

OSCAR K EDELMAN

Social Evolution

OR

Socialism Made Easy

BY

HENRY JAGER



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SINCE the publication of this pamphlet, July 5th, 1916, the sale exceeded one-thousand copies per week. The writer is highly pleased with the reception given to his work and is most grateful to the Comrades for their kind assistance in bringing this pamphlet to the attention of the public.

HENRY JAGER.

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I

Evolution—did you ever hear that word before?

Yes, you probably heard it in connection with monkeys and the missing link.

But Evolution is a universal law. Though first applied by Darwin to the physical development of man from lower forms of life, it is equally applicable to every phase of Nature.

Evolution is at work in your own mind which has grown from a state of nothingness at birth to your present well-equipped thinking machine. Evolution is at work on the earth changing rock into soil, soil into fruits and fruits into life and plenty for man. Evolution is at work in the realm of thought giving school-boys a fund of knowledge not even possessed by the most learned a century ago.

The law of Evolution is the law of change.

There is one phase of Evolution in which we Socialists are very much interested and with which you non-Socialists should get better acquainted—the *economic evolution of society*. If you are one of those individuals who believes that the earth always was as it is, that man did not develop from lower forms of life, that the economic conditions under which we are living always existed as they are now, then this little pamphlet is not intended for you. If you are such an individual you should first read Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Geikie's *Geology*, and Morgan's *Ancient Society* and within the leisurely confines of those learned volumes you *will* be convinced that Evolution is a universal law, inevitable in its results, inexorable in its consequences. But if your mind already grasps the meaning of Evolution, then we crave the indulgence of your attention to the end, in the hope that if there is revealed to you the possibility of a better day to come, you will delve further into the study of Socialism.

II

Living as we have been for the past few centuries under the capitalist regime we are apt to forget that capitalism is not the first form of society but that it is a development from more primitive forms of community life. Capitalism is an outgrowth of Feudalism and historical data are not lacking to show that Feudalism in turn may trace its blue-blood ancestry back to the days when automobiles, submarines, 42 centimetre guns and clothes were unknown.

The reason why Feudalism gave way to Capitalism will bear careful analysis because in it the careful student will see the reason why Capitalism is bound to succumb to Socialism.

Feudalism was slavery under a more euphonious name, just as we still delight in calling ourselves free and independent. Feudalism had its lord and serf—the lord was master, the serf was slave. The serf tilled the soil and gave everything he produced to his lord who in turn, however, permitted the serf to live and even at times to die on the “honored” field of battle. Not only the product of the serf’s labor but also the product of the serf’s love belonged to the lord, for the most outrageous incident of Feudalism—which makes our blood boil even at the present time was the “right of the first night” on the marriage of a serf’s daughter, and still not so different from the view of some of our present day bosses who do not hesitate at the debauchery of their employees.

Feudalism, of course, depended on the might, on the strong-arm, on the bravery and daring of the lord, and on the weakness, humility, fear and ignorance of the serf. But men were meant for freedom, not for bondage and as soon as the means by which freedom could be attained presented themselves, Feudalism died.

Our good old friend, Evolution, presented them with the means. First was the discovery of the art of printing which slowly began to have its effect in the dissemination of knowledge where only illiteracy had previously prevailed—and knowledge is power. Knowledge naturally made people think, so that with the invention of gun-powder they quickly realized that the armor-sheathed lord was as vulnerable as his weakest serf. The discovery of the mariner’s compass was the final blow, for now the sea had lost its terror and with the finding of new lands and continents the desire for freedom and individual growth became stronger than the already weakened fealty which fettered the serf to his master.

III

The new regime that was ushered in was Capitalism. Capitalism as a child was, like all children, full of promise, but now in its old age it is like all of us, fit only for the grave. Again the inexorable law of Evolution. Capitalism at the beginning naturally made wonderful progress. Feudalism meant slavery and submission. The new regime meant freedom, the possibility for growth and free competition. The restraints which had for centuries held back the natural development of man's intelligence were suddenly released and all the stored up genius of the ages found vent in a most marvelous development in every phase of life.

Literature, music and art saw one of the most productive periods in history and the practical pursuits of men were likewise not neglected. Everywhere artisan's guilds were formed for the teaching of various trades and real craftsmen were developed who carved their souls into the furniture and who bound their books with the spirit of love. It is interesting to note that those were the only days of real *manufacture*—which really means "Made by hand"—and the examples of the art of the cabinetmaker, the silversmith and the book-binder still preserved for us are the envy of the present "machine-made" century.

In reviewing the development of capitalism in this country, we find that at the beginning land was easily obtainable. The tools with which the land was worked were simple, mostly hand-made ("manufactured" in the real sense of the word) and easily acquired. If one was healthy and willing to work there was no difficulty in finding something to do. Owning the land and the tools with which to work it, he became master of the situation. Since everyone was able to acquire land and to own the tools of production, free competition actually prevailed. Up to this time with few exceptions man was his own employer and employee.

IV

But the law of Evolution was already at work in this new form of society as it had been under Feudalism. The primitive tool of our forefathers became the more highly developed machine of the present generation. The locomotive took the place of the wheel-barrow, the steamship displaced the sailboat and instead of the continued growth of the individual craftsmen we find corporations monopolizing every industry.

What does this change signify? It means that with the introduction of modern machinery classes have been created—the machine-owning class and the machine-owned class. Let us stray from the subject a moment. Suppose Jess Willard were to say to a ten year old boy, "Let's fight for the championship." You would treat such a remark as a joke, wouldn't you? A fight between the trained pugilist and the weak little chap is out of the question. As the fighter stands in relation to the boy, so does the machine owner stand in relation to the non-owner. Without the machine you can work but you cannot compete. You cannot compete with your wheelbarrow against the locomotive; with your sailboat against the steamship; with your mere brain and muscle against the gigantic wealth and influence of the corporation.

Competition between the workers and the capitalists is a thing of the past. The only competition the worker knows is the competition for a job. If you own the means of production you can dictate to those who do not. You say to John, "If you want to live you must work. If you want to work you must use the modern efficient machine or you stand no chance in the selling market. If you must use the machine and you can't own it, you are naturally compelled to use mine. Therefore I own the only means by which you can live." There are still many farmers, tailors, blacksmiths, shoemakers and other artisans that own their own tools of production but they are the passing relics of an age gone by. The modern machine-owning corporation says, "We acknowledge that you are an American citizen. We are willing to let you fight for this country. We are willing to say many nice things about you but one thing must be clearly understood and that is that either you work without our modern machine and we'll starve you by underselling or you have the other choice of working with our machine and supporting us. In other words you must consent to let us live by the sweat of your brow."

Here you have the two classes—one owns the machinery to work with but does not have to work, the other must work but does not own the machinery with which to work. The owner is the Capitalist, the non-owner is the worker. These classes are the natural development of the capitalist form of society. The Socialists did not create capitalism and therefore cannot be justly accused of having created classes.

That this class-division of society has resulted in injustice is the reason why the Socialists indict Capitalism. The working class lives

on wages; the capitalist class lives on profit. Wages and profit both come from the same source—both are the product of labor. When a commodity has been produced, the initial expense is deducted and the remainder, i. e., the value that labor has embodied into it is divided between the worker and the capitalist. One of these shares labor receives as its wages; the other share also produced by labor is retained by the capitalist class for its profit.

Since wages and profit are both the product of labor and since this product is divided between the capitalist class and the working class, it is an undeniable fact that the capitalist class receives something which it has not produced. Having received it for so long a time without objection from those who have been paying it, the capitalist class has come to regard profit as one of its prerogatives. Capitalism therefore stands committed to this division of labor's product. The capitalist is always ready and willing to divide with the working class that which the working class alone produces but like the proverbial thief who always shouts "Stop thief," the Capitalist always accuses the Socialist of wanting to divide with the hope that the uninformed worker will fear Socialism.

Let us examine this question of division from another angle. Almost daily we hear of strikes or lockouts in various industries. What does a strike or lockout signify? It means a clash between the working class and the capitalist class. What is this clash about? It is due either to an attempt on the part of the capitalist class to reduce wages or of the working class to obtain higher wages. In other words these two classes are constantly contending with each other—one to receive a larger portion of the wealth which it produces and the other to prevent the producer from getting it.

I read a joke some time ago which graphically illustrates the ever present attitude of the Capitalist class towards the worker. A workman entered the office of his employer and asked for an increase in wages. "I must have more money," he said, "because I am getting married." The answer was, "I'm very sorry, I was just going to call you in to tell you that I must reduce your wages because I must buy my wife a new car." The Capitalist well knew that when wages go down his profits go up and when wages go up his profits go down.

If wages and profit are represented by an apple and the working class were to get three-quarters of the apple, the Capitalist class would only get one-quarter. If the Capitalist class received three-

quarters, the working class necessarily could not receive more than one-quarter. But since it is to the interest of both classes to get more and more of that apple, a constant struggle necessarily exists. This struggle must continue to exist as long as Capitalism exists. As long as one class of people insist on getting something that they are not entitled to, insist on living by the labor of another class, so long will that struggle continue.

This class struggle is not a national or racial one—it is a world economic struggle. The tyranny of Russia, the classicism of Italy, the gaiety of France, the philosophy of Germany, the democracy of England and the freedom of America, different though they be in their national ideals, are nevertheless all enlisted under the flag of Capitalism and wherever that flag flies, there the class struggle exists. No phrases, no epigrams, no prayers and no sermons can abolish this class struggle. It is a problem born of economic facts and economic change alone can eradicate the evil.

V

There is another phase of Socialism that I wish to dwell upon for a moment. It is this: Capitalism lives upon the exploitation of labor.

An illustration which is not new but very effective will show how this is accomplished. Assume, for instance, that I am a capitalist. I have a certain amount of wealth; I want to eat the best food; wear the finest clothing; reside in the finest location and when I die I want to be able to leave all that I have to my heirs. In other words, I want to eat the pie and still have it.

This, at first, sounds like a Chinese puzzle. On close inspection it is found merely to be the capitalist method of doing business. I go into the labor market and there I meet John. I ask him, "John, are you looking for a job? (What I really mean is not whether John is looking for a job, but whether John is willing to sell himself to me.)" "Yes," says John, "how much do you want per day?" "One dollar." "All right, John, you may start work for me tomorrow." John works a day, produces a pair of shoes, hands them to me and I give him \$1. John now says, "Will you sell me a pair of shoes?" "Sure," say I. "How much are they?" "Three dollars a pair." "I haven't got that amount," says John. "Well then, you can't have the shoes." On the second day John works again, produces another pair of shoes,

hands them to me and receives another dollar. Now I have two pairs of shoes and John has \$2. Again John tries to buy a pair of shoes but again he is unable to do so because he only has \$2. On the third day John produces another pair of shoes, hands them to me and receives another dollar. Again John tries to buy the pair of shoes and this time he succeeds because he hands back to me the \$3 which I had previously given.

John goes home and begins to think it over. "I have worked three days," he thinks to himself, "and have earned \$3 and produced three pairs of shoes. My three days are gone, never to return; my \$3 are gone, but I have one pair of shoes." I, on the other hand, look at the problem from a different angle. I take out my pencil and do some figuring. I find that one pair of shoes is equal to the cost of the raw material, rent, gas, fuel and other expenses. I put that pair of shoes aside. I think of the \$3 I have given John but I remind myself that John gave me the \$3 back. I still have another pair of shoes—Where did I get them? I did no work, all the money that I invested I have back again, even the \$3 I gave John and yet I have a pair of shoes. It stands to reason that this extra pair of shoes came from no other source but labor. It was John who cut the leather, who stitched the leather, who shaped the shoe, who did in fact all the work, but it is I, the capitalist, who is enjoying the fruits of John's toil.

So you see the capitalist need not work at all; he can eat the pie and still have it. In fact very often the pie grows larger and larger the more that the capitalist eats of it. It is easy to see, why the capitalist's pie never grows less, when our attention is called to it. The only difficult problem the Socialists have confronting them is to get people who for years and years have been taught that the capitalist is supporting them to see that the facts really point the other way; that they are really supporting the capitalist.

I recall an incident in Middletown, New York, while addressing an audience. Someone in the crowd interposed, "You Socialists always run down the capitalist. Where would all of us be if the capitalists did not support us?" I looked at him for a moment and asked him what he worked at. He said he was a tinsmith. "How many hours do you work a day?" "Ten hours." "You are foolish, my dear sir," I said. He became indignant and told me that the Socialists always insult people. Here I offered to convince him.

"If I were in your place," I said, "I would go to a picnic and have a good time or to the opera and hear Caruso or take in the best theatrical performance in town or play football, baseball, basket ball or golf, or read a little Shakespeare, Browning, or Tennyson, if so inclined. *What's the use of working when the capitalists support you?*" He saw the point and concluded that the Socialists were not such wicked fellows after all.

There was a time when people believed that the sun travels around the earth from East to West; their vision belied the facts. It took years and years before they were convinced that the earth revolves on its axis from West to East. The same applies to the lack of economic knowledge on the part of the working class today. The working man puts out his hand on Saturday and receives \$10 or \$15 wages. "Ah, what a fine boss I have." He takes this sum as if it were a gift, forgetting that all day Monday, Tuesday and the rest of the week he is piling up wealth for his "benefactor" while at the end of the week Mr. Benefactor returns a small portion of that wealth. The fact is that it is the worker who extends credit to the capitalist all week and for his services he is exploited in the bargain.

VI

But our good old friend Evolution has never gone to sleep. He has been at work on our economic well being all these years. Feudalism with its Slavery and lack of ambition was not to his liking. So Feudalism disappeared. Competitive Capitalism was an improvement, but competition meant economic waste and inefficiency; and as soon as science and invention blazed the way for the machine wonders of the present day, competition disappeared, industries were organized on monopolistic lines and a developed capitalism arose with the trust as the lord and the workingman as the serf. And now you turn to your good old friend Evolution and ask him "Is this what you have brought us to? Is this the promised land of Eden? You have freed us from our Feudal lord and have substituted the shackles of Capitalism." But old man Evolution smiles and says: "Patience."

That the corporation or trust is a necessary outgrowth of competitive Capitalism and is also a necessary stepping stone to Socialism was always maintained by the Socialists. We all remember the days of Bryanism. In those days every trust was going to be smash-

ed and many smashers were there. Bryan smashed a trust in every speech; Roosevelt smashed a trust in every interview; Hearst smashed a trust in every special edition of his newspapers. The lone Socialist stood on the street corner, an unknown quantity, and he alone knew that the trust could not be smashed. Oh! for the wasted millions of words, and the wasted millions of dollars, and the wasted years of bluff!

The trusts are still with us, stronger than ever, more numerous than ever and all are now convinced that the Socialist was and is right. Had Bryan studied Socialism instead of the merits of grape juice, had Roosevelt spent less time with wild jaguars and more time with Karl Marx, had Hearst been less voluble and more sincere, had we, the common people, been a public trained to weigh and consider the economic problems confronting the country, those wasted years of bluff would have been saved to civilization. The notion of most people that the things that are, always have been and because they are, are right, is costly and expensive.

Feudalism evolved into a system of individual production, but individual production is no longer with us no matter how hard we may wish it to be. Individual production has already developed into industrial institutions employing hundreds of thousands of people. Despite this social or collective mode of production, some of us still dream of the past and think that the days of individualism are still with us.

We are no longer living as separate individuals. We could not if we would and we would not if we could go back to those days. Take our newspapers for an example. Men in China, Japan and everywhere are busy daily reporting events to New York. The machinery on which the newspapers are printed come from every part of the globe. The pulp of Norway and the timber of Canada are enlisted in making the paper itself. Thousands of people, hundreds of industries and every part of the globe contribute a share in the final product. This newspaper, although privately owned, depends for its production upon the collective or socialized effort. Progress could not continue without collective production.

This transition from competitive Capitalism to corporationized Capitalism has necessarily brought with it all the evils of monopoly. When the employer employs five men, each one producing for example \$2 of wealth per day, the employer retains \$1 from each or

the total of \$5, each of the employees receiving the other dollar. If each employee spent the dollar earned each day and the employer his \$5, the whole product would be consumed. Today, when a capitalist employs 100,000 people and makes a dollar out of each one per day, the worker can only buy the other dollar's worth or one-half of what he really produces. It stands to reason that he cannot buy the total amount he actually contributed to the market because out of the \$2 so contributed, he has received only \$1, the other dollar going to the capitalist. The capitalist, however, while he may be able to consume \$1,000 or \$2,000, or even \$5,000 worth of wealth per day, still has merchandise to the extent of \$95,000 per day unconsumed.

What becomes of this accumulated merchandise? The worker cannot buy it and the capitalist does not need it. The warehouses become over-crowded and still there is no purchaser in sight. The cry goes up that the market is suffering from over-production. One would imagine that if there was an over-production that the producers of wealth would have two pairs of shoes instead of one; two suits of clothes instead of one; that they would have enough food to make all happy. In short that no one would worry and plenty would prevail. This is not the case, however. What really happens is that the shoemaker is told his services are no longer necessary. He has produced too many shoes and therefore is rewarded with loss of work. The tailor has produced too much clothing, therefore he is to have no clothes and so on all along the line.

It is not a case of over-production. The disease is really under-consumption; yet in spite of this under-consumption the shoemaker can look into the store windows and see the shoes that would save him from his shivering cold, the tailor may see the clothes that he should be wearing but cannot buy and the workers in general can look into the empty tenements they have built but do not own.

Here we realize that the worker is not out of employment because he is lazy or has bad habits or is disobedient; he is out of work simply because in our present form of society we produce not for *consumption* but for *sale*. Then everyone realises that something must be done. The workers are beginning to get restless; they cannot pay rent; they cannot pay the butcher; they cannot pay the grocer; starvation stares them in the face. For a time false pride keeps them from talking of their poverty but this pride soon gives

way to necessity. Agitators get busy; the newspapers are compelled to admit more and more of the facts; workers begin to congregate on the highways, and some of them even begin to make threats; they begin to learn that there is something wrong with a system that cannot even exploit the masses steadily; they look at the factories that are shut up and at the mills that are shut down; they see the small capitalist—his wealth absorbed by the bigger capitalists—bankrupted and thrown into the ranks of labor; the army of unemployed grows larger and larger until the capitalists themselves begin to fear; the cry of charity goes up and charity is handed down; the capitalist who robbed wholesale now makes restitution on the basis of retail.

The workers begin to ask questions. If this happens in the days of Cleveland, the Republicans blame the Democrats; if it happens in the days of Roosevelt, the Democrats blame the Republicans. Should we however, search for the truth we could readily see that the crisis is neither Democratic nor Republican but capitalistic.

We could see that in Russia, under the Czar, in Germany under the Emperor, in England under the King and in America under the President, all alike and at the same time are suffering from the same symptoms. The crisis is international in its scope and is ever-recurring. You cannot rid yourself of these symptoms without first getting rid of the cause.

After the crisis is over our capitalists get busy to find a remedy in order to prevent a repetition. They argue that since the crisis was due to the overcrowding of our home markets—with the wealth stolen from labor—it must naturally follow that if we could only capture some foreign market as an outlet for this surplus wealth it would bring relief.

A decision is reached, and secretly or openly an attempt to capture some market is made. Of course a modern nation cannot enter into a war for conquest; so a pretext is generally resorted to and war is entered into on the ground of "defence."

If we look across the ocean and see the countless millions engaged in battle and think of the lives that are lost, the thousands maimed for life and the anguish of the bereaved, isn't it fair to ask ourselves whether Karl Marx was not correct after all in his formulation of the materialist conception of history when he laid down this social law: "Production of the means to support human life and the exchange of things produced is the basis of all social struc-

tures; in every form of society the manner in which wealth is distributed and the inhabitants divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced and how the products are exchanged."

When we think of Catholic arrayed against Catholic, Protestant against Protestant and Jew against Jew, may we not ask whether Marx after all was not correct when he pointed out that the economic factor is the determining factor and that all idealism, all morality, ethics and religion succumb to the economic conditions of the times?

The man who hasn't studied the materialist conception of history, looks aghast at the struggle now raging in Europe and tries to find a cause for the gigantic war in some frivolous incident such as the murder of a crown prince or the violation of a paper treaty. The fact is that the roots of war are deeper laid than is apparent on the surface. It was caused by economic conditions. Germany had to have more markets and protect the markets it controlled. England, France and Russia were in the same position and the war in Europe was necessitated by commercialism.

But war will not solve the problem. The solution of the problem lies solely in the abolition of Capitalism. Remove the cause of the disease and all the attendant evils of poverty, crime and war will cease.

VII

The Socialist maintains that society is constantly in the process of evolution. That Feudalism preceded competitive Capitalism; that competitive Capitalism preceded corporate Capitalism and that corporate Capitalism is the immediate predecessor to the Socialist regime.

The Socialist philosophy does not condemn Feudalism or Capitalism for having come into existence any more than other scientists condemn the ape for its shortcomings.

We realize that every form of society preceding our own was a necessary step in the economic development of mankind and was essential to its future development into Socialism. Private ownership and private control of the means of production, transportation and distribution, are already admitted by our capitalist government to have out-lived its usefulness and this admission presages the early death of the capitalist regime.

When Dick Croker was questioned as to how he made his money he answered in Tammany style, "That's my private business." Evolution, however, has been at work since Croker retired from the arena. Today the government calls upon the Rockefellers, the Morgans and the Carnegies to answer the same question and instead of the brazen defiance of Croker, a trip to Europe is their only escape. It is already recognized that the interests of the people are superior to those of the individual. Social control over the means of production, transportation and distribution is becoming a factor. The step from social *control* to social *ownership* is but a short one. Capitalism is already tottering to its grave although some of the capitalists are still unaware of its impending death. I am quite certain that you and I shall attend the requiem mass.

We are organizing for the overthrow of Capitalism along two lines. First, *politically* into the various political districts of the country so as to be able to nominate candidates for the various offices. In this way we are able to come before the masses pointing out the evils that exist, showing them the cause and remedy and asking them to register their vote for Socialism, thereby using the political organization for propaganda purposes and for a test of the revolutionary atmosphere which we have created.

Secondly, we promote the industrial organization of labor. History has taught us that the emancipation of chattel slavery was not brought about by the mere question of abstract justice but was the result of a long drawn out bloody conflict. Putting two and two together we believe that it is just barely possible that although the majority of the people may be in favor of the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production, transportation and distribution, the capitalist may nevertheless feel very inconvenient about accommodating us by turning over the property to the American people and therefore we are organizing the might to back up our right and this might is the industrial organization of labor. The industrial organization is formed by the workers in the shop, in the factory, in the mine, in the mill, on the railroad, as they work. Each shop is organized into an industrial unit and these units in similar industries are in turn organized into larger organizations. These industrial organizations are drilled and trained in the tenets of Socialism. When we have elected our own representatives and can change our laws so as to establish the industrial republic, if the capitalist should then dare to violate the laws, we will be ready to enter

those factories, mills, mines, and railroads, take possession of them and operate them as we are now operating them; but instead of rendering our accounts as we are now doing to the capitalist our accounts will be rendered to the Headquarters of the Industrial Republic. There the men will have the facts and the figures of the wealth produced and it will be to our interest to see to it that each worker receives as near as the human mind can figure it out, the full social value of his product.

In such a society every machine, instead of being a curse, as it has been under Capitalism, will become a blessing, for it will aid in the reduction of the hours of labor; there will be no cause for war, because there will be no stolen property to dispose of; there will be no over-production or under-consumption because each will receive his full share contributed.

Socialism, if it will accomplish anything will beyond all doubt wipe out the one great evil of our present day civilization—involuntary poverty.

Socialism will establish a form of society under which no one will live by the sweat of the brow of another, under which competition, mean, rank, competition will no longer exist; under which every man will have ample time for spiritual relaxation and for the development of the sciences, literature and art and for the first time in the history of the human race, will there truly be a condition in which there will be "Peace on earth and good-will towards man."

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