

Woman and Socialism

By MAY WALDEN



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WOMAN AND SOCIALISM.

We hear people say, "Yes, Socialism is a beautiful dream; it would be all very well if you could change human nature, but since you can't, the dream is impossible." And you hear others say, when some colony has failed whose members tried to co-operate and make life on earth more bearable, "There's an experiment in Socialism for you; it never can succeed; it is too impractical." But Socialism is neither a dream, nor a colony of Utopians. And Utopians, you must know, are people who think out a plan of ideal living; a society where everyone and everything is perfect, and try to live up to it.

Ever since the division of society into classes there have been people who have tried to fashion an ideal state. Plato, who was a Greek, and lived 400 years before Christ was born, was one of the greatest of these dreamers. He wrote "The Republic," which is considered today to be one of the most instructive and charming of books. Sir Thomas More, an Englishman, born in 1480, was another of these dreamers; he wrote "Utopia," a book that has given its name to all these impractical seekers after an ideal commonwealth. Rousseau, a Frenchman, in 1763 gave a picture in his "Social Contract" of an ideal middle class society. Babeuf, another Frenchman, in 1795 wrote that "the aim of society is the happiness of all." He was active in the French Revolution and

was guillotined for the part he took in the struggle. St. Simon and Fourier, both Frenchmen, who were born in the latter part of the eighteenth century, taught that all men should regard each other as brothers, and they tried to establish a brotherhood and make practical their ideas of such a society. The Brook Farm Association, established near Boston in 1840, was an outgrowth of Fourierism. Here Alcott, the father of the much loved author of "Little Women," lived with Hawthorne and other famous co-operators, and tried to found an ideal community. Robert Owen, another Englishman, a philanthropist and reformer, tried to improve the conditions of factory workers and lost the good opinion of his middle class friends when he took up the colony ideal in 1823.

Bellamy, whose book, "Looking Backward," did much twenty years ago to arouse the interest of people in a better state of society, is still credited with depicting an example of Socialism. The Ruskin colony of almost forgotten memory and other communities scattered here and there that have been abandoned,—all of these experiments have been labeled Socialism, and ridiculed for their failure.

The reason they have failed was because the founders had no idea of the changes that have taken and are taking place in the industrial life of the world.

Scientific Socialists, as we call ourselves, do take account of these changes, and we realize

that all of our institutions change as the form of industry changes. But to explain this to you, I shall have to take you back to the beginning of the world's history.

Society has not always been in the stage in which we find it to-day. Pick up any tool with which you are familiar, a needle or a hammer, and think where it came from. You have never seen it in any other form. You have seen needles of different sizes and hammers of various shapes, but they have been made of the same metal. Did you ever think what the beginnings of those tools were? Were they always made of steel, brightly polished and bought from a dealer for a few cents?

No, they were invented ages and ages ago; so far back in the childhood of the race that no one knows the exact date of their invention, except that it was in what those wise men, the geologists (who can read in the rocks the history of the earth and her people) call the Stone Age.

In order to make clear the progress of the human race from its infancy to the present time, let us follow the classification made by Lewis H. Morgan, who was known in Europe as the foremost American scientist, though his name is familiar to few of his countrymen.

He divides the life of mankind upon the earth into three distinct periods: First, savagery; second, barbarism, and third, civilization. Savagery and barbarism he again subdivides into three periods each, which he describes as the lower, middle, and upper status.

The earliest or lower status of savagery begins with the infancy of the human race and may be said to have ended with a knowledge of the use of fire, and of fish for food. During this period the savages lived upon fruits and nuts principally, and did not travel far from their original habitat. The middle status of savagery begins with the use of fish for food and fire to cook it, and ends with the invention of the bow and arrow. Mankind followed the rivers in search of food and thus spread over the greater portion of the earth's surface. The Australians and Polynesians, when discovered, were in this period, they having no knowledge of the use of the bow and arrow.

The upper status of savagery commenced with the invention of the bow and arrow, and ended with the invention of the art of pottery. And most, if not all, of these inventions that have made possible the progress of the human race, are credited to woman's ingenuity.

Many of the tribes of the North and South American Indians were in this, the upper status of savagery, at the time of the discovery of America by Europeans. All of the tribes, then, on the face of the earth who never practiced the art of making pottery, are classed as savages. All of those who made pottery had crossed the line of progress into barbarism.

It is estimated that about three-fifths of the life of the race, or 60,000 years, were spent in the period of savagery. It is also conceded that in this period, and probably for 20,000

years more, woman reigned supreme in what is called "The Matriarchate," or "Mother-right."

The lower status of barbarism began with the making of pottery and ended differently on the two hemispheres. On the Eastern Hemisphere, it ended with the domestication of animals such as gave meat and milk. On the Western Hemisphere, where there were no wild animals suitable for taming the lower status ended with the use of the sun-dried brick and stone, for house building.

The middle status of barbarism began with the domestication of animals in the Eastern hemisphere, and in the Western with the cultivation of plant foods by irrigation, and the use of sun-dried brick and stone, and ended with the invention of the process of smelting iron ore. This, roughly speaking, is the end of the Stone Age, though the use of stone implements continued after iron ones were made.

The upper status of barbarism began with the manufacture of iron and ended with the invention of the phonetic alphabet, and the use of writing. The Grecian tribes of the time depicted by Homer; the Italian tribes, before the founding of Rome; and the Germanic tribes of the time of Cæsar, were all in the upper status of barbarism. At this point barbarism ends and civilization begins with the invention of the phonetic alphabet, and the use of written records.

But what has all this to do with Socialism? A great deal, for as I said in the beginning,

the Socialist philosophy recognizes that the advancement of the race is dependent upon the changes in the form of industry, and that all of the changes in society have followed, and have been the results of the evolution of industry.

The evolution of industry is divided into four stages: First, the Family System; second, the Guild System; third, the Domestic System, and fourth, the Factory System. While it cannot be said that society has passed through and finished each of these stages to the exclusion of all the others (for in many places may be found several of these stages in operation at the present day), it is true that each stage has at some time in the evolution of a society been the highest form of that society. To make this clear let us take up these stages of the evolution of industry and explain them in their order. The first stage, the Family System, began with (a) Communal Production. All of the stores of food and tools for securing it were the common property of the tribe and were divided among the members in proper proportions. There was no division of labor and every member of the tribe was able to do any of the work which was to be done.

The second step in the Family System was (b) Slavery. In the constant warfare between the savage tribes the conquerors made slaves of their prisoners, and these slaves (probably women) were the first private property. The women cultivated the ground with sharpened

sticks, and shells fastened to a short handle for a hoe.

Not much food could be raised by these primitive methods, so the tribe produced nothing to sell. But as the tools were made more perfect, and more food could be raised, some of the slaves could be spared to do other work besides agriculture; and in this way handicraft arose. Women learned to spin the fibres of plants, to weave the grasses, to sew together the skins of animals with needles fashioned from bones of animals; to gather bark and branches for shelter, to brew herbs for medicines and to make dyes; to plait baskets and plaster them with clay and thus mold the first pottery; and to decorate with shells and teeth of animals the clothing and skins for shelter. In this way the extra labor of the slaves was used in making these luxuries for their masters.

Following slavery is the third step in the Family System, or (c) Serfdom. Serfdom was still slavery in another form. The master owned the land to which the serf belonged. The serf could be bought and sold with the land and could not be separated from it or escape from it. The serfs, male and female, worked for their master (or feudal lord) a certain number of days in the week and for themselves the rest of the time. This made possible still further division of labor until the workers became very skillful, and produced more than was necessary to keep themselves and their families.

The next step in the evolution of industry was the Guild System. This began in Europe about

the middle of the 11th century, and was brought about chiefly by the growth of certain trades which had developed in the hands of the serfs, and also by the increased demand for certain goods which made their manufacture desirable. An even greater division of labor was made possible, for the workers no longer belonged to the land, but hired themselves out for a certain period of years as apprentices. After the trade was thoroughly learned, they could go forth as journeymen or journeywomen. All workers of a certain craft belonged to one guild, as the weaver's guild, the bookbinder's guild, etc. Guilds of female workers had the same rights and privileges as those of the men. Among them were the tanners, the furriers, saddlers, and harnessmakers, the bakers, seamstresses, embroiderers of coats-of-arms, tailors and goldsmiths.

The distinctive features of this system of production were, first, the combination of labor with a small capital, and second, the private ownership of the tools that were used. The guild-master, or mistress, bought the materials necessary, and worked in the shop with the apprentices, making the finished product. This finished article was sold directly to the customer. Whatever money was made was kept, as it did not have to be divided with a middleman. As the system developed, however, the master-guilders became more wealthy and tyrannical, and their apprentices and journeymen took sides against them in self-protection. As time passed, the master-guilders joined themselves into trade

leagues, and became very powerful in controlling commerce so that the evolution of industry passed from the Guild system into that of the Domestic System.

The Domestic System marks the rise of the middle man who bought goods and sold them for a profit, instead of making them for use, as had been done in all previous systems. The master-guilders could not look to customers for the sale of goods, but had to depend upon the middleman and the state of the market. The workers could go wherever they chose. They were not bound to a certain master, but had to offer their labor in competition with all other laborers, for their hands and their tools were the only sources of their living.

Great changes took place in the world during this period (the close of the 15th century), from different causes. We will note only those that concern our argument. The rise of the trading class broke up the feudal system and the serfs became hordes of roving vagabonds. The demand for wool and woollen goods led to the eviction of the peasants from their homes to provide pasture for the sheep, and to force the homeless workers into the woollen cottage factories. Religious oppression in the different European countries forced the people to America (which had just been discovered), in search of liberty. According to Marx, a "bloody legislation" was enforced against these "free" people from this time throughout the whole of the 16th century. Girls, the children of "vagabonds," could be enslaved by any town until their 20th year. "All

villages were forbidden to let rooms to single men and women, and the latter could be cast into prison if they refused to become servants, even if they were employed at any other work, such as sowing seeds for the peasants at daily wages, or even buying and selling corn."

Women probably suffered more during this period than at any time since savagery. Many sold themselves as indentured servants to people in America.

Important inventions at this time, especially the application of steam as a motive force to machinery, brought in the Factory System, and the evolution from the hand tool to the ponderous machine. This brought about a revolution in the relation of woman to society; for the first time in civilization her value as a worker was made equal, and in some industries superior, to that of man. Her weaker muscles are sufficient to run the machine, and her patience and persistence, learned through her long centuries of slavery, make her a more dependable worker. But the Factory System has also made another change in her condition. Instead of being dependent upon the men of her family, she is now dependent, as the men are, upon the owners of the machine for a living. And now, men, women and children are fighting against each other for a chance to live.

Let us look a little more closely into this relation of the worker to the machine and see what the trouble is. We have noticed in the earliest period, when there was no division of labor, that there were no tools to speak of and

that there was neither a master class nor a subject class. A little further along in the evolution of industry, tools came into general use; members of the conquered tribes had been forced into slavery, that is, the slaves were the private property, and there was a division of classes into the leisure master class and the subject class. Next the land became private property, to which the slaves, now called serfs, were attached, and tools had been perfected until there was much skill in the handicrafts.

The next step found the tools as private property; the slave, now called apprentice, freed from the land, was still bound and working hard for a master, but he owned the tools which he used by hand.

In the next step, the machines into which the tools had developed, are themselves private property. The workers, now factory hands, are free to offer themselves to any master, but they are none the less slaves because without access to the machines they are powerless to earn their living.

In this stage of industry, which we have now reached, the co-operation of worker and machine in production, has been perfectly organized. So far as the single fact of making goods in the best manner is concerned, the result is perfect; but so far as the condition of the workers who produce the goods is concerned, the result is pitifully and horribly imperfect.

Why is this? And why are conditions allowed to remain as they are? The simple answer is, PROFITS. But let us figure it out.

A girl goes into a factory to work; in five hours she has turned out enough goods to pay for her "keep" for that one day. But she does not stop at the end of that time, for she has hired herself out for the price of her "keep," for a ten hour day. The other five hours she works for the man or the company that owns the machine, and the amount for this work is never paid to the worker. This amount we call "surplus value," and while many of the supporters of the capitalist system deny the theory of surplus value, proofs can be piled on proofs to show that the workers do not get the full value of all that they produce.

Every effort that the workers make to get higher wages is an effort to get more of this value that they have created. This is the cause of the strikes that are so common in manufacturing communities. Every successful attempt on the part of the factory owners to secure more of this surplus value results in the reduction of the laborer's wages. This struggle for more between these two classes, the wage earners on the one side and the factory owners on the other, is called the Class Struggle. A scientific Socialist is known by his or her understanding and acceptance of these three principles that I have briefly outlined: 1st. "Economic Determinism," which is the theory of the evolution of industry and its resulting influence over all social institutions; 2nd. "Surplus value," which is the value the laborer creates and does not get paid for; 3rd. "The Class struggle,"

which is the struggle between capitalist and laborer for a greater share of the product.

There is still one other necessary qualification that a Socialist must have, and that is her consciousness of these principles, and her desire and determination to change affairs so that there shall no longer be a system of wage-slavery; of a master class and a subject class; but there shall be established a system of co-operation, not only in the production of necessities but in the distribution of them, so that each man, woman and child in the world shall have a decent living, and no man, woman or child shall have millions more than they can ever use.

And this desire on the part of every Socialist to better the conditions under which we live, calls for the help of every person, high or low, black or white, Jew or Gentile, who has a spark of the feeling of brotherly love in his or her make-up!

The question is then, how shall we go about it to better the present conditions? Before we answer this question let us review a little differently the history we have just had of the evolution of industry.

In every one of the social stages I have described to you, the owning class (that is the class that owned first the slaves, then the land, then the machines) ruled society and made laws, and formed institutions for the benefit of that class. During the feudal period, the land owners were the powerful people, and they arranged customs, made laws, formed religions

and wrote literature that furthered their own interests.

When feudalism was broken up by the rise of capitalism, that is, when the land owners were displaced by the merchants and manufacturers, all things were changed to suit the capitalists.

These changes in society from one period to the next above it are called revolutions. Politics, art, literature, religion, political science, philosophy, education, and other institutions have all passed through changes following industrial changes in society.

None of these changes is more strikingly shown than in that which is called Public Opinion. People's ideas are formed very largely by what they hear others say whom they look upon as authorities, or by what they read in books or papers for which they have great respect. At the present time when newspapers are so cheap and plentiful, the information that is contained in them, and the opinions that are expressed by them, have a powerful effect in determining people's beliefs on certain questions.

Now these newspapers and periodicals, which are collectively spoken of as "the press," are, almost without exception, owned and controlled by the present ruling class—the capitalists—who are very careful to form a public opinion that suits their own interests. These interests are embodied in the principle that capitalist private property is sacred. This has been taught for so long a time that people take it for granted that it is true, and that there is no need to prove it. Upon this belief there has been built a great

mass of ideas and ideals, and of institutions that are intended to preserve the present system of wages and profits. The workers are set to thinking about petty details and are divided into parties that quarrel over whether we shall have a Republican or a Democratic president, or whether we shall use gold or silver, or paper money, or have a two-cent tax or a five-cent one, in order to keep them from seeing that neither the one or the other will give them all that they produce. Notice the way in which the voters are kept in ignorance of the questions that are burning for solution every hour of their lives. I know many young men who vote the Republican ticket because their father voted it; and I know many men who vote the Democratic ticket because their grandfathers and great grandfathers voted it.

The Republican party is the party of the great trusts which kill off the smaller business concerns by ruinous competition and throw their managers into the wage earning class or drive them to suicide. The Democratic party represents the smaller business concerns that clamor for a suppression, or for a regulation of the monopolies, so they can keep on competing with each other. But both parties want profits. They want the chance to rob the worker of the surplus that he creates.

The Socialists argue that there is a better way for everybody to live than by robbing and being robbed. They do not argue this from any vision, but from a logical conclusion of the principles of industrial evolution that I have out-

lined to you. It is from the fact that always another class has owned the things that the workers must have in order to live—the land, the tools, the machines, the railroads, the factories, the mines—in fact everything needful to the production and distribution of life's necessities. It is plain then to everyone that these things must be owned collectively in order that the workers may be able to use the full product of all that they produce.

So, the workers, ever watchful for an opportunity to benefit their own class, agitate, organize, and educate their fellow men and women for the coming change from Capitalism to Socialism. And never before in the world's history has such a movement been created, for wherever Capitalism has obtained a foothold, there the organization of wage workers into economic and political parties follows as surely as day succeeds the night; until now there are branches of the Socialist party in almost every country on the globe.

The perplexing thing about the whole matter to the Capitalist politicians is the steady growth in the membership of the Socialist party. So frightened are they at this awakening of the working class that they try to deceive themselves and each other into thinking that Socialist political activity is dying out instead of rapidly increasing.

Instance the repeated statements in the capitalist press after any national elections to the effect that the Socialists have met a severe de-

feat! Later dispatches invariably give them a larger vote if not a greater representation.

In Germany, the Socialists have forty-three seats in the Reichtag, though they would have about twice as many if they had not been deprived of their representation. There are eighty-seven Socialists in the Austrian parliament. There are seven in the Prussian Landtag. In the Russian Duma, in spite of repressive measures to prevent the election of Socialists, over ninety were elected. The government disfranchised nine millions of peasantry and from 25 to 40 per cent of the city working classes in order to keep the Socialists out of the Duma. There are fifty-four Socialists in France representing the party. England has thirty-two in the House of Commons. Finland has the honor of having the largest percentage of Socialist representatives in parliament of any nation in the world. After a tremendous struggle for universal suffrage—which contrary to the usual meaning of the term included women as well as men—the first elections under the new law resulted in the election of eighty Socialist representatives out of a total of 114. Eighteen women were elected, of whom nine are Socialists.

In Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Spain and Japan; in Argentine, Australia, Canada and other countries, the Socialist party is organized and at work trying to better the conditions of the common people. The Socialists of the United States number al-

most half a million voters, although not all of them are dues-paying members of the party.

Unlike the Republican, Democratic and Prohibitionist parties, the members of the Socialist party all over the world support their party by paying monthly dues. This money is used to keep lecturers and organizers in the field, and to pay the salaries of the state and national secretaries who direct the work. No person is excluded from membership because he or she is too poor to pay dues, but everyone who can pay is expected to, because the party must depend upon the working class to emancipate itself from slavery.

It is quite proper at this point for women to ask, "What part can I take in this work? Is it not all politics? Women have no vote."

True, in most states women have no vote. It is also true that the Socialist party is a political party. Nevertheless, we Socialists insist that women should join the party and work shoulder to shoulder with the men for our emancipation.

The freedom that we crave, and which we must have, is economic freedom. We working people are all slaves, and women are in greater slavery than men, for we are slaves politically, economically and socially. Analyze the situation and see if we are not.

Politically, we are slaves, because we have absolutely no voice in choosing who shall make the laws that govern us. Do you think, my sisters, if we could vote, that we would vote for

a system that for its perpetuation through profits demands night work for women? Is night work or any other kind of drudgery so dear to us that we clamor for the factory owners to employ us at the expense of our health and that of our unborn children? If we could vote, would we put into office men or women who refuse child labor legislation? Is the sight of our little ones toiling in the shops, mines and on the streets so comforting and so reassuring that we long to have them there? If we could vote, would we consent to elect a mayor or aldermen who connive with wealthy corporations to deprive us of taxes that should go to support schools for our children? No, a thousand times, no! Then join the Socialist party, which is the only party in favor of giving women the ballot that she may vote against those things.

Economically, we are slaves because we are dependent upon some one else for our support; for the roof over our heads, the clothes we wear, and the food we eat. From our cradles to our graves, we are held in subjection by the person who holds the pocketbook and buys our daily necessities. When we are in our childhood our wants are supplied as fully as possible by the love of father and mother. But in our youth, when our wants increase and we are restless under restraint, we are obliged to go from home to find a master; one who by sweating the life out of us can add to the profits he is so eagerly grasping. •

Would any girl, unless she was forced to do it through necessity, slave from morning

till night for \$6.00 a week making beautiful dresses that she can never wear? or stand all day in the stuffy air of a department store receiving insults from women, who, because they are on the other side of the counter, consider themselves superior to a saleswoman, and sell hundreds of dollars' worth of goods a week for which she gets the magnificent sum of \$5.00 or \$6.00? Would she do any of these distasteful, disagreeable, slavish things unless she was obliged to do so? She does it because she is an economic slave; because she cannot make a living except by applying to some one who owns the machines, or the goods she must work with, in order to make her living.

In order that this product may be sold for a profit, the girl by competing with others who want to make a living also, must work as cheaply as possible. When profits are done away with, this grinding process will cease. That will be only when the people own co-operatively the means of production. Then join the Socialist party that is working to abolish the profit system, and to establish the Co-operative Commonwealth.

Women are slaves socially because they cannot do as they choose in society. We are slaves to custom and to public opinion. We marry to get a home, and we stay in it because we consider ourselves the possession of the man who furnishes our food and clothes. We bring unwelcome children into the world because we are sex slaves. We dare not maintain the right to our own bodies because we have taken

a vow to obey our husbands and to cleave to them until death parts us, no matter what the exactions or the abuse they heap upon us! Out upon such teachings, say I!

Look over the women of your acquaintance between the ages of twenty and forty. Do you not know many attractive ones who would make excellent wives and mothers, but who are unmarried because no man has ever come to claim them? The cost of living is so great that men and women dare not take upon themselves the responsibility of a family.

And no woman, even if she was able to support and educate a child, would dare public opinion to the extent of rearing a family without a (so-called) head to it. Not a father's daughter of them! They smother their natural instincts and desires and drag out a wretched existence that too often ends in an insane asylum. Unless she were socially a slave do you think a woman would starve her mother-instinct when her whole nature craved the comfort of a baby's clinging touch? Unless she were socially a slave, would she bring unloved children into the world to prove herself loyal to a brutal ruler who demands that there be no race suicide?

It is only in a state of society where woman is locked upon as the private property of man, that such perversions of woman's nature can be found; the prostitute, the childless woman, and the worn-out over-burdened mother.

When woman is socially free, free to accept

or reject motherhood as her instincts incline her, can we look for the best and fullest development of the human race. Do not mistake this for an attack upon the home, which the capitalists are continually telling you the Socialists mean to destroy. It is rather a plea for the establishment and preservation of the home in its most perfect form. The home without love is a hell. And love can never come to its fullest and most beautiful fruition until woman is free.

Imagine, if you can, a society where each individual has the opportunity to develop himself or herself to the fullest degree; where the miseries of poverty, child labor and female labor do not exist; where co-operation takes the place of competition; where the brotherhood and sisterhood of man and woman is a reality; where peace and equity abide, and there you will have Socialism.

Unite, and speed the day, comrades, when this shall be brought about! Speed the day!

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