

The Northwest Worker

Entered as second-class matter March 9, 1911, at the postoffice at Everett, Washington, under the act of March 3, 1879.

IND. PHONE 478Z

Published every Thursday by the Press Committee of the Socialist Party of Snohomish County, 1612 California St., Everett, Wash.

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Yearly subscription, \$1.00; six months, 50c; three months, 25c; single copies, 5c.

EDITOR IS WRONG SAYS COM. STONE

Comrade O. H. Stone, of Baring, Wash., takes exception to our editorial on Economic Determinism, which appeared in the issue of Feb. 10th, under the caption, "Inspiring Example." As our critic merely makes a series of dogmatic statements without touching upon the one point raised in our editorial concerning the material sacrifices of Poland's greatest pianist, we find little temptation to write another editorial in support of our thesis. However, we publish the freedom of expression, hoping the readers of The Northwest Worker will take the trouble to refer back to the "squib" in question and see for themselves in how far, if at all, we have "belittled" the great principle of economic determinism.

One point only we wish to add to what we have already said: Environmented human beings have a cultivated other than the economic to which they must adapt themselves. To a greater or less degree all men and women, ignorant or cultured, have two environments, each one of which has its own imperative demands. Besides the economic environment, there is a psychological environment, whose demands are often in conflict with the economic environment. Adaptation to one's psychological environment is as essential a phase of the struggle for a higher life as is the bread and butter struggle for a mere animal existence. Sometimes the struggle for the gratification of a psychological need, the realization of some high and noble ideal of life and living, is so determined and so persistent that the biological desire for life itself is vanquished, the idealist giving up his very physical existence rather than yield to any adaptation short of his psychological goal. Of what avail are economic, or mercenary motives, in such instances? But your average economic-determinism Socialist, not really understanding the historical verity of economic determinism, as used by Marx and Engels, means precisely that no comrade in the movement is actuated by other than purely pecuniary, economic motives; meaning that no one works for any motive other than the betterment of his immediate financial or material interests or condition. And it is against this narrow, small-souled, not to say brutal conception of life and human motives, that we protest. In no other sense can we be charged with "belittling" the illuminating principle of historical materialism, or economic determinism.

The people of the Southern states, including the ministry, sought to justify and retain chattel slavery because this ancient institution was in accord with their economic well-being. Their fight for an utterly anti-Christian system affords a most valuable example of economic determinism. On the other hand, the efforts of Lovejoy and Garrison were the result of their idealism, their psychological environment, not of "economic determinism." Their economic environment was precisely the same as that of the men who hated and persecuted them for their fearless denunciation of slavery, mobbing and starving Garrison and actually murdering Lovejoy.

Of Garrison's "economic determinism" Wendell Phillips said:

"This boy (Garrison) stood alone, utterly alone, at first. There was no sympathy anywhere! His hands were empty; one single penniless comrade was his only helper. Starving on bread and water, he could command the use of types, that was all. Trade endeavored to crush him; the intellectual life of America disowned him. \* \* \* No sooner did the church discern the impetuous boy's purpose than out of that dead, sluggish cloud thundered and lightened a malignity which could not find words to express its hate. They would find where I stand saw this apostle of liberty and justice sore beset, always in great need, and often in deadly peril; yet it never gave him one word of approval or sympathy. During all his weary struggle, Mr. Garrison felt its weight in the scale against him. In those years it led the sect which arrogates to itself the name of Lib-

To William Lloyd Garrison

"Some time afterward, it was reported to me by the city officers that they had ferreted out the paper and its editor; that his office was an obscure hole, his only visible auxiliary a negro boy, and his supporters a few very insignificant persons of all colors."—Letter of H. G. Otis.

In a small chamber, friendless and unseen, Toiled o'er his types one poor, unlearned young man; The place was dark, unfurnished, and mean— Yet there the freedom of a race began.

Help came but slowly; surely no man yet Put lever to the heavy world with less;

What need of help? He knew how types were set, He had a dauntless spirit, and a press.

Such earnest natures are the fiery pith, The compact nucleus, round which systems grow! Mass after mass becomes inspired therewith, And whirls impregnate with the central glow.

O Truth! O Freedom! how are ye still born In the rude stable, in the manger nursed! What humble hands unbar those gates of morn Through which the splendors of the New Day burst!

—James Russell Lowell.

COMRADE STONE ON "ECONOMIC DETERMINISM"

Baring, Wn., Feb. 14, 1916.

Dear Comrade: As I generally agree with your position on Socialism, I was somewhat surprised to read your short editorial on "Economic Determinism." I consider it a crime in any way to belittle the exquisite work of that estimable old lady; for, whatever we have been, are, or hope to be, we can only become because of her. She is truly the mother of us all.

Economic Determinism, as I understand the term, is the adaptation of all organic beings to the environment in which they have their being. Further, that favorable conditions of life always produce one result, and unfavorable conditions another. Hence, we have every right to suppose that the operation of this law or principle is uniform.

However, as a favorable environment for cats and mice, for instance, is somewhat antagonistic, the problem is necessarily very complicated. It is easily observable, en masse, that creatures must adapt themselves to their environment or perish, but it is not so easily seen how it works out with respect to the individual. But, as the basic law of development, we may be perfectly sure that it enters into every ramification of life. For there is no scientific reason to believe that there are any exceptions to any general rule, the old saying to the contrary, notwithstanding. The principle is always the same. It is only in its application that it varies. Different individuals respond to a given stimulus in as many different ways as there are differences in constitution. Economic determinism works both on the individual and on the race. Generally it is immediate material interests that carries the day, but this is not always so, as witness certain animals that lay up stores for future use. The same is often true of both individual and co-operative efforts of man. In all instances it's the same principle at work, and it excepts no one. Its application differs as individuals differ. So, look again, Brother, and you will not belittle your mother.

Sincerely, O. H. STONE.

SENATOR OWEN, ANARCHIST

Senator Robert L. Owen, "the gentleman from Oklahoma," friend of "the peepel," also a "friend of labor," and all-round "good man," the kind of orator-politician half-baked Socialists believe to be "almost a Red," etc., frankly stated the other day that he and his class do not believe in "law and order" and majority rule, and that if the common people should cast their ballots in favor of collective ownership, and democratic control of the resources of the United States, it would be up to his class, as property-worshippers, to resort to lawlessness and violence, including murder, to retain their control of the nation's resources. Private ownership in the means of life, private control by the few of the means whereby the many must live, must be retained by the privileged minority, even though "war may be necessary to suppress Socialism."

Of course, the Honorable Senator did not put the case as bluntly as it is stated here, but he meant precisely what we have expressed in plain English in the paragraph above. The gentleman is clear-headed enough, however, to understand that capitalism, the present despotic competitive system, must be made more tolerable to the enslaved masses, or they may be awakened from their hypnotic trance, and start something. If this something should turn out to be the establishment of a real industrial democracy, in the interest of the nation's wealth producers, as against the profit-mongers, then he is ready to go to war on the working-class "to suppress Socialism."

The editor of this paper has avowedly contended that the law-and-order patriots have no more use for essential morality, nor for real democracy, than an aviator has for a toy balloon. Founded as it is on plunder and violence, robbery and oppression, capitalism can produce no genuinely humane or fraternal fruits. From the working-class point of view, there are no "good men" elected on capitalist-class tickets. As stated by Jesus, there can be no compromise nor any identity of interests, between exploiters and exploited: "He that is not for us is against us."

OUR NEXT MOVE

When Socialists read of capitalist-class patriots openly admitting that the will of the majority, expressed at the polls, is to be recognized by them only so long as the bone-heads of the nation vote away the products of their labor to the master-class, under wage-slavery, and that they will resort to violence and murder if the working-class refuse longer to vote for continuance of capitalist-class rule and robbery, many of them, no doubt, feel as though it were time to initiate a program of "preparedness" on their own account. And so it is, high time. Soon it will be too late. History is being made very fast these days. "Preparedness" of one kind or another is the need of the hour. But, in our judgment, there is only one kind of "preparedness" that can serve the ends of the working class at this time, and that is: ORGANIZATION. So far as the workers are concerned, ORGANIZATION and PREPARED-

ness are one and the same thing. Education? Education is included in the work of organization. Organization is the effect of education, it is education crystallized. One can do a certain amount of educational, or propaganda, work without building an organization. But one cannot build an organization without doing educational work of the very highest order. So we claim that the best form of "preparedness" for the working class at this time is ORGANIZATION, organization on both the economic and the political field. The man who advocates the political without teaching the other principle of working-class solidarity, is but leaving half the work to some one else. Possibly specialization in one or the other field is justifiable, under existing conditions. Nevertheless, the fact should be fully recognized and acknowledged, at all times, that complete organization will be realized in fact only when industrial and political solidarity fully supplement one another. This is the goal of all true Socialists, and is, in our humble opinion, the one form of working-class "preparedness" worthy our consideration.

Comrade Stone, was, or was not Garrison an "exception" to the law of "economic determinism" as used in the manner indicated in my editorial?

Carl D. Thompson Favors Boy Scouts

"WHERE ARE WE AT?"

We had always been under the impression that the Socialist party was opposed to the Boy Scout movement, on principle, recognizing in this apparently harmless organization a nursing-ground for budding bone-heads and capitalist-class patriots. Last December, Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton, head of the Boy Scouts of America, resigned his position because the organization had ceased to function excepting as the training ground for future military heroes. As a matter of fact, the "nature-lover" and out-door life features of the Scouts were only placed foremost in the public eye for the purpose of hiding the real objects of the organization. Everybody knows this but Comrade Carl D. Thompson.

Nearly two years ago, Comrade Eliza Lamkin, secretary of Local Elyman, had occasion to send to our Misinformation Department for an authoritative statement concerning the nature and purposes of the Boy Scout organization, with a view to obtaining data with which to fight a movement in her own town for the organization of Scouts. What was her surprise and disappointment to receive from Comrade Thompson the following mis-information:

Chicago, May 9, 1914.

Eliza Lamkin, Lyman, Wash. Comrade Lamkin:

We have today received your note of recent date asking that you write us some time ago for information on the boy scout movement. We find that we received your former inquiry on March 2nd, and on March 4th sent you an answering letter, enclosing you a copy of the enclosed sheet. We are sorry that this did not reach you.

As you will see by the sheet, we have concluded that there is no reason why we should oppose the movement, as the present boy scout organization does not include any military features, and is very commendable along other lines. We could not give you instructions as to how to combat it.

Very truly yours, CARL D. THOMPSON, Director Information Dept.

BOY SCOUTS Information Dept., Socialist Party, 803 W. Madison St., Chicago April, 1914

Our investigations of the boy scout movement indicate that an organization known as the American Boy Scouts originated in a military spirit. This organization is now known as the United States Boy Scouts, but it has only a very few branches, with not more than 3,000 members, and is not widely known. This organization was probably the basis of hostility on the part of the Socialists everywhere toward the movement. The Socialist movement, of course, stands absolutely opposed to military ideas and activities in any connection whatever.

In about 1910, however, a new organization was formed, known as the Boy Scouts of America. Application to their headquarters, 200 Fifth Ave., New York, brought us a copy of their official handbook. We find nothing at all of a military nature mentioned in it, and much that is opposed to militarism. Its purposes and practices all seem to be entirely commendable, and with the military phase eliminated, as it is, it would seem that we cannot afford to fight the movement. It has over 300,000 members, and is the organization most widely known.

NESS are one and the same thing. Education? Education is included in the work of organization. Organization is the effect of education, it is education crystallized. One can do a certain amount of educational, or propaganda, work without building an organization. But one cannot build an organization without doing educational work of the very highest order. So we claim that the best form of "preparedness" for the working class at this time is ORGANIZATION, organization on both the economic and the political field. The man who advocates the political without teaching the other principle of working-class solidarity, is but leaving half the work to some one else. Possibly specialization in one or the other field is justifiable, under existing conditions. Nevertheless, the fact should be fully recognized and acknowledged, at all times, that complete organization will be realized in fact only when industrial and political solidarity fully supplement one another. This is the goal of all true Socialists, and is, in our humble opinion, the one form of working-class "preparedness" worthy our consideration.

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WHAT MARX SAID

MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY OR ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

Karl Marx

In every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange and the social organization necessarily following from it form the basis upon which is built up and from which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploited and exploiting, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolution in which nowadays a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the exploiting and oppressing class—without at the same time and once and for all emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles.

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