

SOCIALISM FROM THE ROOT UP.

CHAPTER XXI.

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM: CONCLUSION.

MARX now goes on to trace the development of the capitalist in the present epoch, indicating the latest phase of the class-struggle; he points out the strife of the workman with the machine, the intensification of labour due to the constant improvement of machinery, etc. He then gives what may be called a history and analysis of the Factory Acts, the legislation to which the employing class found themselves compelled, in order to make it possible for the "free" workman to live under his new conditions of competition; in order, in short, to keep the industrial society founded by the machine revolution from falling to pieces almost as soon as it was established.

The point of the intensification of labour is so important that it demands a word or two in passing; the gist of the matter as put forward by Marx resolves itself into this: As the organisation of production progresses towards perfection, the wear and tear of the workman in a given space of labour-time is increased; and this is true of the organisation of the division of labour period, only it is limited by the fact that the man himself is the machine, and no such limitation exists in the period of fully developed machinery, in which the workman is an adjunct of the machine, which latter dictates to its supplement, the workman, in its constant craving for increasing productivity, the amount of wear and tear of his body in each hour's work. This emphasizes as plainly as possible the subjection of the man to the machine.

Marx also deals with theory of compensation to the workman displaced by machinery; that is, the common view, that by the labour-saving of machinery, which at first sight would seem to tend to the lessening of the number of men employed, more capital is set free for employment.

But, says Marx: "Suppose a capitalist to employ 100 workmen at £30 a-year each in a carpet factory. The variable capital annually laid out amounts therefore to £3,000. Suppose also that he discharges 50 of his workmen, and employs the remaining 50 with machinery that costs him £1,500. To simplify matters we take no account of buildings, coal, etc. Further, suppose that the raw material annually consumed costs £3,000 both before and after the change. Is any capital set free by this metamorphosis? Before the change the total sum of £6,000 consisted half of constant, half of variable, capital. The variable capital, instead of being one-half is only one-quarter of the total capital. Instead of being set free a part of the capital is here locked up in such a way as to cease to be employed in labour-power; variable has been changed into constant capital. Other things remaining unchanged, the capital of £6,000 can in future employ no more than 50 men. With each improvement in machinery, it will employ fewer."¹

And again: "The labourers when driven out of the workshop by the machinery, are thrown upon the labour-market, and there add to the number of workmen at the disposal of the capitalists. In Part VII. of this book it will be seen that this effect of machinery, which as we have seen, is represented to be a compensation to the working-class, is on the contrary a most frightful scourge. For the present, I will only say this: The labourers that are thrown out of work in any branch of industry, can no doubt seek for employment in some other branch. If they find it, and thus renew the bond between them and the means of subsistence, this takes place only by the intermediary of a new and additional capital that is seeking investment; not at all by the intermediary of the capital that formerly employed them, and was afterwards converted into machinery."

The remainder of this Part V. of Marx deals with various questions connected with the great industry, and the changes produced by it on Society. Part VI. deals with the transformation of the value or price of labour-power into wages; with time wages, price wages, and the national difference of wages. Part VII. deals with the important subject of the accumulation of capital: First, with its simple reproduction, afterwards with the conversion of surplus value itself back into capital, and with the transition of the laws of property, that characterise the production of commodities into the laws of capitalistic appropriation. This part also contains a sarcastic refutation of the now exploded stupidity (scarcely to be called a theory) of "abstinence" as the source of capital; it also deals with the old wages-fund theory and other fallacies of bourgeois economy. This part concludes with a long and elaborate chapter on the general law of capitalistic accumulation in its various aspects. The last Part (XIII.) treats of the so-called primitive accumulation, of which Marx says: "This primitive accumulation plays in political economy about the same part as original sin in theology. Adam bit the apple, and thereupon sin fell upon the human race. Its origin is supposed to be explained when it is told as an anecdote of the past. In times long gone by there were two sorts of people, one, the diligent, intelligent, and, above all, frugal *élite*; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance and more in riotous living. The legend of theological original sin tells us certainly how man is to be condemned to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; but the history of economic original sin reveals to us that there are people to whom this is by no means essential. Never mind! Thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort had at last nothing to sell except their own skins. And

from this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority, that, despite all its labour, has up to now nothing to sell but itself, and the wealth of the few that increases constantly although they have long ceased to work. . . . In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly *force*, play the great part. In the tender annals of Political Economy, the idyllic reigns from time immemorial. Right and "labour" were from all time the sole means of enrichment, the present year of course always excepted. As a matter of fact, the methods of primitive accumulation are anything but idyllic."

Marx then proceeds to give an instance of one important form of "Primitive Accumulation," the expropriation of the peasants from the land, taking affairs in England as a type of this idyllic proceeding; as also the legislation at the close of the Middle Ages against vagrants, etc., that is, those who had been expropriated; and, besides, the enactments for the forcing down of wages. He then describes the birth of the capitalist farmer of modern times, and the reaction of the agricultural revolution on the town industry; the creation of the home-market for industrial capital, etc. A chapter follows on the historical tendency of capitalistic accumulation to work out its own contradiction; it becomes necessary to quote a passage here as it bears reference to the future of Society: "The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labour of the proprietor. But capitalistic production begets with the inexorability of a law of Nature its own negation. It is the negation of negation. This does not re-establish private property for the producer, but gives him individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalistic era; *i.e.*, on co-operation, and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production. The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labour,¹ into capitalistic private property, is naturally a procession comparably more protracted violent, and difficult, than the transformation of capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialised production, into socialised property. In the former case we had the expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers; in the latter, we have the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people."

A chapter on the modern theory of colonisation concludes the book, which it must always be remembered is but the first volume (in the original German issue) of a book intended to cover three volumes, but which, nevertheless, as a criticism of capitalistic production may be treated in most respects as an independent whole.

E. BELFORT BAX and WILLIAM MORRIS.

Arrest of Fred Henderson at Norwich.

On Wednesday 27th July Lord Salisbury visited Norwich and held a large meeting on the Agricultural Hall Plain. As a counter demonstration, a meeting was held in the Market-place to protest against the policy of coercion. At this meeting Michael M'Carten, M.P. for South Down, spoke at some length. Seeing that the resolutions were purely condemnatory of coercion and did not put forward a merely political alternative to the Tory policy, our comrades resolved to support them, and Fred Henderson spoke. The meeting, a very large one indeed, was intensely Socialistic in feeling, and, except as to the Irish member, gave our comrade by far the heartiest greeting of the evening. Again when another speaker wished the meeting to show "their enemies that Norwich workmen were Radical," he was at once interrupted by cries of "Socialist," and when he asked what it was that Socialists wanted that Radicalism could not give, received a storm of answers.

The meeting concluded with three tremendous cheers for the social revolution, called for by Henderson, who asked the audience to go to the Agricultural Hall Plain, right in front of where Salisbury was indulging in coercion ravings. The crowd went down London Street cheering, and reached the Plain (a recognised open-air station). Henderson took up a stand under the lamp, intending to hold a meeting, when the mounted policemen on duty rode through the crowd at the speaker and ordered him to desist or he would ride him down. Seeing that this unwarrantable interference with the right of public meeting was exciting the anger of the crowd, Henderson called out, "No violence. Give three groans for Salisbury." Right heartily the crowd responded to this appeal, and then the mounted police, driving to and fro amongst the people, created a disturbance, and tried to excite the people to riot. One constable, No. 40, named Mills, excelled in brutality all the others, and seemed to be animated with a desire to show the public what a miserable ruffian he was. He galloped his horse at full speed along the crowded path, knocking several people down, and, with his fellows, tried to separate Henderson from the rest. They succeeded in this at last, and arrested our comrade in most brutal fashion, Mills striking him severely about the head. Having secured him between their horses they galloped to the station, and Henderson had to pass the night in the cells, charged with riotous conduct. Needless to say, the charge utterly fell through, and the magistrates next morning discharged our comrade without hearing a witness on our side, recognising at once the insufficiency of the police evidence. We are glad to hear that the matter is being taken up, and an inquiry into the conduct of the police will be instituted.

"Of all the instruments of the farmer's trade, the labour of man . . . is that on which he is most to rely for the repayment of his capital. The other two—the working stock of the cattle, and the . . . carts, ploughs, spades, and so forth—without a given portion of the first, are nothing at all."—*Burke*.

¹ It is important not to misunderstand this phrase as used here. The labour of the Middle Ages, though individual from its mechanical side, was from its moral side quite definitely dominated by the principle of association: as we have seen, the "master" of that period was but a delegate of the Guild.

¹ Constant capital, raw material, and the instruments of production; variable capital, money paid in wages.