranks, and that its apostles are, ignorantly or otherwise, playing the enemy's game.

III

HAVING said so much expressive of my own attitude toward anti-intellectualism, I need not further discuss it. To make an elaborate defense of the "intellectuals," or to argue at length against a folly so stupendous as anti-intellectualism would be an ill use of our time. What I propose to do is to give a brief sketch of the rôle this particular form of demagoguery has played in the history of the international Socialist movement. Perhaps the effect of such a review will be to awaken some of you to the danger of anti-intellectualism to the movement, and inspire you to oppose it. It may be, too, that some sincere Socialist who has listened with sympathy to the preachers of this sinister gospel will see its evil side and set himself against it. If either

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or both of these results are attained, my task will be well rewarded.

We date the rise of the modern Socialist movement from the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, in 1848. That great document was the birth-cry of the movement. For a decade before its publication there had existed a number of little revolutionary groups and societies, most of them offshoots of the agitation carried on by Mazzini in 1835. Practically all these groups and societies were secret, conspiratory bodies.

When Marx went to Paris in 1843, he soon discovered that such a "movement" as there was consisted of numerous little warring groups who spent their time and strength opposing each other. One faction, perhaps the strongest numerically, consisted of the followers of Étienne Cabet, who dreamed of establishing a Utopia, a terrestrial paradise, in America, and advocated emigration for that purpose. Next in numerical importance came the followers of Wilhelm Weitling, wedded to the old methods of secret con-

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spiracies and violent insurrections. Weitling's practical policy was thus essentially that of Mazzini, and the followers of the great Italian were practically supporters of Weitling's policy, even though they disavowed his leadership and remained loyal to Mazzini. One common thought dominated them all: by secret organization the workers were to prepare themselves for swift, sudden and decisive insurrections, which would give the government of cities, and even states, into their hands.

Equally opposed to both these factions was another large element. It would be inaccurate to describe it as another faction, for it had no unity of its own. It was composed of numerous petty factions which had little in common with each other except their opposition to the two factions already described. Petty sects and social quacks of all kinds were included in this element. Most important and notable were the remnants of the Saint Simonian and Fourierist movements. The few remaining devotees of Saint Simon

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were divided into two hostile groups, one acknowledging Enfantin's leadership and the other repudiating it. The Fourierists were discouraged and demoralized by the utter failure of the great American Fourierist experiments, at Brook Farm and elsewhere.

As soon as Marx was sufficiently familiar with the situation he began to advocate an entire reorganization of the movement. Or perhaps it would be truer to say that he advocated the organization of a new movement out of the best elements of the numerous sects, groups and societies already existing. In many discussions with the various leaders he urged that the time had come for the creation of a strong proletarian movement, which would abandon all attempts to establish a Utopia as futile, forsake the traditional methods of secret conspiracy and violent insurrection, and come out into the open with a frankly avowed revolutionary aim and policy. And when he and Engels went to Brussels the two kept on advocating these

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views in newspaper articles, speeches, and personal letters.

With these facts in mind, it is easy to understand how it came to pass that Marx was the man whom Joseph Moll, the watchmaker of immortal memory, invited to undertake the reorganization of the movement, and the formulation of a programme and policy for it, and how, as a result, Marx and Engels later on wrote the *Communist Manifesto* and became the acknowledged leaders of the new organization.

For our present purpose, the significance of this chapter in our history lies in the fact that, as soon as the efforts of Marx and Engels began to show tangible results, the sinister cry of anti-intellectualism was raised. At the first congress in London, in the summer of 1847, when Engels and Wilhelm Wolff attended and acted as spokesmen for Marx, arguing for the adoption of what had already come to be known as the Marxist policy, great opposition developed, naturally enough, in the ranks of Cabet, Weitling, and

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other leaders whose policies Marx condemned and desired to supplant. Marx had sneered at the Cabetists as "visionaries" and "social quacks" and contemptuously described those who held the views of Weitling and Mazzini as "phrase mongers" and "mouthers of revolutionary nothings." In turn, he was called "a mere theorist," "a closet philosopher" and a "reactionary politician."

Unfortunately, there exists no official record of the discussions at that congress, nor of the second congress, which was held a few months later, in November, and which Marx himself attended. But dear old Frederick Lessner, who was a member of the *Arbeiter Bildungsverein* at the time, and thoroughly familiar with all that went on, told me on more than one occasion that the opponents of Marx raised the cry of "down with the 'intellectuals,'" not only at the first congress, but all through the intervening period to November, and even at that congress when Marx read the first draft of the *Communist Manifesto*, which was adopted as the theoret-

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ical and practical programme of the movement. Lessner's testimony is conclusive and will satisfy all who know the history of the Socialist movement. It was he who took the manuscript of the *Communist Manifesto* to the printer, and from that time to their deaths he was the devoted friend and confidant of both Marx and Engels.

Of course, the circumstances were exceptionally favorable to the demagogues who raised the cry. They were "men of action": they wanted deeds, not words. Weitling offered deeds. His was essentially a policy of action, but Marx counseled its abandonment, and offered in its place — a system of philosophy! Weitling told them that any day might bring the opportunity to strike the blow that would achieve decisive victory. Thus they had something to work for, an immediate goal that was almost in sight. Marx, on the other hand, talked of evolution, and told them that the social revolution must be the outcome of economic development, not of cunning, courageous and

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desperate insurrections. Clearly, Marx was not a revolutionist at all, but only a reactionary politician!

Furthermore, Marx had repeatedly warned them against reposing their trust in the bourgeoisie, and told them that the working class must rely upon its own power and develop its own leaders. Very well, then, let them take him at his word! Marx himself was a bourgeois "intellectual," not a proletarian. Weitling, on the other hand, belonged to the proletariat; he was a poor tailor, and he had, moreover, suffered a long term of imprisonment for the cause. Obviously, he was the leader to follow, and Marx was inconsistent and insincere in seeking the leadership of the movement.

It is readily apparent that a very plausible appeal could be made against Marx upon such grounds as these, even though the more thoughtful men in the movement might realize that Weitling was no longer a tailor, and that he was as much of an "intellectual" as Marx himself, being entirely dependent

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upon his literary work for a living. As we know, the demagogues failed and Marx succeeded. It is perhaps worth while, in view of the recent outcry against the "intellectuals" in our own ranks, to consider what would have happened if the result of that struggle of sixty years ago had been different, and Weitling's policy had prevailed. Do any of our present-day preachers of anti-intellectualism really believe that the movement would have been benefited by the defeat of Marx, and that it would have been well for the movement if the *Communist Manifesto* never had been written?

IV

THE cry, "Down with the 'intellectuals!'" was again raised against Marx and Engels some three years later. As usual, it was raised by men who were not proletarians, but petty "intellectuals" themselves, not only in the sense that they depended upon intellectual work of some sort for a living, but also in the sense that their point of view was abstract and theoretical and entirely unrelated to the realities of life. It is well to keep this latter aspect of intellectualism in mind, because we are sometimes told by its apologists that the agitation against the "intellectuals" in the party is not directed against leaders who happen to be engaged in the various intellectual occupations, but against a point of view, a mental attitude, a method of approaching questions of party policy.

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It is greatly to be feared that this ingenious "explanation" must be regarded as a rather cowardly evasion of the real issue. Or, it may be, in some instances, a pious delusion arising from an attempt to clothe folly and cunning in the mantle of charity. Were such the case, we should not find the agitation invariably taking the form of an attempt to range the manual workers against the brain workers, as it has done at all times in our history. Instead of that, we should find many of the loudest protagonists of the proletarian-pure-and-simple conception of the movement condemned as "intellectuals," while many of the great thinkers and writers who have been most bitterly assailed as "intellectuals" would have escaped the charge. Marx, for example, would never have been assailed if that were the real meaning of anti-intellectualism.

We shall be compelled to recur to this point in connection with some later manifestations of anti-intellectualism: for the moment we must leave it and return to our nar-

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native. In the aftermath of the defeat of the revolutionary movements of 1848-1849, the leaders of the Socialist¹ movement found themselves compelled, by reason of oppressive laws which destroyed the freedom of the press and freedom of speech and assemblage, to revert to the old methods of secret organization. Marx, who had so lately led the movement from its dark subterranean channels out into the light of open day, had to endure the mortification of seeing it return to the old ways. Marxism thus suffered a serious check.

Of course, the inevitable soon happened and the movement became demoralized. Like every other conspiracy or secret movement in history, it soon attracted a host of intriguers and adventurers. Spies and *agents provocateurs* joined the movement in large numbers to betray its secrets to the police.

¹ The word "Socialist" is here used in connection with the movement in its modern, present-day sense. In 1848-1849 the word "Communist" was used to describe the working-class movement. It was not until many years later that the term "Socialist movement" took its place.—J. S.

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Intrigue became the main business of the movement, and suspicion, envy and jealousy flourished. Marx might well have been dismayed, but instead he accepted the conditions thus imposed upon his leadership, and with rare courage and wisdom devoted himself to the difficult task of saving the movement from the influence of those who saw in the altered conditions opportunity to lead it back to the old ways of insurrection.

Impatient and romantic hotheads wanted to attempt new revolutionary uprisings, and issued manifestoes which were ludicrously bombastic. Against these Marx stood out bravely, advocating better organization of the movement, the progressive abandonment of secret methods, personal study and educational propaganda. Of course, the "impossibilists" of that time, Willich, Kinkel, and others, denounced him as a tool of the reaction, and resorted to the old cry of protest against the "intellectuals," but he cared not. Throughout the bitter conflict, up to the time when he resigned from the Central Com-

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mittee, at the end of 1850, Marx proved himself to be a wise and courageous leader in whose nature there was no trace of demagoguery.

His resignation from the Central Committee was not the act of a defeated and disappointed leader, but of a leader making a great sacrifice for the sake of giving weight to a grave warning he was addressing to the rank and file. Willich and Kinkel told the workers that they ought to rise at once and seize political power, or give up the fight,—fine phrases, doubtless, but a counsel of destruction. Marx, the “cowardly intellectual,” on the other hand, told them frankly that they were not ready to seize political power, nor fit to wield it; that it would take them many years to make themselves worthy!

V

ALTHOUGH it did not wholly disappear, anti-intellectualism was little heard of in the movement during more than a decade. Then it once more raised its ugly head in connection with the foundation of the International Workingmen's Association, and from that time to the end of that great organization it was constantly active. Almost from the beginning, in connection with the titanic struggle between Marx and Mazzini for the control of the International, the enemies of Marx raised the old cry against him. That Mazzini was equally an "intellectual," if we regard only the nature of his work, and far more of an "intellectual" if we consider the essence of intellectualism to be an abstract, theoretical and idealistic point of view, was of no consequence.

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This opposition to Marx manifested itself most clearly at the first congress of the International, held at Geneva, in 1866. Then certain disciples of Proudhon, acting, no doubt, under his direction, fought desperately for the adoption of a rule restricting membership in the organization to manual workers who were bona fide wage-earners. The object of this rule was obviously to exclude Marx and Engels. The same specious demagoguery which in 1847 would have prevented Marx and Engels from writing the *Communist Manifesto*, would have prevented Marx from writing that great masterpiece of Socialist political literature, the Inaugural Address of the International Workingmen's Association, in 1864, and deprived the movement of the brilliant gifts which Marx lavished upon it.

Only the most disingenuous minds will contend that anti-intellectualism is a protest simply against a point of view, a method of viewing Socialist tactics and policy, in view of the efforts made by Tolain, Fribourg, and

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other followers of Proudhon, at the Geneva congress to exclude from the movement all except wage-earning manual workers. It is clear that they would have excluded all who were engaged in intellectual occupations, regardless of their mental attitudes.¹ Of course, it is permissible to doubt whether they would have been equally anxious to adopt such a motion if some other person than Marx, Proudhon, for example, had been at the head of the organization.

Those Socialists who are still innocent enough to believe that anti-intellectualism, instead of being a demagogic attack upon those

¹ From time to time there have been notable instances of this same hostility toward others than wage-earners in the American Socialist movement. In Nebraska, several years ago, a rule was actually adopted to limit the *percentage* of non-wage-workers who should be allowed membership in the party! Some have seriously proposed to limit membership in the party to actual wage-workers, excluding all others, quite regardless of their views. Curiously, such proposals have generally come from men who were not wage-earners! Were they, then, seeking to exclude themselves? Possibly so. My candid opinion, however, is that they intended nothing of the kind. They simply resorted to an old demagogic method of discrediting, if possible, men of whose position and influence in the movement they were envious.—J. S.

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of superior ability and education who attain positions of influence in the movement, is simply a protest against a certain mental attitude toward the movement, would do well to make themselves familiar with the mental attitude of those followers of Proudhon who raised the issue in 1866 at Geneva and at the Lausanne congress a year later. Were they hard-headed, class-conscious proletarians, who viewed the movement from the standpoint of stern reality, and protested against the leadership of mere theorists and Utopians, men who knew the proletarian life only from books?

Not at all. Their point of view was purely Utopian. They talked noisily of "absolute justice" and offered plans for the social revolution so fundamental as the abolition of usury through the introduction of "free credit" and a paper currency, the establishment of a universal language of which Proudhon was the inventor, simplified spelling, quite *à la* Roosevelt, and Guillaume's pet invention, a new system of phonography!

VI

AFTER Proudhon came Bakunin, and a new outburst of anti-intellectualism.

Bakunin joined the International in 1868, becoming a member of a branch at Geneva, soon after the Brussels congress. This was when the International was approaching its zenith, and even the *London Times* editorially likened its growth to that of early Christianity.¹ No sooner did Bakunin join the organization than he began to make trouble. Whatever his motives in joining may have been, it is certain that he was from the very first disloyal and dishonest.

Bakunin wanted to wrest the leadership of the movement from Marx that he might take his place. One of the first things he did was to establish an organization of his own, within the organization, the famous *Alliance*

¹ Quoted by G. Jaekch, *Die Internationale*.

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de la Démocratie Socialiste. Nominally, the *Alliance* was a branch of the International, but it was actually a rival organization which Bakunin hoped to develop within the International until it should be powerful enough to supplant the latter organization, or swallow it. It was itself an international organization, with branches of its own, a separate programme of its own, a separate president and executive council, and was to hold its own international congresses.

Of course, Marx was astute enough to comprehend the significance of Bakunin's *Alliance*. It was not long before the General Council of the International informed Bakunin that he must either disband the *Alliance* or leave the International. Immediately Bakunin and his followers set up the cry that Marx was a despot, a dictator, and a bourgeois "intellectual."

And then a strange thing happened. At the Basel congress, in 1869, it was proposed by Marx's followers, on behalf of the General Council, that power should be vested in

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the General Council to expel any section violating the rules of the association, without waiting for the annual congress. Marx wanted the power to enable him to crush Bakunin whenever opportunity and occasion arose. Under the circumstances, therefore, it was expected that Bakunin, who had been denouncing Marx for his "despotism" and "dictatorship," would violently resist the demand. But, instead of that, Bakunin supported the demand most vigorously, complaining only that it did not go far enough! The General Council, he said, ought to have power to prevent the formation of new sections if they deemed such action necessary, as well as the power to suspend any section at any time.

What was the explanation of this strange action? It was not long before the great master intriguer revealed his hand. At the bidding of the General Council the year before Bakunin had disbanded the *Alliance*, but immediately reorganized all its branches as branches of the International. The

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change was simply one of name. Bakunin still had a personal organization within the International, and his position was stronger than before rather than otherwise. Now, at the Basel congress Bakunin hoped and fully believed that his supporters far outnumbered those of Marx. Here, then, was a fine opportunity to wrest the control of the organization from Marx, and, at the same time, have the supporters of Marx play into his hands by so strengthening the rules of the organization that when he assumed power he would be impregnable. For such a prize as that, Bakunin was perfectly willing to forget that he had so recently opposed Marx as a despot and a dictator.

I will not weary you by describing in detail the anti-intellectualist outbreaks of the years which intervened between the congress at Basel, in 1869, and that at The Hague, three years later, which practically ended the life of the International. Suffice it to say that, even during the time of the Paris Commune, the followers of Bakunin kept up the

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agitation, especially in Spain and Italy. In all the history of popular movements I know of no story of organized treachery to equal that of the Jura Federation, the organization of Bakunin's followers, an integral part of the International.

Its members denounced Marx and Engels as "bourgeois intellectuals" and "priests"; its official organ the *Révolution Sociale*,¹ edited by a refugee of the Paris Commune, named Claris, repeated every dirty slander against the General Council of the International made by such sheets as the *Figaro*, the *Gaulois*, and other reactionary papers; its work was warmly praised by Gambetta's organ, *La République Française*, and similar papers; *Révolution Sociale* even charged that the General Council, and especially Marx and Engels, were in league with Bismarck!

¹ *Révolution Sociale* was made the official organ of the Jura Federation at its congress at Sonvillier, at the end of 1871.

VII

AT the congress of 1872, held at The Hague, Marx realized that it was impossible for him to continue the war with Bakunin and his followers and the other enemies of the International. Therefore, he had decided, in consultation with Engels and a few other trusted advisers, upon a desperate move. Bakunin had announced that he would attend the congress to expose Marx and his clique. Therefore, Marx, who as a rule never attended congresses, resolved to attend and confront his old enemy in open debate. He planned to inflict a crushing defeat upon Bakunin, drive him out of the organization in disgrace, and then, under guise of removing the seat of the General Council to America, practically wreck the organization and thus save it from further attempts of Bakunin to capture it.

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Bakunin did not attend, after all, but left his cause in the hands of his friends Guillaume and Schwitzguibel, who vociferously raised the old outcry against "intellectuals" in the movement. They opposed Maltman Barrie, who was a delegate, upon the ground that he was a journalist, and not a proletarian! Marx and Engels they also opposed as "bourgeois intellectuals." Paul Lafargue was not only an "intellectual," but the son-in-law of Marx, therefore they opposed him. Even Edouard Vaillant's activities in the Commune did not avail to save him from attack, for he, too, was an "intellectual," a physician. Anti-intellectualism attained the climax of absurdity at that congress.

You are familiar enough with the outcome of the congress at The Hague. Bakunin was expelled, together with his henchmen, Guillaume and Schwitzguibel, and the headquarters of the association removed to America. Thus Marx had defeated Bakunin and saved the International from his grasp, by destroying it.

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But that did not end the demagogic cry of opposition to the "intellectuals." In 1873 within the ranks of the British Federation, which still maintained a nominal existence and acknowledged the General Council in New York as the executive head of the International, there had been a good deal of opposition to the action of the congress at The Hague, and, naturally, that meant opposition to Marx and Engels. In January, 1873, John Hales, ex-secretary of the International, bitterly assailed both Marx and Engels, and tried to get the British Federation to expel Marx on the ground that he was a "despot," a "middle class intellectual," and so on, using the familiar Bakuninist tactics and phrases. Marx and Engels were at last obliged to reply to Hales through the columns of the *International Herald*, as well as in a circular which fully exposed Hales.

And now, a word or two concerning some of the most active and prominent of the anti-intellectualists. It is not without significance, I think, that practically without exception,

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they can be included in one of two classes. Almost to a man, they were either empty-headed Utopians, men with schemes for the speedy salvation of mankind, such as "free credit," universal languages, and the like, or they were men whose overwhelming desire for personal gain or power led them into the lowest depths of treachery and deceit.

Bakunin's Machiavellian policy is a case in point. The conduct of John Hales is another. Hales, even while he was the secretary of the International, was, as was later proved, secretly in league with Bakunin, conspiring with him to have the *Alliance* supplant it. Then there were men like Albert Richard and Gaspard Blanc, intimate associates of Bakunin, among the most active members of the *Alliance*, bitter opponents of Marx and all other "intellectuals."¹ Not long after the Paris Commune these men were conducting a Bonapartist agitation among the French exiles, and Marx exposed them. Then only did they come out into the

¹ Cf. G. Jaeckh, *Die Internationale*.

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open with a signed manifesto, bombastically declaring that they, Albert Richard and Gaspard Blanc, had "built up the great army of the French proletariat" and were "the acknowledged chiefs of the proletariat in France" and concluding with the words, "there comes from the depths of our hearts and from that of every Frenchman the cry of 'Long live the Emperor!'"¹

¹ *Idem.*

VIII

IN this outline I have sketched only a few of the manifestations of anti-intellectualism which hampered Marx and Engels in their great work. I purposely refrain from discussing those later manifestations which come within the scope of my own experience for reasons which require no explanation. It is impossible to review this chapter in the history of the movement without feeling that anti-intellectualism is a terrible perversion of essential democracy, a subtle disease against which the movement must protect itself. .

It cannot be too strongly emphasized, I think, that any attempt to limit the influence and work of any number of honest and sincere Socialists, simply because they are not manual laborers, must of necessity be mischievous and injurious to the movement. This is a working-class movement primarily,

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and no conspiracy can change that essential characteristic. But to attempt to exclude from active participation in it all who are not manual laborers is either the counsel of fools or of traitors. If such an attempt were to succeed it would doom the movement to defeat. A working-class movement which deliberately refused to avail itself of all the gifts of intellect and education at its command, would be doomed to pursue forever the futile task of plowing sand.

III

THE INFLUENCE OF MARX ON
CONTEMPORARY SOCIALISM

I

FOR many years the words " Socialism " and " Marxism " have been practically synonyms. There could be no ampler proof of the greatness of Karl Marx than this simple fact. Over a large part of the Old World to-day Socialism is the dominant political issue, and in the parliamentary bodies of several nations its leaders are conspicuous for their ability no less than for their earnestness, devotion, and courage. Throughout the world the movement has a voting strength of nearly ten millions, representing, probably, at least five times as many human beings.

It would be idle to deny that great and important differences exist among those who call themselves Socialists. However much they may have in common, it is obvious that M. Jaurés, the eloquent and scholarly French

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Socialist, and Mr. Hyndman, the equally eloquent and scholarly English Socialist, hold very different views concerning the programme essential to the attainment of the Socialist goal, if not as to the goal itself.

Both these men are pure "intellectuals." Although they are great leaders in a proletarian movement, neither of them has had to experience the proletarian struggle. But if we take Socialists who are equally typical proletarians we shall find exactly the same divergence of thought and method. Keir Hardie, the British Socialist, and Eugene V. Debs, the American Socialist, both belong to this class. Each came to the Socialist movement through his trade-union experience. Yet, despite the apparent similarity of their evolution as Socialists, the two leaders represent opposing poles of Socialist policy and thought.

Such obvious facts as these have caused many critics, sympathetic and otherwise, to attempt a classification of Socialists. Even within the movement itself, crude efforts are

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made in this direction. The Socialist press teems with references to arbitrarily arranged groupings, indicated by such terms as "impossibilists," "opportunists," "intellectuals," "proletarians," and so on. Such groupings have some value in that they describe, however vaguely, some characteristics which roughly differentiate various phases of contemporary Socialism. Their arbitrary character should not be forgotten, however, for a single moment. He who trusts them too completely will be utterly misled. The "opportunist" of to-day may to-morrow be found taking a position which places him among the "impossibilists," and the most vociferous attack upon the "intellectuals" is likely to come from an intellectual, much to the amusement of the proletarians in the movement.

It is quite remarkable that practically all Socialists, whether they be opportunists or impossibilists, proletarians or intellectuals, or even anti-intellectuals, claim to be "Marxists." The English Socialist who works with

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the trade unionist, through the Labor Party, claims to be a pure Marxist. The same claim is made by the impatient "syndicalist" of the Latin countries, with his faith in the mass strike and his ill-concealed disdain for parliamentary action. In practically all Socialist factional discussions Marx is the prophet of all the factions.

This identity of Marxism and Socialism has long been recognized as one of the most striking facts in the whole range of Socialist phenomena. Recently, however, there has been much talk of the waning influence of Marx upon contemporary Socialist thought and action. We have been assured, both from within and without the Socialist ranks, that the teachings of Marx are going out of fashion, being rapidly and more or less openly abandoned. One lady has, indeed, written a book about *The New Socialism*,¹ assuring us that "Marx called up a swathed and ter-

¹ J. T. Stoddard, *The New Socialism*. New York, 1910.

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rifying figure, in which the world sees the dread specter of revolution," whereas the "new" Socialists are devoting themselves to the task of stripping away the disguise, and unveiling "the kindly features of a radical and comprehensive social reform."

The New York Chapter of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society has announced as one of its study topics the question, "Are the Teachings of Karl Marx Being Abandoned by Present-Day Socialists?" and it is to that question I desire to address myself here.

As a biographer of Marx, it has been my special task, during more than a dozen years, to try to understand the man. It has become my habit to view the developments of the Socialist movement throughout the world from what I believe to be his point of view; to interpret his writings by what I know of his life; to bring all that I know of his life and his intimate conversation and correspondence with friends to my aid in studying his formally stated theories as they appear

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on the printed page. Whatever disadvantage such methods may have are more than outweighed, in my judgment, by the numerous and obvious advantages.

II

AS to the question itself, I feel strongly that neither an unqualified negative nor an unqualified affirmative reply is possible. My belief is that the Socialist movement of the present day is both breaking away from and drawing closer to the teachings of the great German revolutionist. Recent criticism has compelled all thoughtful and sincere Socialists to admit some defects in Marxian theory, and to recognize the necessity of a readjustment of their theoretical position, and of their policies so far as they have rested upon the mistaken theoretical premises. But, for all that, the unmistakable tendency of present-day Socialism is toward a closer adherence to the essential and fundamental teachings of Marx, not away from them. Paradoxical as this statement may seem, a careful and candid study of the

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life of Marx in connection with recent developments in the international Socialist movement will reveal its truth.

“As for me, I am no ‘Marxist,’ I am glad to say,” was a saying frequently upon the lips of Marx. With the words went that half-sneering expression with which his best portraits have made us familiar. If we can fathom the meaning of the cryptic and paradoxical utterance, it may assist us very materially in our attempt to find a satisfactory answer to our question. Who, then, were the “Marxists” thus scornfully repudiated by Marx, and what were the reasons for the repudiation?

During his lifetime, as now, there were many disciples of Marx who regarded his theoretical work as being his greatest achievement, and his most important contribution to the cause of the proletariat. He was to them primarily a political economist. They spoke of his great work, *Das Kapital*, as the “Bible of the proletariat,” and as a Bible they regarded it. With a passion which can

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only be adequately described as religious, tens of thousands of working-men laboriously read and studied that difficult work. It was to them an "impregnable rock of Holy Scripture." Those who could not comprehend the work as a whole satisfied themselves with a few memorized passages. Like all Bibles, it became a book of texts, much quoted but little read.

Naturally, those who regarded the book as a Bible made it the basis of a creed. Naturally, also, their creed became the basis of a sect. Doctrinal tests decided the fitness or unfitness of men and women to enter the Socialist fellowship and to be reckoned with the elect. Just as the religious sectarianism based upon creedal and doctrinal tests has barred many a rare and beautiful religious spirit from the church, while it placed the word "orthodox" as a stamp of approval upon many an unworthy and irreligious spirit, so this sectarian "Marxism" imposed its stamp of "orthodox" and "unorthodox" to determine the fitness or unfitness of men

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and women to be called Socialists. Many who believed in the whole programme of Socialism, who saw the necessity of a working-class political party to bring about the realization of that programme, and were willing to work with and through such a party for the immediate interests of the working class, and, ultimately, the collective ownership of the social productive forces, were denied the right to call themselves Socialists, and a place in the Socialist ranks, simply because they could not subscribe to all the economic and philosophical teachings of Marx.

In every country Socialism has had to outgrow this dogmatism and sectarianism before attaining political importance. In almost every country the movement had its inception in a theoretical propaganda. A few earnest souls devoted themselves to the task of studying the works of a Fourier or a Marx and getting others to study them. To fully understand the master's teachings naturally became the chief ambition of such disciples. To the average person, the zeal and

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devotion of such men and women is incomprehensible. I have known a working-man, of scant education, to walk a distance of ten miles every Sunday morning for years, no matter what the weather, to study with a fellow Socialist the first volume of *Das Kapital*. After seven or eight hours of labored study, the patient student would undertake the homeward journey of ten miles supremely happy if he had mastered a single new passage.

Of course, his joy was due to something other than mere intellectual satisfaction and triumph. It rested upon a much nobler passion than that. Mastery of the difficult and abstract text was not an end in itself, but a means to an end of great grandeur. Only through a knowledge of Marx could the proletariat ever be saved. The psychology of this attitude is not difficult to understand. It is precisely that of theological sectarianism: Marx is the only true prophet, his book the one and only true gospel, and every question is to be decided by an appeal to its text.

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It is almost unnecessary to say that Karl Marx was too great and wise a man not to recognize the folly of the attitude here indicated, and the positive perils to the movement which it involved. He certainly did not deny the importance of correct thinking, or underrate it. On the contrary, he was apt to expect and demand too much in the way of theoretical knowledge from those engaged in the social movement. But he knew that the great mass of the workers could never be expected to understand fully such philosophical doctrines as the materialistic conception of history, or theories of political economy such as surplus value. He was not foolish enough to believe that a great movement could be founded upon a correct understanding of such subtle and difficult theories. At most he believed that the movement could be guided by such knowledge. In other words, while he expected and desired that the leaders of the movement should possess a thorough theoretical training, he did not ex-

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pect anything of the kind from the rank and file.

When his overzealous and impatient disciples sought to push the importance of theoretical training beyond this limit, and to insist upon making the acceptance and understanding of his theories a test of membership, Marx was impatient. It was in such moods that he expressed his gratitude that he was not a "Marxist."

There was another reason for the cryptic and paradoxical epigram. Like all great thinkers upon whose work a definite school of thought has been founded, Marx has suffered greatly at the hands of his own followers, through their wild exaggeration of his theories. The prayer of his heart might well have been: "Save me from my friends — I can take care of my enemies myself!"

The case of Ricardo, the great English economist, may be pertinently cited as a well-known example of the discredit which intellectual leaders incur as a result of the unwise

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zeal of their followers. Ricardo took for his theme the law of wages and concluded that wages, as a rule, *tended* to approximate the cost of maintaining a given standard of living at a given time and place. Ricardo surrounded this statement with numerous qualifications, setting forth a generalization of great importance. But Ricardo's followers, more "Ricardian" than Ricardo himself, ignored all the qualifications and stated the theory in a grotesquely exaggerated manner, which found its complete expression in Lassalle's inflexible "iron law of wages." A great and profoundly true generalization of the master became, in the hands of his disciples, a grotesque and dangerous error.

In like manner, Marx suffered from his more Marxian than Marx followers. For example: in one of the earliest of his Socialist writings, the *Communist Manifesto*, he developed his famous class-struggle theory and emphasized the historic rôle of the proletariat. If the workers are ever to be emancipated, he declared, it must be through their

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own efforts. Here was a great generalization of tremendous importance, the basis for a working-class movement. But some of his followers, disregarding his abundant warnings, made this generalization the basis of another, which, if generally accepted, would have robbed the working-class movement of the service of many of the finest intellects and devoted consciences ever enlisted in its support, including that of Marx himself. Their reasoning was very simple and naïve: Because the emancipation of the proletariat must be the work of the proletariat itself, it follows that no one who is not actually a proletarian can loyally desire to serve the movement for proletarian emancipation. Determined efforts were made by some "Marxists" to exclude Marx himself from the movement upon these grounds!

One other example of the exaggeration of his theories of which Marx was the victim must suffice, though the number of such illustrations might be indefinitely extended. The materialistic conception of history, a

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doctrine of the highest philosophical and sociological importance, is perhaps the greatest of the intellectual achievements of Marx. The gist of this theory is that the principal factor in social evolution is the economic one, the method of producing and distributing wealth. This has become nowadays a commonplace, but it was a revolutionary idea when Marx first proclaimed it.

Now, Marx never dreamed of asserting that the economic force acts as the sole determinant of social evolution. In order to focus the attention of the thinkers of his time upon his theory, and in meeting the attacks of opponents, he, quite naturally, at times overemphasized this one factor. Yet he did not fail to warn his disciples against falling into the error of regarding the economic factor as the only active influence in social evolution. His followers, many of them, disregarded these warnings and carried the tendency to exaggerate which Marx himself manifested to the most absurd length. In their hands the theory became one of simple

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economic fatalism and predestination. According to their caricature of the theory, no other factors have influenced the rate or direction of the evolution of society: race, religion, patriotism, ideals of all kinds have been meaningless.

This economic fatalism has been carried to the most absurd lengths, especially in America. In the name of Marx the preposterous claim has been set up that, because men in general are prone to act, consciously or unconsciously, in accordance with their material interests, there must be an ascertainable economic motive for every act of an individual; that if one whose material interests are such as to identify him with the capitalist class, the exploiters, enters the movement of the working class, the exploited, the sincerity of his action must be denied, and a secret, hidden, ulterior motive suspected! In actual experience this grotesquely stupid conception of Marx's great generalization has wrought great mischief in the Socialist movement.

These two sets of his disciples — those

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who regarded him as a pope, at least, and sought to make an orthodox creed of his theories, and those whose crude and wild statements of the most profound truths transformed them into nightmares of error — were the “Marxists” against whom Marx so often directed his withering satire. Marx chafed and groaned in spirit when such followers as those comprised in the two groups we have considered reduced his important philosophical and economic principles to a jumble of meaningless absurdity. And, with that fine loyalty which marked his whole life, Friedrich Engels carried on the warfare against such “Marxists” long after the death of his friend and associate.

Fortunately, the last ten years have been marked by an ever-increasing reaction against both types of “Marxism.” It is notably rare nowadays for the stupid anti-intellectualist cry to receive serious attention. The movement itself, in practically every country in the world, is becoming more liberal and tolerant. It refuses to heed the stupid dema-

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gogic suspicion of those who do not actually come from the proletarian class, which was at one time so potent a source of factionalism; it no longer indulges in heresy trials, but permits the fullest possible freedom of opinion. A Bernstein who rejects some of the most important of Marx's generalizations is suffered to remain in the Social Democratic Party of Germany, and his right to disagree with Marx is upheld.

By many very thoughtful observers this liberalizing tendency has been hailed as a sure and certain sign of the waning influence of Marx. It has been interpreted as showing that the theories of Marx are being abandoned by those who call themselves Marxian Socialists. But in point of fact — so far as the liberalizing tendency amounts to the abandonment of crudely exaggerated forms of Marxian theories, and of all attempts to create a sect or cult, with an orthodox philosophical and economic creed — it must be otherwise interpreted. It is not a reaction against Marx, but against that "Marxism"

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which Marx himself so despised, and which consisted of a perverse and cruel misrepresentation of his theories. In revolting against this "Marxism" the Socialist movement is in fact following the leadership of Marx himself, and the tendency represents a wholesome return to the teachings of Marx.

III

IT is quite true that the Socialist movement has, in most countries, ceased to concern itself mainly with the propagation of theories; that all the Socialist parties of the world pay an increasing amount of attention to practical work in the direction of social and political reform. There has been a rather striking development of opportunism, not alone in Germany, but in every land where Socialism has attained political importance. When that splendid Socialist leader, Wilhelm Liebknecht, was first elected to the German Reichstag he was strongly anti-parliamentarian. He feared that the revolutionary spirit of Socialism would be engulfed in parliamentary issues. His avowed policy then was to enter the Reichstag, make a speech denouncing the capitalist system, and then march out, quite like the

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hero of the nursery rhyme! That was the naïve idea of revolutionary progress which prevailed at that time, even among astute leaders of the revolutionary party.

It is a far cry from that *opéra bouffe* attitude of Liebknecht's to that which characterized the last years of his life, and which characterizes the German Social Democracy to-day. I hardly need say here that the Social Democratic Party of Germany is devoted to a broad comprehensive policy of social and industrial reform; that it does not send its representatives to the imperial parliament merely to make denunciatory speeches and then walk out, refusing to participate in the work of legislation. On the contrary, it is by the zeal and ability with which the representatives of the party work for social reform that the confidence of such a vast number of voters has been won. Singer, Bebel, and the other leaders of the party know very well that this is the case: that only a very small minority of their supporters understand or care for Socialist theories.

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It must be freely admitted that the temper and policy of the Socialist movement have undergone a great change. This change has been both a cause and a result of growth. Where the Socialist movement is numerically weak, it is invariably characterized by fanatical bitterness and sectarian intolerance and dogmatism. Its first political victories, often almost insignificant in themselves, are won in spite of these characteristics, most often, perhaps, through peculiarly favorable circumstances leading to the election of the Socialist candidate in spite of, rather than because of, his Socialism.

It has been the universal experience that, as soon as the Socialists of any country succeed in electing a single representative to an important legislative office, a change begins to manifest itself. The propaganda becomes less sectarian and theoretical, and more practical. The temper of the party loses much of its arrogant intolerance. Its representatives abandon wild, irresponsible talk of a sudden revolution, and cheap sneers

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at social reforms, and devote themselves with energy to the task of securing legislation for the immediate betterment of the lot of their class.

The reason for this change is apparent. Brought face to face with great opportunities to better the lot of the toiling masses, they dare not neglect them. No matter how small the specific reform may be, considered by and of itself, the instinctive class consciousness of the Socialists prevents them from opposing or ignoring it and contenting themselves with denunciations of capitalism or prophecies of a coöperative commonwealth to come. It is easy enough for the propagandist, free from responsibility, to arraign the capitalist system, demonstrate the need of replacing it by a saner and juster system, and show the relatively insignificant importance of some minor reform, such as the enactment of an employer's liability law, for example.

In office, confronted by the responsibility of the immediate challenge, the Socialist

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dares not treat such questions lightly. Always an evolutionist in theory, as a mere propagandist, engaged in arousing his apathetic fellow-citizens, he not infrequently forgot his evolutionary theory and talked as if a sudden revolution, changing the whole social organism, were possible. Election to office brings immediate recognition of the fact that no such change is possible; that the theory of evolution is made up of vital facts. He comes to a realization of the meaning Marx intended to convey by a favorite phrase of his, "revolutionary evolution."

Thus, in the crucible of actual experience, the rivalry, hatred, and contempt of the Socialist for the social reformer, and of the social reformer for the Socialist, are melted. The earnest social reformer soon finds that when he wants child-labor legislation, factory laws, tenement-house reforms, industrial insurance, and other such reforms, the fundamental and instinctive class consciousness of the Socialist can always be relied upon. In

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this way, the Socialist party in almost every European country has become the party of social reform.

This, then, is the basis for the prevailing opinion that the modern Socialist movement has lost its revolutionary character and become a simple reformatory movement. The validity of that judgment depends altogether upon a certain narrow interpretation of the word "revolution." There can be no serious difference of opinion upon the point once that definition of the word "revolution" is accepted.

To Marx, more than to any other man, belongs the credit of associating the Socialist movement with the concept of a social "revolution." The phrase looms large in the celebrated *Communist Manifesto*, and in all the subsequent literature of Marxian Socialism. But Marx used the term "social revolution," as he used so many other commonplace terms, in a very different sense from that which common usage had imparted to it. To understand the significance of the

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term in the literature of Marxian Socialism, therefore, it is necessary to get at the meaning which Marx ascribed to it, and which his most representative and authentic exponents have accepted.

Whereas, to most persons, the term "social revolution" means a method, to Marx it meant simply a result, quite regardless of the method by which the result was attained. To most persons revolution suggests street riotings, barricades, insurrections, intrigues, conspiracies, and *coups d'état*. It means the sudden overturning of things, ousting governments and dynasties. In this narrow sense the French people have been called the most revolutionary people in Europe. Before Marx, the crude Socialist thought of the time regarded such "revolutionary" methods as the natural way to attain the realization of its goal. Against that sort of "revolutionary" effort Marx directed his splendid genius for political leadership.

To Marx that sort of revolutionary activity was purely Utopian and altogether un-

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scientific. He lost no opportunity to assail it and make it the butt of his superb satire. He pointed out that such "revolutions" are not at all *social* revolutions. After a successful *coup de force*, resulting in the overturning of a dynasty or the changing of the form of government, people continue to maintain the chief fundamental social relations of the old régime. The class struggle persists, and the wage-earner is still exploited by the capitalist as before. What he means by social revolution is a thorough transformation of these social relations, the abolition of class divisions which rest upon the exploitation of the proletariat. This result is the revolution. The transformation of the social forces of production to social property, however accomplished, is the revolution. It is not more or less revolutionary whether attained by peaceful political action or by torch and sword at the barricades, whether the process of its accomplishment takes fifty years or is the result of a sudden, cyclonic movement.

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It will be seen, therefore, that, assuming this to be a fair interpretation of Marx's concept of the social revolution, the change which has come over the Socialist movement is not of necessity a departure from the revolutionary path as Marx understood the term, though it is a very great departure from the older revolutionary concept which he assailed, and which still clings to the term in our common usage. It must also be admitted that the followers of Marx did not always conform their speech and their policy to the philosophical distinction he imposed upon the term; that all too often they lapsed back into what their teacher derided as a purely Utopian concept of revolution. It may also be admitted with perfect candor that Marx himself occasionally lapsed into that Utopianism against which his life and thought were, as a whole, so finely devoted.

So much is granted. It will not avail, therefore, to quote isolated utterances or actions to prove that the thought of a sudden, decisive revolution sometimes possessed the

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mind of Marx. Against these lapses from the scientific, evolutionary attitude must be set the overwhelming testimony of his thought as a whole, and, more important even than that, of his practice.

IV

NOTHING could be more fallacious than the attempt to interpret the opportunistic development of contemporary Socialism as a progressive abandonment of the teachings of Marx. The assumption upon which it rests, that opportunism and Marxism are antithetical concepts, is entirely false. Marx was nothing if not an opportunist, using that term in its best, and strictest, sense. He was so far removed from those intransigents of the Socialist movement, who scorn the idea that the Socialists should participate in the movement for social reform through legislative channels, as the imagination can conceive. He had the profoundest contempt for all who sought to bind the movement to that abortive attitude. I make the claim that the tendency of contemporary

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Socialism to concern itself with a programme of immediate social reforms, palliative measures for the amelioration of the victims of the social struggle, within the existing order, represents a return to the most important teachings of Marx, not a departure from them.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, that work which may be said to be the corner-stone of modern scientific Socialism, we find him laying emphasis upon the fact that the transformation which he calls the social revolution is not to be a sudden act. He speaks of the "first step in the revolution" being the struggle for political democracy, the attainment of the franchise by the proletariat. That accomplished, the proletariat is to wrest, "by degrees," the control of the social productive forces from the hated *bourgeoisie*. His insistence upon the necessity of a "first step," and of a conquest of the economic resources "by degrees," shows very clearly that, from the first, Marx repudiated the old notion of sudden, catastrophic revolution.

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His ideal was one of the "revolutionary evolution."

In the same profound and epoch-making pamphlet Marx lays stress upon the fact that the Socialists, because they accept the class struggle as their fundamental and guiding philosophy, must not confine themselves to working for the attainment of the ultimate interest of the proletariat, the abolition of wage-labor and its inevitable exploitation and oppression, but must participate in the "immediate struggle"; that they must take their own the "momentary interests" of the workers as well as their ultimate aim. In pursuance of that thought he outlined a programme of social reform upon which Socialists and progressive social reformers are making common cause to-day in every country where the Socialist parties are represented in the legislatures.

Four years after the *Communist Manifesto* was published, in the aftermath of the revolutionary struggle of 1848, some of the most romantic of his co-revolutionists were

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urging the workers to insurrection. They were obsessed by the notion that the workers could at once seize the reins of power and establish Socialist republics in the most advanced countries of Europe. Marx assailed these romanticists with merciless satire and invective. He denounced them because they would "substitute revolutionary phrase for revolutionary evolution," and while the impatient romanticists assured their followers that they could win immediately, Marx told them that it would take perhaps fifty years, not to accomplish the social revolution indeed, but to make themselves "worthy of political power!"

When Ferdinand Lassalle attempted, in 1862, to enlist the support of Marx for an insurrection in Germany, urging him to assist in raising funds for the purchase of muskets and ammunition, Marx indignantly refused, and the incident led to the termination of the friendship of the two men when they met in London a few months later.

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Marx understood as Lassalle could never do the great fact of social evolution.

How much of an opportunist Marx was, is best shown by the history of the International Workingmen's Association. Of far greater importance than his contributions to political economy, and inferior only to his sociological discoveries, the practical work of Marx in the development of that great international organization of the proletariat has not yet received just recognition. It is impossible to read the history of the International and avoid the conviction that Marx was endowed with great political sagacity, amounting almost to genius.

The importance of the International to us, in the present discussion, lies in the light its history sheds upon the mind and temper of its great leader. Marx initiated the movement, wrote its address, or platform, formulated its rules, and dictated its policies. He wrote every one of its official pronouncements. Never was there a political

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“ boss ” who so completely ruled his organization. For the opportunism which characterized the International Marx must therefore be held directly responsible.

It was Marx who arranged that the trades unions of Great Britain should coöperate with such bitter enemies of ordinary trades union policies as Bright and Cobden in rousing the public opinion of Great Britain to the support of President Lincoln and the Union cause, and to vigorous opposition to the sympathy of the government and the ruling class in general for the Southern Confederacy, which the government at one time practically decided to recognize as an independent power. It was Marx, too, who, in the same way, brought about the coöperation of all the radical forces in the struggle for franchise reform a few years later.

Here, then, was opportunism with a vengeance! Marx was not unaware that there were elements in the International to whom such a policy was repellent in the extreme. There were many followers of

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Proudhon, the French anarchist leader, who were very bitter in their opposition to Marx on account of his opportunism. Of these critics Marx wrote, in a letter to his friend Kugelmann: "They brag about science and know nothing. They look with contempt, as revolutionists, on any concerted action of the working classes, and they treat with contempt any idea of making use of the legislature for anything, as, e. g., for shortening the hours of labor."

In the masterly inaugural address of the International, which Marx wrote, the Ten Hours' Act was hailed as being "not merely a great practical result," but as "the victory of a principle." Even the coöperative societies, at which Marx had been disposed to sneer in 1848, were praised and heralded as a sign that wage-labor was a transitory economic form, destined to be replaced by associated free labor. And the first congress of the International, at Geneva, adopted resolutions, most of them written by Marx, in favor of such reforms as the abolition of

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child labor; regulation of women's labor by the state; limitation of the hours of labor for adults to ten per day; direct taxation; and so on.

It is clear, then, that, altogether irrespective of the merits of the controversy which divides the opportunists of the Socialist movement from their intransigent comrades, it cannot be said that the movement becomes less Marxian by becoming more opportunistic. Marx was himself an opportunist of a very pronounced type. In his mind, the actual union of the workers was the supremely important thing. He wanted movement above all else. He revealed the principle by which his whole life was guided in the letter he wrote to the German Socialists in 1875, when the union of the Lassallian and Marxian forces was being negotiated: "Every step of real movement is worth a dozen programmes."

Without expressing here any opinion upon the wisdom or otherwise of the Socialists entering into such compacts as the one upon

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which the British Labor Party is based, it is impossible for me to resist the conclusion that Mr. Hardie with his belief in and alliance with the Labor Party is much more in accord with the teaching and example of Marx than are his intransigent critics, even though the latter so loudly invoke the name and authority of Marx.

V.

IT would be disingenuous to deny that some of Marx's theories have been openly abandoned by not a few Socialists, and that they have been greatly modified by others in response to the searching criticism to which they have been subjected. Marx himself regarded monopoly-price as something exceptional, an abrogation of the law of value. Since he wrote *Das Kapital*, the exceptions to his law of value have become more numerous, as a result of the development of great monopolies and near monopolies. The value of a great many commodities is determined by their marginal utility, quite irrespective of the social labor actually embodied in them or necessary to their reproduction.

Then, too, some of the sweeping generalizations which Marx made, and which his followers long believed to be absolutely true,

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have not stood well the test of history and close analysis. The recognition of this fact has quite profoundly influenced Socialist policy. It is worthy of note, however, that the result has been to develop the movement quite in harmony with that broad spirit of opportunism which Marx himself so well and so bravely exemplified.

Take, for example, his theory of agricultural concentration. Marx firmly believed and confidently predicted that, within a comparatively short time, the small farm would cease to exist. He saw the small farms, and the farms of moderate size, disappear, swallowed up by the bigger ones, and the whole industry of agriculture dominated by immense capital. His followers excelled their master's confidence in the truth of his forecast.

It is now recognized by all thoughtful Socialists that this forecast has been completely belied by the actual facts of agricultural evolution. The small farm has more than held its own, the expected concentration of the in-

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dustry has not taken place; there has in fact been a well-marked tendency in the opposite direction of decentralization. Irrigation, "dry farming," and the mass of improved methods resulting from the application of science to agriculture have revolutionized the industry, but in quite another way than Marx predicted.

Of course, so long as the farming-class was looked upon as a rapidly disappearing one, a class whose immediate interests must of necessity, and in an increasing degree, be opposed to the interests of the proletariat, the Socialist propaganda made small headway in agricultural communities. So long as that mistaken generalization obsessed the minds of the followers of Marx they were little disposed to appeal to the farmers, or to concede that the status of the farmer and a belief in Socialism were quite compatible. To treat the farmer as a negligible quantity, as a survival member of a rapidly disappearing class, of no account politically, was the natural outcome of that generalization.

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When astute political leaders of the Socialist movement like Dr. Adler, of Austria, and acute theoreticians like Herr Bernstein, of Germany, demonstrated the delusive character of Marx's forecast, and proved that the Socialists in those countries must either recast their agrarian policy, so as to make a successful appeal to the farming class, or abandon all hopes of attaining political success, modern Socialism entered upon a new phase. Of course, there was some strife, a bitter conflict between the old orthodoxy and the new truth, and the complete breaking-up of the international Socialist movement was confidently predicted by many of its enemies. But nothing of the sort happened. The leaders of the movement set themselves to the task of studying the whole problem of their position toward the farmer.

They found that the economic interest of the small farmer was not so antagonistic to the interest of the industrial proletariat as they had long believed; they found that the farmer needed Socialism almost, if not quite,

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as badly as the factory worker. So successful has the Socialist propaganda among farmers been, without compromising its revolutionary spirit, that many of the greatest strongholds of the movement, both in Europe and America, are in agricultural districts. The kingdom of Saxony is mainly dependent upon agriculture, but it is known as "Red Saxony" on account of the strength of the Socialist movement there. In the United States we find Oklahoma an agrarian state, taking a leading place in the Socialist propaganda.

In like manner, the persistence of the petty retail stores, and of petty industries, contrary to another of the sweeping generalizations of Marx, has profoundly influenced the policy of the Socialist movement. While its main appeal is and must of necessity be to the actual proletariat, the Socialist propaganda does not neglect the small shopkeeper or the professional man. In most countries, but especially in the United States, the actual wage-workers constitute a minority of the

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population. The Socialists recognize this fact. So there has developed a new and broader concept of the movement. Only a very tiny and insignificant minority now ever thinks of demanding that the Socialist movement shall be limited to the wage-earning class.

That greatest of Socialist political leaders, Liebknecht, in his later years insisted that when the Socialists used the term "working class" they included in its meaning "all who live exclusively *or principally* by means of their own labor, and who do not grow rich through the work of others." Thus, he would include the small farmers and small shopkeepers, as well as a majority of the professional classes. He declared that the German Social Democracy was the party of all the people with the exception of about two hundred thousand. "If it is limited to the wage-earners," he said, "Socialism cannot conquer. If it includes all the workers and the moral and intellectual *élite* of the nation, its victory is certain."

VI

TO sum up: There may be said to be two kinds of "Marxism," the one consisting of a body of theoretical and philosophical generalizations, the other of certain principles of working-class action, precepts, and examples of tactics for the movement. This "practical Marxism" has been for a long time obscured by the Marxism theory, and neglected in consequence. Now that critical examination has forced the abandonment of some of his theories, and the modification of some others, Marx, the leader, the tactician, the statesman, is taking the place of Marx the theorist to some extent.

Hence the paradox that the influence of Marx upon the Socialist movement of to-day is increasing just as rapidly and as surely as it is breaking away from dogmatic Marxism.



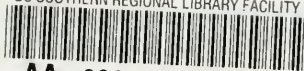
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