

EDITORIAL

KARL MARX.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ABOVE the dust raised by the recent speeches of Vice-President Marshall, the answers attempted by his critics, his replies, rejoinders and surrejoinders on the subject of “the rich”—above that thick dust there rises, majestic, the giant intellectual figure of Karl Marx—above the confused din of the confused controversy there is heard, clear as a bell, the scientific note of Marxism.



The Labor Movement, or, be it, the Social Question, is not a phenomenon of date as recent in America as it would seem. It arose about nearly ninety years ago. Nevertheless, first the war with Mexico and the thereby opening of further and vast natural opportunities; thereupon the discovery of gold, in California; the Civil War in the Sixties; the subsequent acquisition of the Hawaiian Islands; the speedily following discovery of gold in Alaska; then the war with Spain and the consequent annexation of Porto Rico on the Atlantic and of the broader acres of the Philippines on the Pacific; last not least, the Canal venture on the Isthmus—these not to mention minor intermediary incidents, were the forces of varying power, recurring at intervals of varying length, that successively “laid upon the table” the motion of the Social Question which was first made in the Twenties of last century. To be sure, each successive time the mo-

tion was supposed to be permanently “tabled,” yet was it as regularly and persistently again “taken from the table” at each successively recurring interval—taken from the table with an ever increasing “vote” in the affirmative, until now the slimness of the “vote” in the negative may be gauged by the insignificance of the only two States carried last November by Mr. Taft. To-day the motion is now in permanence “before the house;” it is the only motion.

Epoch-marking in the discussion was the book of Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*—a curious work on social science, seeing its teachings were threaded with a love story; a unique romance, seeing it was essentially sociologic. Down to the Nationalist Movement, to which *Looking Backward* gave the impulse in 1889, and since the days of Thomas Skidmore, which may be said to have seen the tangible start of the Social Question, the motion presented by the same bore two characteristics—the distinct note of Revolution, and glaring crudity of thought. The Nationalist Movement was the connecting link between the crude, tho’ Revolutionary Past, and the Revolutionary, but no longer crude, Present. The difference consisted in the Marxism that stamps the present.

From the older, hence, more experienced civilization of Europe, the breath of Collectivism was breathed into the land. With the device “Proletarians of all countries, unite!” Collectivism itself had cast off the early Communistic vestiges with which it was at first clothed and Marxism made its appearance here as Socialism, as the compilation of the economic, ethnic and sociologic principles around which a vast Movement was crystallizing on the opposite shores of the Atlantic.

It goes without saying that the appearance of Marxism in America denoted a ripening of Social conditions away from the conditions known to the “Revolutionary Fathers.” In the measure that Evolution was plowing the field for Revolution, and in the measure that Evolution was recruiting, even organizing, the forces for the Social Revolution, the Capitalist Class “threw up breastworks”—met the arguments of the approaching Revolution with counter arguments. The crudities of the arguments of the pre-Marxian days furnished the counter-arguments with welcome handles. The “handles” grew fewer and fewer in the measure that Marxism “took possession.” From year to year the clash narrowed down more and more to Marxism and anti-Marxism. To-day it is Marxism against “the field,” or, “the field” against

Marxism, the multitudinous anti-Marxist theories making common cause against Marxism.

Which is right; hence, to which belongs the future?

Altho' the dictum of John Stuart Mill—"Social science is not an exact science"—is more sweeping than the facts warrant, this much is true: Social science is not, like the exact sciences, subject to demonstration in advance. Is, then, man left wholly without guidance, condemned to flounder about in the wilderness, and by accident only to strike the path that leads out of the woods? Not at all—at least not our generation.

Altho' not directly demonstrable, like a proposition in Euclid, sociologic theories are more or less quickly amenable to a touch-stone that is the test of SCIENCE. What is the touch-stone? It is Prescience—the power to foresee. Not one of the sociologic theories advanced to-day but has lived long enough to be brought to the touch:—has it foreseen correctly? has it not? If it has, it is scientific, and true; if it has not, it is nonsense and false. If it has foreseen correctly, then may it be safely banked upon as a cardinal principle, like any mathematical theorem; if it has not foreseen correctly, then should it be discarded as a chimera.

Brought to the touch, is Marxism scientific?

Marxism is the sociologic tenet, which, synthetically combining ethnology and political economy, and, proceeding from the theory of the Law of Value, established by itself, follows the Law through its numerous ramifications, and arrives at the conclusion that the material goal of civilized existence is an abundance of wealth for all producible and produced without arduous toil by any; that the social structure, requisite to reach the goal, is dictated by the progressive mechanism of wealth-production, that social structure being the Co-operative Commonwealth—a commonwealth which substitutes "political government," government by political agents, with "industrial government," government by the representatives of the organized useful industries of the Nation; and that broadening and deepening mass-pauperization, with the consequent enslavement to an ever more plethorically wealthy economic oligarchy, is the inevitable outcome of the continued private ownership of the natural and social requisites for production.

Thus does Marxism foresee and foretell. How does anti-Marxism?

Anti-Marxism foretells that the social and political institutions raised by The Fathers will be forever; it maintains that they are the last word of socio-political evolution, and it surmounts the Constitution with the motto: “Esto perpetua”—so shall it be forevermore.

Anti-Marxism—unmindful of the warning of James Madison that the time would come when a majority of our people would be propertiless and without the hope of acquiring property—foretells that involuntary poverty is a phenomenon impossible under the Stars and Stripes.

Anti-Marxism, speaking through the mouth of the A.F. of L. asserts the present, and foretells the continued “brotherly relations” between Capital and Labor.

Anti Marxism, speaking through Protection, foretells prosperity from a high tariff and dear goods, profited from by Brother Labor and Brother Capital alike.

Anti-Marxism, speaking through Free Trade, foretells prosperity from a low tariff and cheap goods, a bountifulness to be shared in reciprocity by Brother Labor and Brother Capital.

Anti-Marxism, speaking through Finance, foretells universal well-being, one day from a gold standard; another day from a silver standard, now from an “elastic currency.”

Anti Marxism, speaking through its ecclesiasticals, foretells peace on earth from “godliness,” and, denounces as “un-godly” the theorizers who maintain the existence of classes and class war.

Unnecessary to extend the list. Whatever the special complexion of the Anti-Marxist, one basic feature all have in common, instinctively in common,—a veritable Free Masonry, all reject the Marxian Law of Value, along with its consequent theory of the unbridgeable, irreconcilable and irrepressible Struggle of Classes, UPON THE REJECTION OF WHICH EACH PLANTS HIS SPECIAL THEORY, speedily to see the prognostics drawn therefrom come to grief. They prove better things; with the regularity of clockwork worse has followed and is following, as illustrated, just now, by the spasms of both Vice-President Marshall and all his bourgeois critics.

Events refute anti Marxism, and demonstrate it the opposite of Science. From each recurring refutation of Anti-Marxian, and demonstration of its unscientific

foundation and spirit, Marxism itself rises re-confirmed; its scientific merits re-demonstrated; taller in inches, stronger of voice, with ever more ears catching its vibrant, clear note; ever more hearts warming and minds rescued from the Slough of Despond by the lofty sentiments its truths inspire; ever larger masses marshalling under its banner.

In the meantime, official economists, and other pensionaries of capitalism, writhing with the cold steel of Marxian science in the vitals of their theories, hide their rage in the wrinkle of a sneer at Marx.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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slpns@slp.org