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The Logic and -
Economics of the
Class Struggle. -

BY

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The Logic and Economics of the Class Struggle.

I.

From the rapidly growing spirit of unrest in the Labour Movement at home and abroad, and the bitter plaints to be heard in all countries at the historic failure of Parliamentary methods, it has been evident for some time past that the old principle of Trade Unionism would have to be consigned to the vortex of oblivion, together with the parliamentarism, constituting its political reflex, and the methods of alleged progressive procedure associated therewith, which have been relied on by various people to secure reforms as innumerable as the abuses begotten of the capitalist system. On the one hand, Irishmen, since the days of Parnell, have relied on the Home Rule proclivities of Members of the Westminster Playhouse for the accomplishment of Ireland's emancipation despite the fact that to talk of the independence of Ireland in the House of Commons would be considered treason, and that no Member of the Nationalist Party has ever had the courage to so far break the terms of his induction affirmation as to speak of Ireland as anything else than an adjunct of England. By which complaint I do not wish it to be thought that I urge or favour Nationalism or any phase of reactionary revolutionary endeavour aiming merely at the establishment of a new system of exploitation, but only that the failure of the various parties sent to St. Stephen's to achieve the object of their mission constitutes an all-sufficient condemnation of Parliamentary methods. Those methods, as concerning the class nature of society, we hold to be a reflex of class industrial control; and, as concerning the working class and its Parliamentary betrayal by Millerand, Jaurès, Bebel, Liebknecht, Burns, Briand, Vivani, MacDonald, Thorne, Steadman, Shackleton, etc., a reflex of the Trade Unionism which but perpetuates the present system and serves only to create an aristocracy of labour, the existence of which is fast becoming incongruous in view of the socialisation of wealth production and the perpetual specialisation of industry such as capitalism involves.

Having, in its quest for plunder, created an internationalism of finance which has leapt o'er the frontiers of the world, subdued, whilst employing national prejudice, regulated the teachings of philosophers and the dogmas of priests, extended to the press a freedom of corruption, and formulated the basis of an Industrial Communism founded on the international solidarity of Labour as being the only method of ensuring the freedom of the world, Capitalism, in its death throes, presents us with a social order which is, intellectually and economically, in a state of transition. Side by side with the decay of sects and sectarianism the observer notes the failure of class Trade Unionism, *i.e.*, Unionism which seeks to benefit one class of workmen at the expense of another, to prove other than a welcome bulwark of the present system to the Capitalist class. Modern methods of production serving more and more to reduce the skilled workman to the ranks of the unskilled necessitates a growing tendency on the part of Labour to ignore craft and even industrial division, and to replace such organisation by international solidarity of spirit and local solidarity of action. The inevitable development of labour organisation along these lines, involving the Waterloo of the Napoleonic monster of Capitalism, the latter assumes, by way of policy, to have regard for Labour organisation, so long as such organisation, in opposition to the exploitation resulting from over-production on the one hand, and unequal distribution on the other, shall have nothing to offer. This, as we shall presently show, is the reason why pure and simple Unionism and political Socialism, once acclaimed as the very agencies that were to have secured the worker's freedom, have served and are serving only to secure his fetters. This is seen to be so particularly in relation to what is technically called "scabbing," where we find that the Trade Unionist blackleg proves a more effectual opponent of his class than either the professional or amateur blackleg. As this phase of blacklegging is a legitimate offspring of palliative Unionism—begotten of the ignorance, nourished by the imbecility, and matured by the infamy of capitalist development—it follows that whatever economic grounds may at one time have justified its existence, in this aspect of its development, the security of the foundations of Capitalist society and the perpetuation of proletarian exploitation are the sole excuses for its continuation.

So far as the professional blackleg is concerned his numbers are too few to guarantee immunity to Capitalism, although his efficiency is equal to that of the Trade Unionist worker. He accordingly receives more pay, and thrives on the betrayal of his class by his readiness to employ his efficiency to the ends of strike-breaking. Neither so consistently desirous of serving the interests

of Capitalism, nor so few in numbers, the amateur blackleg poses as a freeborn citizen who scorns to be fettered by Union rules and regulations, is plentiful but deficient, ill-paid but well praised by the capitalist class, and is recruited from the ranks of the professional come-down section of society and tramps of no philosophic ideals. Receiving less pay than the professional, and working better than the amateur, the Trade Unionist strike breaker fails to realise that he is scabbing, and that the officials of his Union are but well paid industrial police protectors of the interests of Capitalism. Seeking refuge behind the title of "Union-man," he will take a pattern from a scab pattern maker, cast it in a Union mould, hand the casting to another blackleg, and then rely on the production of a paid-up Union card in testimony of his Unionism. Not only so, but he will go to the meetings of his Union regularly and denounce as traitors all who do not belong to the Union whilst working in that branch of industry, irrespective of their reasons for not so belonging. Failing to realise the logic of the iron law of wages or the ineffectiveness of a strike waged on the Capitalist basis of financial strength to secure to the worker any lasting reform, he makes better conditions of labour, a higher standard of temporary comfort as measured by the extent of wages received, and the moralising of capital the object of his strikes. He denounces all views contrary to the orthodox capitalist views of family life, statesmanship, and belief in the Deity as antithetical to the interests of Unionism, and compromises with any devotee of respectability who will help his Unionism forward. He congratulates himself upon the peaceful nature of his demonstration when on strike, whilst not hesitating to occasionally crack a Non-Unionist blackleg's head. He will coax, bully, or cajole Non-Unionist blacklegs to decline to carry out their contracts with the employing classes, manifest his hostility towards them under all circumstances, and toast the health of a Unionist of another trade employed in another branch of industry whose service to the employing class during a strike trouble enables the Non-Unionist blackleg to continue in employment. Finally, he will identify Trade Unionism with the insurance of members of his Union and himself against sickness, unemployment, and death, whereby the interests of capitalism are the better subserved, or else vote for the return to Parliament of an employer when on strike against him, concluding by congratulating a member of his own class on having so effectually betrayed him as to secure a seat in a capitalistic Cabinet. Thus is he seen to be but part and parcel of the paraphernalia of the Capitalistic state, a bourgeois institution posing as a proletarian rebel.

Such a state of political and intellectual chaos as this involves may be truly said to constitute the proletarian mirage—reflecting

the economic morass of Capitalism—which lures the worker on to sure and certain destruction. The Bourgeois Radical Republicanism of the Bradlaugh cult which proved so absolute a negation of the philosophy of the heroic days of Freethought, when Carlile and Taylor waged their battle against Priest, Parliament, and King; the Lassalianism of Social Democracy with its cry of “through Universal Suffrage to victory,” and its collectivist proposals for land nationalisation which meant the centralisation of capitalistic development; the palliative philanthropy of Christian Socialism which aimed at preserving the proletarian’s respect for the sacred fetters of capitalism and averting revolution; the peculiar individualistic anarchism of Proudhon, Warren, and Tucker which found itself opposed to any violent activity on the part of the worker, and with its pet anti-statism and freedom of contract hypothesis defended the labour note and private property out of the depths of its fear of monopoly and the State, which but reflected Capitalistic development, without which existence its own being would cease; all these phases of conservative and reactionary Socialism and Social Reform aiming merely at a return to industrial conditions existent in a pre-capitalistic epoch or at the palliation of the present day capitalism, in the interest of the bourgeois class, and never at any point seeking to synthesise an antagonism to the many symbols of capitalistic servitude, with a revolutionary antagonism to the spirit of that industrial slavery, in the terms of an industrial activity which found its logical reflex in an antagonism to all the institutions of capitalism, and the pet political and religious theories which were to condone and explain their existence; all these phases of bourgeois reform—Capitalistic Manchester Radicalism, philanthropic regenerated Christism, aristocratic land restoration, opposition to industrial development, Republicanism which bowed before the symbol of monarchial authority, because it but resembled Republicanism, Freethought which attacked the priest, and allied itself with a capitalistic ethical movement to preserve the State, a materialism which hesitated to treat of economical interpretations of history, and economical interpretations of history which hesitated to question, much less deny, the existence of a capricious deity,—which from differing capitalist view-points, and for the maintainance of different sections of capitalistic interests, approximated so nearly to the letter of proletarian emancipation, have not only sagaciously abstained from carrying their respective theses to that logical conclusion which meant a recognition of the principles of the class-basis of society, and the synthesising of their propaganda into one grand revolutionary overthrow of the cant and humbug so characteristic of the cowardice of bourgeois society, but have also surrendered, in response to the pressure of advancing capitalism, alike the spirit and the letter of their propaganda.

Ushered into being amid the eclat of triumphant philosophers, whose pens were dipped in the blood of martyrs, bourgeois society will pass into the pantheon of history amid the silent scorn of all who have nothing but contempt for petty intrigue and tyranny, which lacks the courage to be aught than anonymous. In order to avert the penalty to which it had condemned other civilizations and earlier societies, it gave birth to all those panaceas and promises of the social millennium defined above, the existence of which have served to divide, as well as to educate, the proletariat, and to turn their activities into various Reformist channels, and divert them towards mutually exclusive revisionist ends, which have long since petrified into the pet dogmas of doctrinaire-cults now stranded high and dry on the shore of time's revenges. Leaving far behind the rapidly fading landmarks of revisionist endeavour, the flowing tides of industrial progress meanwhile are bringing into fuller view the revolutionary foreshore of Marxian and Bakunian materialism, which tells not only of labour's vindication, but also of an industrial commonweal, behind what, to the superficial culture of the bourgeois explorer, is but a barren wilderness of political impossibilism, the dreariness of which is only varied by the sand-storms of economic fatalism, and the will-o'-the-wisp of a land that can never be a mirage of a well of social being which lures the investigator on to certain destruction. But then the bourgeois explorer is a stranger in such parts. He has been reared in a false civilization, nurtured on a philosophy of which the phrase exceeds the substance, and matured in an environment which neither develops persistency of purpose nor clarity of imagination. By book-lore warned against will-o'-the-wisps, and by culture wont to confound the phrase with the substance who shall withhold from him that pity due to that political economist, who, mistaking the phrase of capitalist bombast for the substance of its shallowness, now confounds the simplicity of communism, as regards its phrase, with a shallow civilization, instead of seeing in the simple the harmonized quintessence of the complex? Not, certainly, the Communist who sees through the darkly stained glass of Capitalist society to the commonweal beyond.

The male worker seeks by violence and badly conceived physical force to secure free speech and the vote, and succeeds in his endeavours, only to fail to industrially emancipate himself. Circumscribed in his philosophy by a Capitalist education, he fails to see that capitalism must break up the home, cause woman to agitate for the vote in militant manner under industrial pressure, strike, be betrayed, and pass through similar experiences to those of the man-worker, only during a shorter period, before the logic of the class-struggle can be realised, and sex emancipation within

the classes having become a fact, the struggle of revolutionism against conservatism, passing now into an avowed class-war—working men and women against male and female parasites—proletarian, irrespective of sex, against exploiter, irrespective of sex. And, as the principles of Free Love are still further realised, advocated, and fearlessly defended in pursuance of the class-war, so will the unholy alliance of sweated and sweater of one sex against sweater and sweated of the other sex, cease in the light of the industrial solidarity of the working-class. Woman will stand erect and free—*as woman*. On the one hand, equally with man, the recognised parasite, living on the exploitation of the slave: on the other, equally with man, the pioneer of revolution; in both cases, freed by industrial progress from the fetters of convention, standing for the principles of Free Love and, perhaps, in some cases, for those of an even purer friendship, in which sex plays no physical part. For this doctrine, which will only attain to its true significance in a Communistic era, will nevertheless be, as it is even now, not only compatible with the advanced development of Capitalism, so far as the capitalist class is concerned, but an intellectual consequent of its industrial basis in society, so far as the proletariat is concerned. Apart from the fact of marriage being but legalised vice and prostitution—a form of rape by Act of Parliament, if the position of woman be that which the marriage laws claim it to be, and, at the least, a blasphemous outrage did the Deity, invoked by the priest for three half-a-crowns, exist—it is not because womanhood is sacred, either in the eyes of bourgeois religion or capitalism, childhood honoured, and manliness admired, but because the family reflects the exigencies of capitalist well-being, that marriage exists. For the same reason, the Church and State do not hesitate to condone prostitution outside, as well as inside, marriage. Where money is not forthcoming, the chastity of domestic filth alone is compatible with conventional respectability—because the children would become a burden on the rates, which the capitalist class pay out of the surplus value; where the parents are wealthy parasites, time-honoured members of the House of Lords, or well-to-do churchwardens, and the children will *not* become a burden on the rates, divorces may be obtained *ad lib*; the more the better for priest, lawyer, and judge.

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II.

In the foregoing section of this brochure, we have but considered the futility of compromise and the logic of the industrial struggle which but finds social expression, as yet, in a vicious luxury, as the social contrast to a no less vicious poverty. The question which now remains to be solved is but the old one of the utility of propaganda. The nature of the social quagmire I have sufficiently indicated: it is for me, with equal power of conviction, to indicate the sufficiency of the way out, and awaken the spirit of revolt in the breast of the proletariat—the spirit which has slept so long as to seem almost dead. And yet it requires but the emotional fanning of inspiration. Already Capitalism stands self-condemned even before its own altar of bourgeois “justice”; and those who triumph through the medium of its authoritarianism begin to tremble at their own sense of insecurity. The religious instincts of the primitive Communist, the analytical power of the scientist, the classifying genius of the philosopher, the healthy scepticism of the pioneers of investigation and dethroners of religious, political, and industrial superstition: the single-eyedness of purpose of the martyrs of every age and clime, who have warred against the professional charlatanism of priest, scientist, and artist, in the name of a higher emotionalism, a truer science, and a purer art: all this psychological depth of being, and of purpose, which constitutes the legacy of the ages, has for its nirvanic realisation the emancipation of the proletariat as the only foundation of a social order in which the idealism of the ages can become one with the material prosperity of every member of the commonweal. To the startled bourgeoisie, this fact presents itself as evidence of the predestined fall of capitalist society, which revolutionary prophets of materialism foresaw in the old-time star-dust. It lends the support of historical foundation to Proudhon’s famous reading of the philosophical and social portents, that “like the Nemesis of old, whom neither prayers nor threats could move, the revolution advances, with sombre and inevitable tread, over the flowers with which its devotees strew its path, through the blood of its champions, and over the bodies of its enemies.” It is not that fear does not chill with terror the heart of the bourgeoisie, but only that listlessness, as yet, has not ceased its hold upon the proletariat, that the need for revolutionary propaganda is demanded of us in order to remove the halo of doubt that constitutes the propogandist’s aerole.

As I pen these words, I recall that it is but a few days since the 11th November, 1908, was being anxiously looked forward to as the twenty-first anniversary of the death of the Chicago-martyrs. What more fitting theme can I select than the story of their

martyrdom, in order to carry the conviction of inspiration to those to whom I have already made clear the basic principles of the class-struggle, the logic of which finds its expression in a solidarity of non-compromise? It is no isolated message, this message of Chicago; but only one of the many great tragedies that have been concluded in the name of class-domination and authority. But, because not isolated in kind, it is not the less stirring in character. Not in the execution of four innocent men in the name of capitalist and bourgeois law, but in the manner of their passing, does the inspiration for later labourers in the cause of freedom lay. It is well, then, that we should consider the story of their struggle with the authorities, the better to realise how the shedding of their blood but served to fertilise the seed of human liberty which shall yet supersede the cowardice and tyranny of modern capitalism and social prostitution. For herein will be found the emotional justification for waging that struggle, the logic and economics of which we have long since comprehended.

The Labour struggle in the States had taken on an acute phase and in all parts there were strikes and lock-outs, and threats of a mutual character between worker and exploiter. The acceptance by the Governmental authorities of an eight-hour day as a maximum working period several years previously had not involved its extension to the great mass of workers up and down the States. Recognising the subserviency of law to economic pressure, the general conference of the National Labour Union determined that the eight-hour day for the whole of Labour should be introduced throughout the States by a universal strike on May 1, 1886. Great preparations were made to this end, the agitation proving hottest in Chicago, where the Anarchists and Socialists were called on to play their part in the struggle.

Whilst pointing out that short of Socialism all was illusion, they did not hesitate to encourage the revolutionary spirit implied in the movement. Foremost amongst those who were most active in the agitation were August Vincent F. Spies, Albert R. Parsons, Samuel Fielden, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, Michel Schwab, Louis Lingg, and Oscar Neebe. Of these, Spies was born on December 10, 1855, at Friedewald, Kurhessen (Province Hesse-Nassau since 1886), Germany, being the son of a forester—in Germany a Government official. Proving himself unusually bright in his studies, he was educated by private tutors, and also attended the Polytechnicum for one year, subsequently choosing his father's profession. By the age of fourteen he had become a religious sceptic, and had read all the great German classics, as well as studied Kant and Hegel's philosophy. The death of his father when he was sixteen, necessitated the abandonment of his studies

and his joining his relatives in America. Arrived in New York, he learned the upholstery trade, and proceeded shortly afterwards to Chicago, where he lived from October, 1872, up to the time of his murder by the authorities. Becoming a Socialist in 1876, he believed in a political class struggle up to 1880, when he repudiated the practicability of political action, and came to believe in the economic struggle only.

Albert Parsons, born on June 24th, 1848, in Montgomery, Alabama, was brother of Major-General W. H. Parsons; and in the course of his mental evolution had held several positions of trust in various Labour organisations, and did active literary work on behalf of the revolutionary movement.

Samuel Fielden first saw the light on February 25, 1847, at Todmorden, Lancashire; and inherited from his father that love of truth and hatred of hypocrisy which later brought him into conflict with the authorities.

The son of a Bremen worker, Adolph Fischer received but a poor worker's education, and at fifteen sailed for America. His father, who was a member of the Socialist Party of Bremen, gave him an early insight into the rottenness of society, and laid the basis for his acceptance of the Anarchist ideas he afterwards defended.

George Engel, Fischer's colleague in the Chicago struggle, and a native of the German city of Cassel, where he was born on April 15, 1868, was left parentless when but twelve years old, and learned his Socialism in the bitter school of experience. It was in the same school and under the same harsh teacher that Michel Schwab, born at Kitzingen, Central Germany, on August 9, 1853; Louis Lingg born at Mannheim, September 9, 1864; and Oscar Neebe, born in Philadelphia of German parents, came to realise the nature of the poverty problem.

Such were the type of men who played their part in the agitation which, as the fatal May Day approached, tended more and more to frighten the employers and to paralyse industry. Cunning, cowardice, and brutality were ever the prerogatives of the capitalist class and their dirty spies. A meeting on May 3 was attacked and broken up by those hirelings of the capitalist class, termed by Karl Marx the civil bourgeois guard, but more popularly known as the police, who, firing on unarmed men, women, and children, left six dead and several wounded. On the following day a meeting of protest was held in the Haymarket, at which Spies, Fischer, Engel, Fielden, and Parsons spoke, each speaker pointing out the scientific basis of their antagonism to the capitalist system,

and urging the workers to economic revolt, not indiscriminate bomb activity. This did not suit the police, who advanced upon the meeting with loaded rifles and in fighting formation. The throwing of a bomb—by a traitor of the Coulon type, without doubt—killed and wounded many of the police, and indiscriminate firing on their part at once became the order of the day. Houses were ransacked, crowds arrested, and the comrades already arrested indicted.

Time passes, and the next act of the tragedy is enacted in Judge Gary's court on October 7, 8, and 9, 1886, when the historical figures of the agitation addressed the court in their own defence. Dignified in bearing, his handsome face now lighted up with satire, bold, defiant, and fluent in delivery, Spies' speech, so rich in historical detail and philosophical generalisations, has for the cowardly judge, the dirty, lying witnesses, and the inane, packed jurymen, many an unwelcome truth. Schwab, his pale, earnest face eloquent of his contempt for the legal curs around him, exposes the whole damnable conspiracy of which he is a victim. Neebe follows, only to regret that he is deprived of the honour of dying. Fischer, erect in bearing, is his successor, his tall form contrasting strongly with the cringing persecutors around him. Lingg, speaking in German, impassioned in his utterances, is proudly defiant and fiercely calm; whilst Engel, who succeeds him, speaks easily and with the calm stolidity of the Tueton and the Stoic. Then follow lengthy speeches from Fielden and Parsons. Moderate in language, his arrangement of his matter renders the former's address none the less telling; whilst the intense power and latent passion of the Texan's speech rightly entitles it to be deemed a brilliant agitation speech—the most powerful speech of a formidable propagandist.

The scene changes—November 11, 1887, draws nigh, and months of petitioning have proved to be of no effect. Bourgeois law, founded on an ignorance as dismal as the tyranny of power, must have its way; and well do the heroes of the struggle realise the meaning of the message their death will send throughout the world. "Let no attempt be made to avert the final tragedy of the Eleventh of November; make no effort to avenge our deaths." Such was the brave, dignified message of these men a few days prior to their death—a fate which Louis Lingg anticipated by suicide the day previous to that on which Engel, Fischer, Parsons and Spies were executed.

And now it is the fatal day—November 11 has arrived at last. Now listen to their last words on the scaffold. "There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle to-day," prophetically asserts Spies; "Hurrah for

"Anarchy!" triumphantly exclaims Engel; whilst Fischer adds to this shout of triumph, "Hurrah for Anarchy! This is the happiest moment of my life." Albert Parsons remarks are cut short, as he requests commandingly, "Let me speak, oh men of America! Will you let me speak, Sheriff Matson? Let the voice of the people be heard! Oh——"

The tragedy is at an end, but the story is not yet closed. On June 26, 1893, Governor Altgeld, in a complete statement of the case and of his reasons for granting an absolute pardon to Samuel Fielden, Oscar Neebe, and Michel Schwab, states that the jury was packed, the jurors incompetent, the testimony bought, the judge prejudiced and subservient, and the conviction one of personal revenge. Thus out of its own mouth is capitalist justice condemned. May the workers, out of the very tyranny and oppression of Labour, see to it that it shall ere long be non-existent, but an ugly nightmare of the past, to be placed in the same category as the Holy Inquisition, the Crusades, chattel slavery, and feudalistic serfdom—past witnesses to the desolating pestilence of mental ignorance and economic power. The message of Chicago is a message of freedom. On the morning of his execution, Parsons received from Josephine Tilton the following telegraphed farewell: "Not good-bye, but hail, brothers! From the gallows trap the march shall be taken up. I will listen for the beating of the drum." "The drum-tap," said Benj. R. Tucker, in pursuing the analogy to its logical conclusion, "has sounded; the forlorn hope has charged; the needed breach has been opened; myriads are falling into line: if we will but make the most of the opportunity so dearly purchased, the victory will be ours. It shall be; it *must* be!" Such is the inspiration as well as the logic of the struggle. Let us recall the daring words of Danton: "Daring, ever daring to dare!" and though we but enter into annihilation's peace for our trouble, the sleep will cost us nought but the negation of life's pains, while our endeavours will yet spell the world's emancipation. Courage, comrades, courage; let us put on the dauntless armour of resolution, and, as if by magic, the chains of wage-slavery shall pass away, and freedom for all be ensured, so long as to the courage of our martyred dead we add a clearer vision of the meaning and outcome of the struggle, which we are called upon to wage.

Was MARX? an Anarchist?

A QUESTION FOR SOCIALISTS
TO ANSWER.

Bourgeois society has proven itself so able to turn all agitations and philosophies to account in justification of its prostitution of principle, that revisionism and reaction under the magic of its pretentious hypocrisy have often assumed the role of revolutionary propaganda. Of such pretensions, anarchism in its phase of pure and simple anti-statism must rank equally with Socialism in its phase of state collectivism. The former is a bourgeois counterfeit equally with the latter, viewed from the standpoint of the proletarian. Amidst the confusion, which the existence of such counterfeit coinage involves, it is well for the worker to know where he stands. This can only come from mastering the attitude of the father of scientific Socialism, Karl Marx, and the relation of his caustic criticism of capitalistic production to the teachings of Proudhon, Warren, and Bakunin. In order to accomplish this, and to separate the teachings of Marxism from the bourgeois Social Democratic vapourings of Lassallianism, the Bakunin Press is publishing the following:

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