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Socialism and Anarchism

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1. THE SOCIAL IDEAL.

When we read the books of the official professors of social science on the subject of Socialism and Anarchism, we are astonished to find how little the sociologists, even those friendly to us, understand of the great scientific revolution which Engels called the Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science, a revolution now more than half a century old.

Scientific Socialism, as established by Marx and Engels, combined into a harmonious unity two things which from the bourgeois point of view appeared to be irreconcilable opposites: on the one hand dispassionate objectivity, science indifferent to ideals, and on the other hand the passionately sought subjective ideal of a better society. Those who do not take the point of view of scientific Socialism believe that an ideal, that is to say, something, which we desire, can never be a subject matter of science, and that, conversely, passionate desire must be a hindrance to objective truth. To the alleged objective science of society they give the name of sociology; and the sterility, the lack of results which is everywhere in evidence in the countless books of these "sociologists," furnishes the best refutation of their contention that social truth is born of dry book-learning, rather than of participation in the social struggles. A social ideal, on the contrary, they know only as Utopianism — as the conception and propaganda of a better or best social system — which has nothing to do with the science of society, even though its advocates maintain that they are able to prove "scientifically" the excellence of their new system.

Scientific Socialism has overcome this contradiction through the discovery of the economic basis of social evolution. It has taught us that with the continuous improvement in the technical methods of labor and the social organs and organizations necessary to their operation, the entire social order undergoes an uninterrupted transformation, including the opinions and ideals of mankind. Man must continually adapt his ideas and opinions of possible and desirable institutions and organizations, to the progress of the productive forces; in other words, he follows ever new social ideals. Therefore, such a social ideal does not signify the construction of a faultless social system, but it is a mental picture of a subsequent, more highly developed social system, in which the disadvantages of the preceding system have been overcome, and which is adapted to that development of the forces of production which has just been attained. Since everything which man does must first exist in his mind as purpose and will, therefore every new social order, before it becomes a reality, must first exist as a more or less adequate, conscious ideal.

Thus in the youth of capitalism, when the new inventions of the steam engine by James Watt and the spinning machine by Arkwright opened up boundless possibilities to industrial development, the natural social ideal was: unconfined freedom of private production and of competition, the sweeping away of all feudal and guild obstacles. So now, when capitalistic appropriation stands in the way of the full employment and development of the forces of production, when the gigantic establishments and trusts have shown the possibility of a well-devised organization of labor, the natural social ideal is: the socialization of the means of production. And this social ideal forms the chief demand in the programs of the Socialist parties of all countries.

Consequently, if we Socialists are asked: "What order of society do you recommend as the best?" we answer: "None at all." We do not extol any system of society as the most perfect or the only good one, in comparison with which all others are objectionable. Various social orders are necessary, hence advantageous, according to the height of technical and economic development; upon a certain plane of development, an order, which previously was necessary, becomes injurious and unbearable, as is now the case with capitalism. Hence all our struggling and striving is now directed toward the next step, and toward the removal of the obstacles which stand in the way of the acquisition by society of the means of production. These obstacles are mainly two: the political supremacy of the capitalists and the defective organization and discipline of the working class; therefore, our most immediate aims are the organization and training of the workers and, by means of these, the conquest of political power.

Consequently, we are by no means of the opinion that after this victory and with the commencement of the nationalization of the great industries, the ideal of the best of all worlds will have been attained. On the contrary, it is our conviction that this new condition — like its predecessor, capitalism — is only a link in a continuous chain of development. Our program naturally contains nothing in regard to the further phases; our practical task is merely the realization of our present social ideal, that is, the displacement of capitalism by the social order which naturally follows it. We must leave it to the members of the society of the future to raise the banner of new social ideals to correspond to the new needs that will arise.

This does not mean that the subsequent forms of development do not interest us and that we therefore need not concern ourselves about them. It simply means that it would be absurd for us to put our views in regard to future orders of society into the form of demands the realization of which should determine our practical line of action. On the contrary, since it tends to clarify our views and opinions, it may be of value in our present struggle to attempt to forecast the various future phases of social development by means of our historic-materialistic method.

2. THE FUTURE STATE.

The substitution of Socialism for capitalism will not be a single, world-convulsing act, but a process of gradual change, however rapid as compared with the present time [(1)]. The nationalization of the great industries and trusts will effect no fundamental change in capitalism, for certain industries are even now nationalized; the fundamental change will lie only in the fact that the power of the state will be at the disposal of the working class. The great contrast between the new proletarian supremacy and the former capitalist supremacy will manifest itself immediately, not in a deliberate revolution of the mode of production, but in vast cultural measures — promotion of education, care of the public health, aid for poverty and suffering — by which the new society must make up for the neglects of capitalism. Although we are unable to say to what extent private production will at once be replaced by social production — certainly not completely — yet it is certain that the vigorously executed measures for the promotion of the welfare of great masses of the people will form the basis of the new economic development. Kautsky has already shown how the simplest, most necessary and, to every worker, immediately urgent measure for the checking of poverty, namely, bounteous provision by the state for the unemployed, strikes at the very roots of capitalism; it will be one of the most effective levers for putting a speedy end to private production undertaken for the sake of profit.

When private production is then, for the greater part, replaced by social production, there will nevertheless be little change apparent in the method of production, except that in place of many producers and employers there will be but one; hence the expressions and forms originating in the production of commodities will continue to exist. To the products there will be attributed a certain *value* for which they are sold; the participants in production will be paid a *wage* for the labor-power they have expended in the service of society — to be sure, the value> of labor-power will be rated far higher than now — and perhaps this wage will be calculated to vary according to performance and supposed service. The division of that portion of the social products intended for individual consumption will, at this stage of development, be effected by their purchase from society by means of the wage which society pays to its members for their labor. Hence private property will still play an important role; disparities in this form of property will exist; money will be used for the payment of wages, and for buying and selling among the still existent private producers. However completely the abolition of poverty may change the aspect of society, production will at first be but little altered in its superficial aspect by the overthrow of capitalism. Nevertheless this aspect will be deceptive. Even in production the basic difference will be enormous; it will no longer be a means for the creation of surplus value, and it will no longer be left to the hazards of private undertakings, but it will be directed toward the satisfaction of needs as its immediate aim, and hence will be controlled with conscious foresight.

This stage of social development cannot endure; it will gradually undermine itself. Internal contradictions will even in the future be levers of social evolution; to be sure, they cannot, as under capitalism, manifest themselves in a class struggle, for the classes will have vanished; the contradictions will become perceptible in the form of inadequacies, and will furnish the inducement for their removal by means of conscious modification of the foundations of society. Here the contradiction consists in this, that value is a quality of products which originates in private production, and hence vanishes when private production ceases to exist. In a society of commodity-producers value expresses the social character of their private labors; it is in their common quality as values that the products of these private labors announce themselves to be qualitatively similar to each other and to incorporate within themselves social, abstract labor. That the private persons are participants in a social labor-process, becomes apparent only in the quality of value that is common to their products; hence in the inverted form of a quality of things. In the act of exchange the producers and the products meet; there the social character of their private labors comes to light; there value is formed, or more correctly, there it passes from an abstract, conceptual existence into reality. "It is only in exchange that the products of labor receive a socially equal existence as values which is distinguished from their naturally different existences as use-values" (Marx, "Capital," I).

When the social character of labor is immediately apparent to everyone, it need not be embodied in the fanciful form of an objective quality of the product. With the disappearance of private labors, which formerly constituted value through their equalization in exchange, value itself will vanish. It may for a time lead a traditional existence: the impossibility of determining it practically when it has lost its real existence will put an end to the order of society in which it played the chief role in the distribution of the means of consumption. When a generation shall have passed after the first abolition of capitalist poverty and new generations have been born which only know it from hearsay, men will gradually cease to comprehend the capitalistic idea of paying wages for work done. With the universalizing of that scientific and technical education which under capitalism is the monopoly of privileged classes and is used by them to extort higher payment for their labor power, the differences in wages will disappear. With the memory of capitalistic inequality will also disappear the feeling that a man who accomplishes more than another should receive more. Moreover, how would the measure of performance be determined, except in entirely similar labors? Therefore some other rule for the distribution of articles of consumption will have to be sought for.

Possibly, for lack of something better, recourse will be had to the idea that everybody is entitled to the same amount. However, the development of the productive forces will soon lead to another standard. One of the first and most obvious consequences of the abolition of capitalism will be a tremendous development, to an extent now hardly conceivable, of natural science and its technical applications. The universality of scientific education will augment the now small group of natural scientists and inventors by countless numbers of powerful, creative minds. Nowadays this group works only for the profit of the capitalists and to satisfy the thirst for knowledge of a small guild of scholars; in addition, it is demoralized by avarice and place-hunting, as well as hampered by worry and disappointment. Under Socialism the natural scientists and inventors will be sustained by the ennobling consciousness that all their researches and discoveries will redound to the immediate benefit of the community. Then the knowledge of the forces of nature and their technical application will receive an impetus never possible before; the productivity of labor will increase enormously, and the drudgery of the individual will be considerably lightened. The means of life will thus be produced in such abundance that it will no longer be necessary to use painful exactness in apportioning to each his rightful share. Where unlimited abundance reigns, each can take as much as he needs without arousing the jealousy of others. On the other hand, the knowledge that there is always enough will restrain each one from taking more than he actually needs, whether to hoard it or to waste it, both of which would be equally without purpose. The only measure at this stage of social development for the division of the means of consumption will, therefore, be the necessity of the individual. It is obvious that under these circumstances, where each takes what he needs from the social store, the idea of private property, even in means of consumption, will gradually disappear.

This immense increase in the productivity of labor, as a result of the advance in science and education, can commence only when the Socialist order shall have prevailed for some time; for the increase itself will be a consequence of the cultural measures of the new society. Therefore, in the beginning the superiority of Socialist production over capitalist production will have to be based upon entirely different factors. All these factors will be directed toward an effective economical and carefully planned system of production and the avoidance of all useless waste of material and labor-power, in one word, *organization*. We often conceive the aim of our present struggle to be the organization of scattered, wasteful and anarchic production, and this is to be accomplished by the state as soon as we shall have seized it. The proletariat, then, needs the power of the state to force its will upon the classes it has conquered, to advance education, culture and instruction by vast measures, and in addition to organize the process of social production. Old political institutions will be remoulded into new organs, which will play a part in the management of production; hence they will receive an entirely new significance, while the old forms and names will remain unaltered. Thus the political structure will also be altered but little in its superficial aspect, but greatly in reality. The nature of the State will undergo such a basic transformation that Engels could say with justice: The state will die. Instead of an institution for the oppression of one class by the other it becomes a corporate body with purely economic functions. In accordance with this combination of political form and economic substance, the working regulations will have the form and force of laws.

The organization of labor implies a certain measure of legal compulsion, that is to say, of the subordination of the will of the minority to that of the majority. But whence will this order of society obtain the force to execute its laws? Under capitalism the state has at its disposal a great mass of forcible means: police, prisons and courts, and finally the army; it is only through the physical means of force at its disposal that a minority is able to maintain its rule over the great mass of the people. These physical means of force are unnecessary to the rule of the mass, which will accomplish its purpose by moral force alone. The political system which the proletariat will introduce after its victory, and which may be designated as a consistent democracy, will be governed by the same principles which the workers now employ in their fighting organizations: equality of rights for all members, expression of the will of the whole in legal provisions and resolutions which each must obey, execution of the will of the majority by an executive. The means of compulsion that are employed here to impose the will of the majority upon the minority will probably also be employed in the future industrial democracy — namely, discipline.

This discipline consists in the voluntary subordination of the individual to the whole; it is the chief proletarian virtue, which the working masses have acquired in their struggle against capitalism. The workers will never be able to overthrow capitalism until they have brought this virtue to its highest development, the subordination of their personal desires and of their egoism to the interests of the whole class; this virtue they will carry with them into the new society, and there it will become the moral cement of the Socialist order. It will be the moral counterpart to political democracy; the latter will need no other means of force.

In any case, discipline means the overcoming of an existing instinct; the safeguarding of the interests of the whole does not, in this case, spring spontaneously from direct inclination, but from rational consideration. This instinct, which must be overcome, is egoism, self-interest, which has been fostered by the economic conditions of commodity production and competition until it has become the predominant instinct. Whoever does not possess this characteristic, or possesses it in insufficient measure, is hopelessly lost under capitalism. A characteristic that for countless generations has been ever necessary, and almost essential to life, and hence is firmly rooted in human nature, will require several generations of disuse to become weakened to a considerable degree and finally to disappear. Therefore, the Socialist order of society will be unable to uproot this impulse immediately; its advance over capitalism will consist in this, that egoism will be restrained by discipline (that is, by rational conviction grown into a habit), that the preservation of the common interest will become the most efficacious means of preserving the individual interest.

But the new order of society will itself foster far different traits of character. The common labor for a common end, the community of individual interests with those of society as a whole, will develop to an extraordinary degree the feeling of brotherhood and comradeship. It was economic necessity that made egoism the most prominent trait of men under capitalism; it

was economic necessity that made solidarity and discipline the leading traits of the revolutionary labor movement; and it is economic necessity that will, to the same extent, develop the feeling of sociability above all other traits of character in the Socialist society. Men will regard themselves, first of all, not as individuals, but as members of society; the welfare of the whole will dominate all their thoughts and feelings. This tendency will then no longer rest upon the self-conquest of the individual, who sacrifices his inclination to that which he recognizes as necessary; it will rest upon direct inclination Instead of having to overcome an inherited instinct, this tendency will rather consist in the active exercise of the newly born instinct.

This evolution of human instincts will also entail a change in the social organization. In the beginning, the organization of social labor will require special measures, which will be decided upon by the majority, executed with conscientious care by a central body, and faithfully observed by the individual. But as organized work becomes a habit, and as the interest of all becomes the highest aim of each, the deliberate organization and regulation of labor will gradually become superfluous. And to this extent the last vestiges of political authority will vanish, the authority which in the beginning, under the form of laws and controlling bodies, kept the minority in subordination to the majority. The organization of labor will then be no longer a product of external regulation, but of inner impulse. And when the enormous increase in productivity, due to the advance of science, becomes a reality, the results of labor will no longer have to be obtained through carefully planned organization. Thus the substitution of Socialism for capitalism signifies from the very beginning an enormous advance in liberty, since the rational force of discipline in behalf of individual and common interests takes the place of brutal compulsion in the service of alien and hostile interests; but in the further development of the Socialist society even the compulsion of discipline will gradually disappear, and no compulsion will remain other than that of the individual's own sense of sociability, the appreciation or the blame of his fellowmen.

It is self-evident that with greater or less probability much more can be inferred from the given premises in regard to the various phases of development of the future society: in regard to the technique of labor, artistic activity, the return to the land, etc., there are many valuable hints in our literature. The statements made here, however, suffice for an appreciation of the views of the modern Utopians.

3. MODERN UTOPIANISM.

As long as no working class movement was in existence, utopianism was the natural form of Socialism, of the aspiration for a form of society based upon common property. Until the appearance upon the stage of history of a class whose struggles had Socialism for their necessary goal, Socialism was bound to be an artfully contrived idea, of which hopes were entertained that it might be made sufficiently attractive to the rest of mankind. To have foreseen this goal, signified at that time a tremendous advance. Therefore the modern Socialistic working class holds in high honor the great Utopians of the early part of the nineteenth century, whom it regards as its precursors.

Even with the appearance of scientific communism and of the working class movement, Utopianism has not utterly vanished from the scene. The defects and faults of the existing social order are so plainly apparent to countless men outside the working class, that the question is forced upon them: Could not society be better organized? But only an infinitesimal portion of them come into the workers' camp as allies; the conceptions of the Social Democracy remain foreign to them; and although some, after much difficulty and painful shedding of numberless prejudices, do finally find their way there, the great majority are prevented by bourgeois limitations. To these there is no other course left than to construct a better world in their own imagination and to try to gain adherents to it; to the professional vanity of clever literati it appears far more honorable to invent a "system" of their own, than to be incorporated recruits in the great army of the party of Labor.

Thus the two roots of modern Utopianism are the defects of capitalism and the great intellectual eminence of the Socialist movement, so sharply opposed to all conventional bourgeois conceptions and so far superior to them. But while the classical Utopianism was in advance of its time, modern Utopianism lags behind our age. It remains beneath the intellectual level of the present, because it has not freed itself of the intellectual backwardness of the bourgeois mode of thought. Within the latter, it is true, it occupies an honorable place because of its wider vision and keener critical attitude; this honorary testimonial must compensate it for the fact that it is practically without influence in society. A Utopia, an imagined best order of society, cannot form the program of a fighting class; a Utopia cannot gather around itself a party, it can only be the nucleus of a sect.

It is true that even Utopian social constructions can temporarily gain considerable influence. In America, after the publication of Bellamy's "Looking Backward," a group of people (it was even called a party) was formed, which set for itself the task of realizing the system of society described by Bellamy. Similarly, in the beginnings of the German working class movement the Utopian constructions of Eugen Duhring met with so much response that Engels was forced into the famous controversy with him.

Among all modern Utopian systems, Anarchism in its various forms has become the most influential and significant for the labor movement. In countries that have remained backward in capitalistic development, where the government is in the hands of a small, corrupt clique serving only special petty interests, instead of in the hands of an energetic capitalist class that has strongly organized the power of the State, the Anarchistic watchword, abstinence from corrupting politics, meets with ready response among the workers. Thus it was for a long time in Italy, thus it is still in Spain. As the logical successor to liberalism, it forces the latter's

individualism — worship of abstract liberty and aversion to the power of the State and all authority — into a complete opposite to capitalism. Its Socialism is Utopianism, that is, it has no idea of the necessary evolution of social formations upon the basis of the evolution of the forces of production, but places before itself the ideal of an absolutely just and best world, for which it seeks to win adherents by means of propaganda.

Regarded superficially, this ideal appears to have some features in common with the state of society which we have predicted above as the farthest result of evolution. The division of the means of consumption according to need and the absence of all compulsory authority, which we expect as the final consequence of evolution, is set up by the Anarchists as an absolute demand for society. This coincidence is the basis of the curious idea that the Anarchists are more logical and more radical than the Socialists, because they aspire to an order of society that is higher and further developed than the Socialist order of society.

This idea is ridiculous. In the first place, there is no such thing as a definite Socialist order of society. And in the second place the liberty demanded by the Anarchists takes no account of the foundation work — the highly developed productive forces — which alone makes that liberty possible. In Kropotkin's famous work, "The Conquest of Bread," the workers are advised, when the revolution breaks out, to throw off all authority and to establish no new authority, but to combine into free laboring groups. All that could result from this is co-operative, or private, petty industry. The Anarchistic ideal discloses itself here as a petty-bourgeois ideal, a yearning for the "liberty" of the small, independent producer; some Anarchists, who call themselves the most logical, even put their theory into practice and settle as hermits upon some small estate, far removed from the tumult of world conflicts and development.

However, this idea is easily comprehensible, because all those who have not freed themselves from the bourgeois conceptions, hence also the Anarchists, cannot conceive of Socialism and the striving for the abolition of capitalism, otherwise than as the realization of a Utopia. Therefore, they believe the Socialists to be the adherents of a definite future social order, one that has already been fixed and determined upon. This error is especially prevalent in France: the alleged ideal of the Socialists — the socialization of the means of production exclusively — is there called Collectivism, while the more radical, who demand the abolition of all private property, call themselves Communists. It is further said of the Collectivists that they advocate a division of goods according to service, while the Communists want them to be divided according to need.

This idea often prevails among those who seek exact definitions of Socialism and Anarchism, in order to answer the question whether the Anarchists also belong to the great family of Socialists, and whether they are justly or unjustly rejected by the Social-Democrats as illegitimate "brothers." Practically, the question is not of the slightest importance; we fight the Anarchists most energetically, in spite of the fact that they call themselves enemies of capitalism, because they are enemies of the working class movement; because their propaganda always threatens to destroy organization and discipline, the chief weapons of the proletariat in its struggles, and tends to divert the workers from the most important part of their struggle, the conquest of the power of the State. And so it is not because of a formal definition, but in the interests of the practical struggle, that we regard the Anarchists as opponents who do not belong to our Socialist movement.

Footnotes:

(1). This theory of transformation has been set forth at length by Karl Kautsky in the second part of "The Social Revolution."
