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KARL MARX:

The Man and His Message

By

J. KEIR HARDIE

*(Reprinted from "The Labour Leader" of August
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The following chapters on Karl Marx from the pen of our late revered comrade J. Keir Hardie, were contributed by him to the pages of the LABOUR LEADER of the 12th, 19th and 26th August, 1910. The occasion of the articles was the publication of the first English complete biography of the great international Socialist thinker and agitator, written by John Spargo and published by Huebsch, New York (10s. 6d.). An authorised British edition has been since published by National Labour Press, Manchester, royal 8vo., price post free 8s. 6d. The volume is handsomely bound and contains numerous illustrations, facsimile and index.

KARL MARX:

His Life and Message.

THE MAN.

At length the English-speaking world is in possession of a life of Karl Marx worthy of the man. Mr. John Spargo has placed not only the Socialist movement, but also the world of letters, under a debt of gratitude to him by his masterly and scholarly work.* The many-sidedness of Marx's character, the almost world-wide range of his activities, and the efforts of his opponents to belittle, obscure, and misrepresent the man and his work, all combined to make the writing of his life a task of no ordinary magnitude. Mr. Spargo, however, brought to the work not only the patient, well-trained mind of the student, but also the loving devotion of the disciple. One misses some of the lighter touches of Marx's character with which Liebknecht has made us familiar, and there is occasionally a sense of repetition and a suspicion of journalese in the style, but the final and abiding impression with which one lays down the book is that it has added a fresh triumph to the literature of the Socialist movement, and created a biography, not for this age only, but for all time. The numerous illustrations, mostly portraits, add considerably to the interest of the book. Mr. Huebsch, the publisher, has spared no pains to provide materials and style worthy of the subject matter.

Karl Marx was the second son of his parents, both Jews, and was born at Trier, in the province of the Rhine, on May 5, 1818. The family name had originally been *Mordechai*, but the father, probably after his conversion to Christianity, shortened it to Marx. Karl was the inheritor by descent of a long line of culture and learning, his forbears, on both sides, having been for generations Rabbis of the Temple of Israel. In this connection Mr. Spargo takes occasion to dispel a fable which has hitherto not only passed as unchallenged fact, but has even been credited as having been the starting point from which Marx deduced his great

* "Karl Marx: His Life and Work," by John Spargo. Authorised English edition, with numerous portraits, facsimile, &c. Royal 8vo.; price, 8s. 6d.—National Labour Press, Ltd., 30, Blackfriars Street, Manchester.

theory of the economic interpretation of history. The story was that Marx *pere*, who was a lawyer of good position, was forced to abandon the faith of his fathers and accept Christianity by an edict of the Government, the alternative being to lose all official positions, and to become a professional outcast. It now appears that the whole fabric on which the tale rested had no foundation in fact, and that Marx's parents became Christians, with perhaps some mental reservations, not from official compulsion, but from genuine conviction. Madame Lafargue, Marx's eldest daughter, testifies that her grandmother's own reply to those who teased her on the subject was that she "believed in God, not for God's sake, but for her own." It seems almost iconoclastic to thus destroy an ancient monument of inaccuracy, but this is an utilitarian age, and no lie, however venerable, can be held to be sacred.

A POET AT HEART.

Early discovery was made of the fact that young Marx possessed talents and abilities out of the common, and his father set himself to train and develop these with admirable wisdom and tact. Our author describes the boy as being "a strong imperious lad, of fiery temper and impetuous manner and spirit. He was, in fact, at heart a poet, and possessed the passionate, wayward, artistic temperament." At school he was a general favourite, despite a biting sarcasm with which he was apt to wither up such of his playmates as happened to incur his displeasure. In this respect, at least, the child was certainly father to the man. At sixteen he entered the Bonn University, where his father desired he should study law. Here, however, he was not a success, and after a two years' course he went to the University of Berlin, where he finally took his degree of Doctor of Philosophy, despite the fact that he had again been but an indifferent success as a student.

When Karl was twenty his father died of tuberculosis, and five years later he married Jenny Von Westphalen, to whom he had been engaged for a number of years. She was very beautiful, and belonged to the aristocracy. Her father was Baron von Westphalen, who was half a Scot, his mother being a descendant of the Marquis of Argyll, who was executed as a rebel at Edinburgh in 1684. She and Karl had been friends and little sweethearts since childhood, and the tale of their engagement and loyalty to each other under very trying circumstances reads like a page from a romance. Marx had, by this time, broken with the past in regard to both religion and politics, and had already entered upon that career which was destined to so mightily influence the course of history, and which will continue to be felt so long as the race endures. After their marriage the young couple lived for a time in Paris, where he was on terms of familiar intercourse with most of the brilliant group of Humanists

and Utopian dreamers whose names subsequently became famous in the Valhalla of revolutionary fame. Heine, the poet, Bakunin and Proudhon, the philosophers of Anarchy, Cabet, the Owenite Communist, and other choice spirits, welcomed the brilliant young German, who had already made for himself a place in the ranks of the giants of intellect and of action.

THE LONG ARM OF TYRANNY.

In January, 1845, Marx, with others, was expelled from France, and went to Brussels, where at the end of three years the "long arm of the Prussian Government" again reached him, and he was again driven out. As it happened, however, a provisional Government, the result of a successful revolution, was in office in Paris, and at its invitation Marx returned to that city, and had a right royal reception. From there he went to Cologne to organise and direct the revolutionary movement in Germany. Here he edited a newspaper, and was twice tried and acquitted for writing sedition. But in the end the paper was suppressed, and Marx was once more expelled.— Before leaving Cologne he paid off the debts of the paper to the uttermost farthing, and not only beggared himself in so doing, but also his wife, who parted with the family heirlooms, which her grandmother had inherited from her Argyll forbears.

There were now three children in the Marx family. They had entered Cologne practically penniless, they left it absolutely so. Marx fled to Paris in May, but an abortive rising on June 13 following restored the reactionaries to power, and Marx had again to flee for safety. He made for London, which, but for an occasional holiday, was now to be his home for the rest of his life. The years which followed were years of toil, suffering, hunger, and privation. The record of those weary years is one of almost unrelieved tragedy. Huddled in a small, single apartment, turned out into the street for non-payment of rent, frequent sickness among the children, the loss of little Edgar—their only boy—the birth of Eleanor, whose tragic end a few years ago sent such a thrill of horror through the movement—and finally, the death, first of his wife, and then of Jenny, his eldest daughter, all combined to deepen the gloom of those dark days.

THE OUTCAST.

The spectacle of the possessor of one of the greatest intellects of his day in Europe, trudging the streets of London, haggard, hungry and forlorn, applying for and being refused a job as a clerk at probably 25s. a week; chased by a policeman on suspicion of being a thief, whilst on his way to pawn the remains of his wife's trinkets to get food for his starving children, is a sad commentary on the theory that only the unfit suffer. Because this man,

despite the most tempting offers, refused to prostitute his talents in the service of the ruling caste, he was hounded as a felon, and branded as an enemy of the race, and made to suffer all the physical and mental tortures of the damned. Here is an extract from a private letter, written by Mrs. Marx to a friend during this period, which it is difficult to read even now without emotion :—

I will describe to you only one single day of this life. The keeping of a wet nurse for my baby was out of the question, so I resolved to nurse the child myself, in spite of terrible pains in the breast and in the back. But the poor little angel drank so much silent worry from me that he was sickly from the first day of his life, lying in pain day and night. He did not sleep a single night more than two or three hours. Then he became subject to cramp, and was wavering constantly between death and miserable life. In these pains he drew so hard that my breast got sore and broke open; often the blood streamed into his little quivering mouth.

So I was sitting one day when our landlady stepped in and demanded £5, the sum we owed for rent, and because we were unable to pay at once two constables stepped in and attached my small belongings, beds, linen, clothes, all, even the cradle of my poor baby, and the toys of the two girls, who stood by crying bitterly.

In two hours they threatened they would take all and everything away. I was lying there on the bare, hard floor with my freezing children and my sore breast. In the end a friend helped us. I sold my bedding to satisfy the druggist, the baker, the butcher, and the milkman.

— THE HEROIC WIFE.

But the brave woman complained not. She too loved the cause. She knew the titanic struggle in which her husband was engaged; how he was being assailed by jealous rivals and carping critics within the movement and implacable enemies without, and how much all this added to the burden of his herculean labours. She was his helpmate and comrade. And thus it was that, despite the fearful struggle, these two continued to be sweethearts and playmates to the end. The movement can never know all that it owes to the women who stand by their men in the dark days.

By and by the financial situation grew more easy, but Marx's health had been shattered beyond repair. He continued to work as hard as ever, but breakdowns became ever more frequent. Then came the end.

“On the 14th of March, 1883, shortly before 2 o'clock, the crisis came, and Engels was at once summoned. He found Eleanor in tears. Marx had gone from the bedroom to the study, they said, where, seated in his armchair, he seemed half asleep. Engels went to the study at once and found his old friend, not half asleep, but fully and for ever, with a smile upon his lips. Karl Marx was dead.”

THE MAN AND HIS METHODS.

The last quarter of the Eighteenth, and the first half of the Nineteenth Century were stirring times. Revolution, grim and bloody, stalked abroad all over Europe. Feudalism was in its death-throes. The Middle, or Capitalist, class was fighting for power, and to their side, naturally, the working class rallied. In the closing years of the 18th Century came the French Revolution, over the "atrocities" of which so many crocodile tears have been shed by smug callous hypocrites, and when it was over one fair land had set its face sunward. But it was a Middle-class triumph; the victory of the working class in France is now fairly on its way, but has not yet been won. Everywhere on the Continent the revolutionary movement had a political objective. Commercialism and Feudalism were at grips for the control of the State.

Here, at home, the Middle class also had its political movement, but, owing to the more developed state of the capitalist system, there was also, and concurrently, a very definite movement of the working class. The workmen realised that they were being ground to dust by the unregulated operation of a competitive system over which they had no control, and so Trade Unionism had, early in the 19th Century, already taken a firm hold. There were Luddite riots and outrages in Yorkshire, bread riots in Scotland, and similar outbreaks elsewhere.

THE DAYS OF UTOPIANISM.

The Socialism of these days—and it surprises one to note how much there was of it—was mainly of the dreamy Utopian order. Men had certain "natural rights" which were only possible under a system wherein all would be free and equal. Owenism in this country was sanity itself compared with some of the theories which found ready acceptance abroad. It is easy to smile at these theories nowadays, but they were the imaginings of high-minded men imbued with love for, and faith in, humanity. Marx, it is said, came first into close touch with Socialism through association with the disciples of Saint Simon. The movement in those days was known as Communism, the term Socialism not having been evolved.

Thus we get to the year 1848, when the modern Socialist movement was born into the world during a veritable maelstrom of civil war, with its accompaniment of barricades, bloodshed, and wild revenge.

THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1848.

A revolutionary outbreak occurred in Paris, in December, 1847, which was continued through January, and crowned with final success in February. Louis Philippe fled to London (arriving by the way almost about the same time as Marx was

making his triumphal entry into Paris, after his expulsion from Brussels) and a Provisional Government was in office. Fired by this example, the Revolutionary forces of Germany and Austria followed suit, and Vienna, Cologne, and other cities were soon in the hands of the insurgents. Nowhere in the volume before us does Mr. Spargo touch such heights of graphic descriptive power as in his blood-stirring accounts of the glorious happenings of those momentous days, when Kings and Emperors were compelled to pay homage to our common manhood, alive and dead. The spirit of revolt swept across the English Channel, and for a time it almost looked as though the hour of a British Republic had struck.

The Chartist movement had reached its lowest ebb in 1847, and appeared to be on the point of expiring. Rent and torn by internal wranglings, it had ceased to count as a force in politics. When, however, the news came that the Paris workmen were behind the barricades, it sent a thrill through these islands, which swept away all personalities and set the country aflame with revolutionary fervour. It had got noised abroad that the British Government intended to set Louis Philippe on the throne of France again by force of arms, if need be, and at once, and to all appearance, spontaneously, great meetings of protest began to be held all over the kingdom. On March 2, 1848, a great demonstration was held in Lambeth Baths, addressed by Ernest Jones, Feargus O'Connor, George J. Harney, and others, and a deputation was appointed by the meeting to proceed to Paris to present an address of congratulation to the young Republic.

A WONDERFUL OUTBURST.

Four days later Trafalgar Square was packed by a mob of London citizens cheering themselves hoarse for "The Charter" and the "French Revolution." Upon the same day, March 6, rioting took place in various provincial cities. Thousands of hunger-maddened unemployed operatives marched through the streets of Glasgow, sacking shops, and singing Chartist songs, and shouting "Bread or Revolution!" The troops were called out, and several persons shot down in the streets. While this was going in Scotland there were riotings also in England. At Manchester, for example, thousands gathered in front of the workhouse and demanded the release of the inmates, stormed the police station, and attacked the police in the streets with bludgeons secured by smashing the stalls in the market place. The British Government was accused and frightened. In almost every city the Government had troops secreted, ready to shoot down rioters. The British flag was everywhere torn down and trampled upon, and all over the land, in the cities, the French tricolour with the red rosette was displayed. Bands played the *Marseillaise* from morn till night, and thousands of Englishmen

who had never learned a word of French before, learned from the Chartist orators to cry "*Vive la République! Vive la France!*"

ONLY SIXTY-TWO YEARS SINCE.

It is astounding to think that all this happened in England only 62 years ago,* that is, well within the memory of the 700,000 old-age pensioners now alive. But the end was not yet. Great demonstrations continued to be held daily, and all over the land the people were cheering for the "Charter," the "Republic," for "Liberty" and for "France." And so things went on till the 10th of April. On that day it had been arranged that a monster petition, signed by 5,700,000 persons, should be presented to the House of Commons, and that it should be accompanied by 100,000 armed men to see that it was received. By this time the Government was thoroughly alarmed, and preparations were made to cope with any contingency that might arise. In London alone 9,000 troops paraded the streets, whilst tens of thousands more were posted at strategical points, or were kept in reserve out of sight. Six thousand constables were armed, and 8,000 Special Constables were sworn in, among these, fittingly enough, being Louis Napoleon, afterwards Napoleon III, then a refugee in London. This display of force so alarmed the Chartist leaders that, fearing the massacre which they believed to be inevitable, they abandoned the demonstration. The petition was duly presented, and consigned to oblivion, into which the Chartist movement also speedily followed.

THE FORESIGHT OF KARL MARX.

Marx had not only been a keen observer of the risings, but had also been an active participator, first in Paris, and then in Cologne. He, however, was not under any illusion as to what was happening. He knew that so soon as the demands of the capitalist class were met, and themselves established in power, they would turn upon and rend the working class if it attempted to carry the Revolution forward in its own interest. But he knew also, that the experience thus gained would be invaluable in guiding the workers into a genuine movement of their own, without which he realised their own freedom could never be won.

THE FAMOUS MANIFESTO.

In November, 1847, Marx and Engels, in collaboration, had prepared a statement of principles for the guidance of the newly-reorganised Communist League—of which they had secured control—and this had been accepted, not of course without opposition, and ordered to be printed and circulated. It came from the press on the morning of February 14, the very day, as it

*This was written in 1910.

happened, on which fighting began in the streets of Paris. It was the famous Communist Manifesto, the most fateful document ever written in the whole history of the working-class movement. It was the birth certificate of the modern Socialist movement. It had a two-fold purpose—to define clearly the nature of the struggle in which the Communists were engaged on behalf of the working class—and the attitude of the League to the working-class movement outside its own ranks. For the moment I shall confine myself to the question of tactics, since it is round these that all the controversy now rages.

Section two of the Manifesto raises the question: "In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?"

(Proletariat I may explain for the benefit of young readers means working class, and Bourgeois, middle class.) This is how Marx answers the question:—

The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties. They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.

In the succeeding paragraphs he goes on to show that what distinguishes them from others is that understanding, as they do, the true inwardness of the working-class movement, they are able to give it guidance and direction. They are on the one hand:—

The most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all the others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement!

Now nothing can be clearer than this. We may disagree with it, but we cannot misunderstand it.

THE I.L.P. JUSTIFIED.

The Socialist movement was not to be a thing apart from the general working-class movement, with its own tests and dogma, but an integral part of the movement, merely acting as the advanced guard, careful all the time not to get so far ahead as to be out of touch with the main body of the army. And this is exactly what the I.L.P. is, and always has been. The Trade Union movement is the real movement of the working class, and the I.L.P. is the advanced wing. And that, as I shall show later, was what Marx intended the Socialist section of the working-class movement to be. All through his life Marx—Engels also for that matter—rigidly adhered to the policy set forth in the Manifesto. At Cologne he frankly threw in his lot with the Radicals, and he

tells how the Communists did the same in most European countries. The paper he edited at Cologne was not a Socialist paper. When the "Red International" was formed in 1864, there never was any pretence that it was other than its name proclaimed it to be—an International association of working men, to the membership of which no Socialist test was ever applied.

MARX AND TESTS.

He did not ask the working class to unite as class-conscious Socialists, but only as working men. He knew the class consciousness would come in good time. He had no patience with those who sought to impose any kind of test whatever in the way of the workers uniting as a class industrially or politically, for their own mutual support, protection, and advancement. Of that there cannot be the least manner of doubt, and that being so the question remains, what was the great service which Marx rendered to the working class, and with that I next proceed to deal.

THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE.

Marx's real title to greatness, and certainly his greatest claim upon the gratitude of the working class, rests upon his discovery, for such it practically was, of the truth that history is but the record of class struggles, and that these are always the inevitable outcome of the economic system of the time resisting a change which its own workings has made inevitable. This is what has come to be known variously as the Economic or Materialistic interpretation of history. All that that means is this: That Marx supplied the same explanation of human progress in civilisation and towards freedom, which Darwin subsequently did of the evolution of animal and plant life towards the stage of perfection now attained. ¶ The existence of a ruling class is only a proof of a successful revolutionary struggle waged by that class at some former period of its history. ¶ With each succeeding class struggle the bounds of human freedom have been enlarged until with the advent of the Capitalist system of wealth production we have society, in the main, divided into two great antagonistic classes—the owners of property and the producers of property. Thus, with the organisation of the enfranchised working class into a definite organisation of their own, industrial and political, the final stage of the struggle for the freedom of the race has been entered upon. When the property-less working class has made all capitalistic property public property, then classes will have disappeared, since that which now divides a community into classes, the private ownership of property, will have disappeared. Differences of individuals will, of course, continue, but these will be individual distinctions, and will not divide men into separate and antagonistic classes. That is the task which falls upon the

Socialist movement. Socialism does not create the class struggle, it does not even accentuate it, it only recognises it. This is the broad generalisation of Marx which pedants have distorted out of all recognition, and elevated into a sectarian dogma under the name of the "Class War."

MARX'S THEORY AND THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT.

Accepting Marx's theory of social evolution as being correct, we are at once met with the question of how it should be applied in the working-class movement? Here also Marx is clear and emphatic. There were moments, when, under the spell of some actual rising, Marx spoke and wrote as though he still clung to the old-time idea that the working class, even when possessed of the vote, would still require to seek its freedom rifle in hand behind the barricade. But his abiding thought was that freedom could only come by the gradual evolution of a properly-equipped working-class party, taught class consciousness by actual experience gained in the struggle with Capitalism, and by changes in the ownership of capitalist property forced on society by the workings of the capitalist system itself.

Mr. Spargo gives a curious illustration of this changing attitude of Marx. On April 17, 1871, when the Commune of Paris was newborn from a successful working-class rising, Marx wrote of the event as follows:—"This insurrection is a glorious deed for our party. . . . And the grandeur appears the greater when we think of all the vices of the old society, of its wolves and swine, and its common hounds." There we have a recrudescence of the old Marx of the pre-Communist Manifesto days. A year later, when the "wolves and swine and common hounds" had swept away the Commune in a tornado of leaden bullets, Marx could write of it thus: "The Commune notably offers a proof that the working class cannot simply take possession of the State machinery and set it in motion for their own aims." Engels put the same truth in terser style, when he said the time for "Revolutions of small conscious minorities at the head of unconscious masses" was past, and that a revolution by violence could only set back the movement. This, by the way, applies to other "methods of violence" than those represented by the rifle and the barricade.

A CONCRETE CASE.

Let me give one concrete case to show the method by which Marx believed the final emancipation of the working class was most likely to be most speedily attained. In section two of the Communist Manifesto, already quoted from, he winds up by giving some practical advice concerning tactics and programmes. There

were impossibilists in those days even as there are now, and those, also as now, were all for "revolution." Here, then, is how Marx illustrates the methods to be employed for bringing Socialism into being. After showing that "the first step" is to raise the working class, *i.e.*, form a Labour Party, so as to make the workers "the ruling class," he goes on to say that this new ruling class "will use its position of supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the capitalist class," and thus in time, "centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State," *i.e.*, of the workers organised as the ruling class. Be it noted that the first thing to be done is to get the workers in power as the "ruling class"—as has been done in Australia—and then begin to take over "by degrees" the instruments of production. In the beginning, he adds, measures which appear "insufficient and untenable" will be passed, but the very passing of these measures will lead to the demand for further measures, making still "further inroads upon the old social order," and, however irksome this process may appear to be, it is "unavoidable" if we are ever to attain the goal. The measures to be supported by the Communists—the "most advanced section of the working-class movement," be it remembered—would, he said, vary in different countries, but in the "most advanced" the following will be pretty generally applicable. I give the first three items verbatim, and in the order in which they appear :

- (1) Abolition of property in land, and the application of all rents of land to public purposes.
- (2) A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
- (3) Abolition of all right of inheritance.

Item four is a curious one, and is only understandable on the supposition that Marx had in his mind when he wrote it a State in which Labour had already become "the ruling class." It reads as follows: "Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels." The rebels Marx had in mind were undoubtedly those members of the deposed ruling class who were taking arms against their new masters. Imagine the Marquis of Bute and the Duke of Westminster taking up arms against a Government which insisted on their working for their own living! The other items on the programme include such measures as National Banks and Railways, increase in factories, etc., owned by the State; liability of all to labour—which may have meant the Right to Work; the reclamation of Waste Lands; Free Education, and Abolition of Child Labour "in its present form." Such are the main items. Reading the first three items and remembering the Land, Inheritance, and Graduated Income Taxes of last year's Budget, one wonders where the so-called pure Marxists got their authority for criticising the Labour Party for giving it support. Certainly not in the teaching of Marx himself; still less in his political

action. It will also interest the single taxers to note that about the time Henry George was due to be born, Karl Marx was recommending that the rent of land should be taken by the State and used for public purposes.

THE ALL IMPORTANT THING.

This fresh and vigorous study of the life and teaching of the founder of modern Socialism will, I believe, exert a great and abiding influence upon the activities of the Socialist movement in many lands. Here is the conclusion at which Mr. Spargo arrives concerning what Marx's attitude would be to the different sections of the Socialist movement in Great Britain were he alive to-day:—

: It is impossible, of course, to say with certainty that Marx, were he alive to-day, would do thus and so, but it seems a fair inference from the facts of his life that in England, for example, his sympathies would be with the Labour Party, despite its lack of a satisfactory theoretical programme, rather than with the Social Democratic Party, which, despite its admirable theoretical programme, practically considered, remains a section.

In a footnote, Mr. Spargo explains what he means is that the Labour Party, despite its shortcomings, is yet "the real *movement* of the workers, which Marx regarded as being vastly more important than theoretical correctness." There we have the crux of the whole matter; and the opinion is the more valuable as coming from one who, when he was in this country, was an active worker in the S.D.P., and is a member of the Executive of the Socialist Party of America. Marx never conceived Socialism as a dogma. To him the all-important thing was the working-class movement. He made it clear that Socialism had not been "discovered" or "invented" as a patent cure for all the ills of humanity. Marx explained Socialism as being the working of a natural law, just as a scientist might have done in any sphere of science. He showed how certain influences were at work in Society and the results to which these must inevitably lead. Marx in "Das Kapital" did for the working class exactly what Adam Smith did for Free Trade and for the commercial and capitalist class in the "Wealth of Nations," viz., make clear the working theory by which their business should be conducted. Mr. Spargo says elsewhere that with the publication of the Communist Manifesto Socialism became "a theory of Social evolution, not a scheme of world building; a spirit, not a thing. . . . Socialism had become a science not a dream." This is finely put and contains a truth which critics of the Labour Party have yet to learn. In fact, one is driven to one of two conclusions concerning these critics: either they have never read any standard work on Socialism, or having read it they have not understood. Judging by their sayings and doings no other conclusion seems possible.

IS SOCIALISM A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT?

But is not, it may be asked, Socialism a revolutionary movement? Yes, no such revolutionary change has been conceived since the days 2,000 years ago, when John the Baptist called upon men to repent for the Kingdom of God was at hand! Socialism is revolutionary; it not only revolutionises the thoughts and actions of its adherents, but also of the whole of society and the fabric of the State. Socialism is, without exception, the greatest revolutionary ideal which has ever fired the imagination, or enthused the heart of mankind. But, in the biting rebuke which Marx addressed to some of his professed followers who would "substitute revolutionary phases for revolutionary evolution," we must be careful not to confuse the end with the means. The Socialist state is the end, and what concerns us most at present is the means by which we are to get there. Marx only knew of one way; the organisation of a working-class movement, which would in process of time evolve the Socialist state. Socialism will abolish the landlord class, the capitalist class, and the working class. That is revolution; that the working class by its action will one day abolish class distinctions.

And it was the inspired vision of Karl Marx, which first formulated as a cold scientific fact the inevitable coming of that glorious time. Little wonder that his memory is a consecrated treasure enshrined in the hearts of millions of the best men and women of all lands.

In this review I have confined myself almost exclusively to those portions of the book which deal with Marx's contributions towards formulating the theory of Socialism and the methods of the working-class movement. But the volume goes far beyond these limits. The life of Marx is synonymous with the record of the revolutionary movements of all lands, from 1840 onwards. As Mr. Spargo proceeds with his task he brings before us men and their ideas and actions in such a vivid way that we seem to be living through it all, and to be able to visualise the men who have hitherto been shadows or names only. The leaders of great movements at home and abroad are made to live and move and have their being before our eyes as the great drama of revolution unfolds itself to our wondering gaze. Nowhere within the same compass, or in anything like the same attractive form, can so much light upon the movements of the past, with their bearing upon the present, be found as is packed within these 352 beautifully printed pages. "Karl Marx: His Life and Work" is a book which no intelligent Socialist can afford to say he has not read.

KARL MARX: HIS LIFE AND WORK.

By JOHN SPARGO

AUTHORISED ENGLISH EDITION
WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS,
FACSIMILE, AND INDEX.



Of this Book KEIR HARDIE wrote:

“Mr. John Spargo has placed not only the Socialist movement, but also the world of letters under a deep debt of gratitude for his masterly and scholarly work. . . . ‘Karl Marx: his life and work’ is a book no intelligent Socialist can afford to say he has not read.”



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