

# Politics of Reason.

No. 2.

## The BETTER SECURITY.

BEING THE HERESIES OF A  
REVOLUTIONARY REVISIONIST

By

LEONARD NELSON

"Public Life", Manchester.  
Eldonejo "Publika Vivo", Göttingen, Manchester,  
Paris, Stuttgart

1928

*Copyright reserved.*

SERIES :

## POLITICS OF REASON.

No. 1.—Gerhard Kumbleben: "THE JUST STATE" 3d.

*Contents* 1 The Just State 2 Criticism of Autocracy  
3 The Danger of Clericalism 4 The Fallacies of Democracy  
5 The Principle of Leadership

No 2 —Leonard Nelson: "THE BETTER SECURITY." 3d

*Being the heresies of a revolutionary revisionist.*

*Contents* 1 Of Class Interest 2 On Economic Necessity  
3 On Dialectic Necessity 4 The Class War

No. 3.—Gerhard Kumbleben. "JUSTICE IN INDUSTRY THROUGH SOCIALIST MARKET ECONOMY." 6d

*Contents* 1 The Present Situation 2 How to abolish Exploitation  
3 Free Competition 4 Private Enterprise and State Industry  
5 Industrial Combination 6 Taxation of Land Values  
7 Over-population and Over-production 8 The Socialist Commonwealth

Published by "PUBLIC LIFE".

(Eldonejo "PUBLIKA VIVO", Gottingen, Manchester, New York, Paris, Shanghai, Stuttgart)

In LONDON 5, EMPIRE MANNSION, MARLBOROUGH STREET, E.C. 4, PENSHURST ROAD E 9.  
*Also relating to the subject.*

Leonard Nelson:

"POLITICS AND EDUCATION"

*Translated by William Lansdell.*

7/6

Published by ALLEN & UNWIN,



40, MUSEUM STREET, W C 1



## PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR

IN face of the growing importance which the dispute between Marxian and anti-Marxian socialists has for the working class in this country, it may be justifiable to publish the translation of a short pamphlet which bears on that subject. It was written by the late Leonard Nelson whose thorough and clear works on the foundations of politics have contributed so much to the recent development of socialist ideas.

The fact that the translation is published in the series "Politics of Reason" indicates that it should be read in connection with the first pamphlet of this series, called "The Just State", to which it forms an invaluable addition. At the same time it forms the basis for the now following numbers of this series which will present the application of socialist principles to economic and cultural problems.

Other essays of Leonard Nelson have been translated by William Lansdell and are published by Allen & Unwin under the title "Politics and Education". Nelson's standard work on the Philosophical Foundations of Politics will possibly soon follow.

GERHARD KUMLEBEN,

London, *June*, 1928

## FOREWORD

THIS pamphlet was originally intended as an introduction to a more comprehensive exposition of the theme indicated in the subtitle. But as urgent tasks have prevented me over and again from continuing the work and will also do so in the near future, and as on the other hand there is still an urgent necessity for other than the usual bourgeois criticism of the so-called Marxian foundation of socialism, I shall no longer delay the publication of this part of the work which I have now finished. I hesitate the less because it forms a complete unit in itself which by reason of its brevity may be welcome to those who have as little time to study the swelling flood of books on Marxism as I have to increase it.

LEONARD NELSON

Göttingen, *December*, 1926.

## CHAPTER I

### OF CLASS INTEREST

#### 1

THAT there is such a thing as an objective—not purely imaginary right, is nowadays disputed strangely enough even in the ranks of the socialists. Socialism is not nowadays recognised by its own advocates as a demand based on *justice*. Anyone who tries to base socialism on justice is considered as the representative of a very antiquated philosophy, as a sectarian and utopian.

The question arises, what shall take the place of the rightful claims of the exploited class now declared non-valid? Something or other must after all distinguish the socialist programme at least in the eyes of socialists. What is this criterion?

The answer is the class interest, the material interest of the proletariat. This interest is the driving force in socialism.

We all know this doctrine. It is a predominant one and thus shares the fate of all predominant opinions, namely that it is followed by the further opinion that there is no need to reflect any more upon it. In the sanctuary of Marxism it is the Holy of the Holies. People are firmly convinced that the mainstay of the Marxian practice, the class war, stands and falls with it. Anyone who has his own thoughts about it, falls under the curse of heresy.

Anyone who fears this curse had better not read on.

#### 2

But we are audacious enough to think about the meaning of this doctrine.

What does it maintain? Obviously it means that the worker who correctly understands his material interests, is a socialist and therefore a fighter in the class war. Nothing less, a fighter, that is to say a man who devotes his life to his cause and makes sacrifices for it.

Whoever gives the slightest reflection to this must already begin to waver. A strange sort of material interest it is, that is satisfied by the voluntary payment of membership fees, by persistence in strikes, by odd jobs in the party, by imprisonment, banishment and even death.

"But that is not what we mean", the Marxians would reply. It is not the *individual* material interest (of each single person) that leads to the class-war, but the material interest of the *class* or the economic situation of the proletariat.

But what is the meaning of these words? Who is the class, the proletariat?

So far we only know that in the class war the material interest of no individual who takes part in it, need be satisfied, but before we go any further, we must ask whether, by the struggle for socialism, the class, the proletariat really is raised to a higher level. But who could doubt that? The proletariat has time to wait, until the day of the harvest dawns, the working class will still exist, when the individual fighter has long since fought himself out. Of course, the proletariat does not *die*, and its time may therefore come. But unfortunately neither does it *live*. For who is "the proletariat", "*the worker*"? Where do you find *the worker*—not an individual person, but the worker in general? How does he live, what are his interests, this worker in general for whom the *individual* sacrifices himself? Do you understand that this worker in general is surely not less imaginary than the idea of justice which is so much ridiculed? And that even if he did live, it could never be understood why the individual worker should go to any trouble to satisfy the interests of the worker in general?

### 3

But before lightly throwing overboard an ideology which is still an article of faith amongst socialists, let us carefully consider it again. What would happen if all or even the majority of comrades were afraid of the sacrifices which the class war demands, and therefore gave it up? Would that not be harmful to all of them? Most certainly! But what can we conclude from that? Can we conclude that, after all, the material interest of the individual requires that the struggle should be taken up? Not at all! For if the worker is really led by considerations of expediency and not by a consciousness of responsibility (this moral crutch) he will only

desire, that the *others*—as many of them as possible, of course—shall wage the class war so that he may not be injured if it fails (Naturally as a clever man he will be silent about his secret and not destroy the illusion of his comrades that it is expedient for them—and not for himself—to perish as class fighters on the battlefield of proletarian honour) But he will secure for himself a well-paid post in the service of the capitalists in order to be protected on both sides

4

Is all this imaginary? Does not everyone who is really guided by economical considerations, make others pull the chestnuts out of the fire? Does he not yield to fatigue, when he has stood for a long time in the exhausting fight, and finds that he does not gain anything but only sacrifices himself for others? "After us the deluge!" He who follows the economical impulse, uninfluenced by idealistic whims, has found in this maxim the only sensible rule for his life

5

But that is not how the class-conscious worker thinks! "He is a scab, who attacks the comrades of his class from behind!"

"A scab?" Do I hear correctly? I thought that I was speaking to comrades with a Marxian training and find myself back in the bourgeois nursery, for what have we to do with moral disgust and the appeal to the feeling of solidarity, if only material interests are scientifically admitted as facts in the theory of the class war?

6

Now that the mists are dispersed, we come back to the discredited ethics. If they have no place in the theory of the class war, then let the only possible conclusion be boldly drawn, the materialist theory of the class war can be traced back to a purely geographical problem, it instructs its scholars to go where, thanks to the struggle of the *others*, the highest wages are paid

7

We understand now the rôle of the mysterious worker in general in the theory. For in order to avoid the above consequence of the

selfish standpoint, that is determined by *individual* considerations of expediency, there is needed the worker in general, *the* proletariat that survives all the individual proletarians, that does not only make sacrifices, but itself enjoys the fruits of these sacrifices, the proletariat in short, for whom the class war is profitable. Unfortunately the actual worker—the one who really fights the class war—does not get anything out of this. Indeed, in reality, it is the *individual* who must fight the class war, the individual who is still the simpleton who does the work of the others—provided that he has not another reason for the class war than the one that is advanced in the theory.

## CHAPTER II.

### ON ECONOMIC NECESSITY

#### 8

If what has been said is true, how was it possible for such a doctrine to get such a firm hold on the human mind?

This is quite easily understood. People were tired of the fantastic speculations of a so-called idealistic philosophy. It was not possible to build the socialist edifice of the future with the cobwebs of such a philosophy. Thus naturally the message of the all-powerful force of material interests fell on fruitful soil, especially in the period of growing capitalism, and superstitious belief in the omnipotence of economics was almost imperceptibly substituted for superstitious belief in the omnipotence of philosophy.

But what interests us more here is this. Had one really exorcised the spectre of idealistic philosophy by this substitution? Are the "economic conditions" really something material?

The "material interests" which are the determining power behind these conditions, are surely nothing material though they attach to material things like food, clothes and houses as their objects. As interests, they are just as much of a spiritual nature as ideal interests are.

And the economic conditions themselves, these levers which set in action all historical progress? What is here the force that compels progress according to the principle of economy of effort



or of the greatest efficiency? Is it the power of the water that falls on the paddles of a turbine and thus drives electrical machinery? Is it the force in the manure that helps to increase the crop? Is it not rather that this material power (which indeed exists in the water and in the manure) is brought to use through the mental labour of the mechanical engineer and of the agricultural chemist? The "productive forces" are thus, when thoroughly examined, purely mental forces they can be traced back to human power of thought and will. Briefly they bear just that taint for which the ideal powers have been condemned. Is the spectre banished by baptising it, to the glory and honour of historical materialism, with names of material things?

9

And what about enforcing progress through economic necessity? If anyone had ever read the tracts of historical materialism with sufficient attention, he would have discovered that the authors themselves do not earnestly believe in this necessity. The classic exponents of this theory, at any case, are careful enough to speak about the necessity only with the greatest reservations that the event in question must come to pass, if this or that other event is not to happen. For instance, that the modern industrial proletariat must bring about a class-less society, "if it is not to sink to the level of the Chinese coolie", or "if the whole of modern society is not to perish". Engels, whom I quoted here, continues immediately "It is on this palpable material fact that modern socialism founds its confidence in victory, and not on the ideas of justice and injustice of this or that arm-chair philosopher"<sup>1</sup>

The supposed necessity is, therefore, of no other kind than that to which a physician refers when he tells a man who has kidney disease that he should go to Egypt if he wants to regain his health. But the sick man who is afraid of the fatigue and cost of the long journey, stays at home, in spite of the necessity pointed out by the physician. But what would we think of the *sanity* of the patient, if he who is pining away helplessly at home, bases his belief in mastering his illness on the "palpable material fact" presented to him by the physician?

<sup>1</sup>Friedrich Engels "Herrn Eugen Dührings Unwägung der Wissenschaft" 12th edition 1923, page 162

What can we do with the academic statement that the proletariat must bring about socialism, if it is not to sink to the level of the Chinese coolies? The question whether the proletariat will really sink to that level is not once put, much less answered. And why on earth should it not, for it is not supposed to care whether it would thereby suffer injustice. And even if "the proletariat" has a reason for struggling against sinking to the level of Chinese coolies—we can sympathise with him in this—nevertheless the real proletarians, whose activities alone could prevent such an end, have no reason to pay on behalf of that imaginary comrade (who has been invented by an arm-chair philosopher) the cost of his journey into the land of the future.

10

If we consider the matter in an unprejudiced manner, as experience shows it to us and not through the glasses of an arm-chair philosopher, it is quite clear that economic necessity is a purely invented, imaginary tale. Experience tells us that consumers and producers are influenced by many inclinations and considerations which interfere with the economic process, determined by purely economical considerations (which process is undoubtedly possible in theory). Consider only the influence of vanity in all its forms and especially in fashion where its range can be increased indefinitely. Consider what an obstacle in the way of technical improvements is the desire for ease combined with profit-making, so widespread and firmly established where cartels and trusts and other forms of monopolies capture production and thereby exclude the stimulus of competition. Do not we Germans know well the type of bourgeois who is quite satisfied with his miserable economic conditions when he gets as compensation titles and dignities and the thanks of the fatherland in other honours? People from the working class with official posts thus often ignore the situation of their own class and, considering themselves as something higher, are lost for the proletarian movement. Or let us consider the customs union that has long since been advocated by all thoughtful people. The impending ruin of Europe that is actually becoming a "palpable material fact" which confronts the whole world to-day with "irresistible necessity" has not the power to bring about the remedy which is economically necessary. But we need not go so far as that. Even those who are not able to make extensive and

difficult economic studies know, as soon as they begin to think, that despite modern technical efficiency it is impossible to find a single bicycle that fulfils its purpose as a means of locomotion, and is not a mere ornament, for to serve its true purpose it should have the quality not so much of glittering in the sunshine, as of not rusting in the rain. In other words, the iron parts should be plated with zinc and not with nickel. Or to give another instance if economy really played the role which arm-chair philosophers imagine, the communal kitchen would long since be the rule. Is there any more striking proof that a vast majority of human beings insist on living uneconomically than the fact that in a town of four million inhabitants like Berlin, the few known institutions of that kind have soon disappeared for lack of demand?

"The rational is the real and the real is the rational", Hegel taught, and as everyone knows his idealistic philosophy thus clashed hopelessly with the world of facts. It is now clear that the Marxian inversion of that philosophy has actually not altered much the fundamental axiom of this idealism and thus clashes equally with facts.

## II

There is only one way out. We all know it—the contradiction with facts in which the pretended necessity finds itself, is dissipated into a mere semblance provided only that we give to the Spirit of the World in its materialistic guise—as is fitting in consideration of its omnipotence—sufficient time to complete its work. The only thing that matters is this: *in the long run* economy will be successful here, just as reason is in Hegel's system. Thus it is proved that temporary reactions do not contradict the theoretically necessary development.

As we know, the beginning of the German revolution that was, according to Zinovjev, inevitably and necessarily due for October 1923, did not take place, nor did the inevitable breakdown of the Russian revolution that Haase and Kautsky predicted "for a few weeks hence". Nevertheless the "confidence in victory" remains unshaken on both sides, for "a thousand years are as a day in Thy sight" and to be postponed is not to be abolished.

"Capitalism is dying"? Why not? It is just in its last gasp.

In this way the theory is really secured against any contradiction with facts. There remains only one shortcoming: if the time-limit is not determined within which the theoretically necessary final

success is to take place, success will be removed to such a distance that it will be out of the control of experience. It will be impossible to disprove it by facts, but it will be impossible also to prove it by facts. This may be a consolation for the speculative philosopher, but it is a mockery for the practical man who finds himself deceived about the "palpable facts" which were offered to him as the foundation of the "confidence in the victory of modern socialism"

## CHAPTER III

### ON DIALECTICAL NECESSITY

#### 12

WE should, perhaps, not protest against the introduction of new names. But the "productive forces" and the "historical necessity" have not been brought forward in order to make a concession to a technical age and to converse with the worker in the language of natural science. Here we are up against the results of "dialectics", the core of historical materialism and the so-called scientific socialism that is based upon it. And here there appears before us the real spectre, the very spectre which one intended to banish when one turned one's back on Hegel's ideas and abandoned that philosopher's spook-hunt in order to draw attention to the historical function of matter. Alas, Marx's and Engel's mockery of the phantoms of metaphysicians, especially of Hegel's colossal abortion, can even more justly be turned against the materialistic visionaries. In their thoughts—to give only some few instances—the bourgeoisie crushes feudalism, the productive forces inflame the world-war, the method of production revolts against the mode of exchange, a new order of society ripens in the womb of the old—without the aid of human beings, and the mechanism of capitalist production trains and organises the working class. These visionaries finally attempt to prove the impossibility of new class-differences arising after the abolition of capitalism, by the fact that *the* proletariat cannot exploit itself.

Occasionally, however, even a believer like Stalin revolts against this attitude of making a fetish of concepts, e.g., when he challenges the fatalism of the Second International. "I have in mind the so-called theory of 'productive forces' which is accepted by the Second International, which justifies everything, reconciles every-

body, which, when everyone is already tired of the facts, states and explains them and which is quite satisfied with these mere statements "1 It is only as a practical revolutionary that Stalin allows himself this heresy, as a Marxian theorist he too is under the spell of historical necessity

A "spook-hunt" I called it. It was from just this that our advocates of historical materialism wanted to escape. With these theorists it is not concepts as real beings, but matter which develops by dialectical necessity. Well, let us suppose for a moment that the productive forces are material, so that we can meet the dialectician half way. Do we really thus do his theory a service? Even if to proceed from a *concept* to another—the corresponding negative concept—as Hegel's method demands, has any sense, what can be the sense of proceeding from one *fact* by negation to another fact, as is necessary in historical materialism, in order to help dialectical progress on its way, for only by contradiction is the world supposed to improve.

All honour to negative concepts, but what can we understand by negative facts or even negative matter? What in the material jargon is the "negation of capitalist appropriation"? Who could discover that this negation is "individual property based on co-operation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production which are produced by human labour itself"?2 Who could discover this unless he had the key to the Holy Scriptures of Marxism?

If, however, the negation of the fact in question should be the circumstance that no capitalists are to be found in a socialist society, then let us also admire the dialectical ability of the chairman who expressed his dissatisfaction with the size of a meeting by saying "Unfortunately I see many who are not present."

### 13

It is not of any use to say that the worker will certainly be on the right track if he hears something about the overthrow of capitalist society. The question is whether we have to thank this theory for such result. Dialectical necessity rests on the relation of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, and this is supposed to find application in the reality of the material world. To enquire into how this happens may savour of curiosity, but it is certainly just-

<sup>1</sup> Stalin "Lenin und der Leninismus" Wien 1924, page 30

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx "Capital" 1886 page 789

fied Because it appears possible to explain how it happens, the crutch of ethics has been thrown aside. Morals and justice have become at least a superfluous hypothesis—to alter a well-known phrase of Laplace. The claim of human rights is considered only as an ideological reflection of what has been realised in the world of material facts by the negation of the same. What one tries to find in it besides that, is, according to the contemptuous judgment of Engels nothing but “exalted rubbish”<sup>1</sup>

Does this conception lead us anywhere? A more searching consideration of the instance cited above will help us to see more clearly. What is the contradiction of which it is expressly said that it “is not one that has sprung from the head of man” but exists “in the facts, objectively, outside of ourselves”, whereas “modern socialism is nothing but the intellectual reflex of this actual conflict”<sup>2</sup>? What are these facts, that are supposed to contradict each other?

This is what it all means: whereas in the Middle Ages the producer of goods could keep these goods as his property, whereas, that is to say, “the ownership of the product rested upon one’s own labour,”<sup>3</sup> this relation was altered when the factory system and, therefore, “social production” came into being. The product was no longer kept by the producer who had worked for it, but was appropriated by the capitalists, “the ownership of products” in this sense rests no longer “upon one’s own labour”. Thus arose the “contradiction” which is supposed to exist “between social production and capitalist appropriation”.<sup>4</sup> This and nothing else is the contradiction which is supposed to be inherent in modern capitalism and is supposed to bring about necessarily the transition into socialism.

The facts which, contradicting each other, are said to negate or “do away with” each other, are thus social production on the one hand and capitalist appropriation on the other.

But why is a contradiction found in the association of social production and capitalist appropriation and not in the association of individual production and ownership of the product by the producer? In other words, on what grounds do the mode of

<sup>1</sup> Engels Herin Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft Preface

<sup>2</sup> Engels ‘The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science’ Edinburgh 1908 page 18

<sup>3</sup> Op cit page 17

<sup>4</sup> Op cit page 18

production and the form of ownership correspond with each other in the manner which is presumed here to be necessary? In and for itself no such grounds are discoverable

#### 14

However, we are quite ready to admit that an "incompatibility between social production and capitalist appropriation" not only actually exists, but also was bound "to become the more sharply marked, the more the present system of production gained the upper hand"<sup>1</sup> But the explanation lies in a circumstance quite outside the facts in question, the very circumstance supposed to be irrevocably banished from socialist theory and made superfluous by dialectics

For it is only when one understands the "incompatibility" as a matter of right and not of dialectics that everything becomes clear

What deceives us here in dialectics, as everywhere, is due to a play upon words The theory owes its power to convince only to the following circumstance the hearer or reader unconsciously takes certain inadequately explained expressions (such as "ought to", "be based", "do away with", "conflict", "incompatibility") in their otherwise known signification of something that concerns rights, and therefore he gives the assumption of objective right its fitting place, an assumption which is supposed to have been eliminated but which is really indispensable and only disguised

The question, therefore, why mode of production and form of appropriation should correspond in the way described, has only one answer Because they *ought to* correspond to each other, in the literal, that is in the ethical sense of the word The necessary claim which arises from the one fact (social production) and which cannot be satisfied by the other fact (capitalist appropriation) is that the "ownership of products" remains with the producer because it is *still* "based on his own labour", looked at from the point of view of his *rights* Thus considered as a claim based on rights, it at once becomes clear that indeed one fact "does away"<sup>2</sup> with the other And at the same time the other riddle is solved, why it was only capitalist production that created this "incompatibility" and brought about the age of "negative facts"

<sup>1</sup> Op cit page 18

<sup>2</sup> Op cit page 18

Therefore, only if the claim based upon right which has been expounded (simply another expression for the abolition of unearned income or of exploitation) has an objective validity and authority, in short, only under the assumption of an objective right, has the Marxian criticism of capitalism a sound basis, and can be developed into scientific socialism.

15

The Marxian thesis mentioned above, that the conflict "is not one that has sprung from the head of man" but exists "objectively, outside of ourselves, independent of the wishes and doings of even those who have ushered it in"<sup>1</sup> is more firmly established than might be expected, considering the want of truth in the dialectical mysticism of facts

It holds good, because another thesis, that of the objective right, holds good, however difficult it may be to explain why this latter does hold good

As a necessity based on right—namely of a society free from exploitation—socialism holds objectively an established position and we can no longer say that it "is nothing but the intellectual reflex of this actual conflict, whose image is found in the heads of . . . the working class".<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CLASS WAR

16

It remains to be examined what our theoretical conclusion means in practice

We thus come back to the question of the class war

So much follows from what we have seen he who wants after all to hold to the class war must find a new basis for it, for such a basis is not afforded by the materialistic theory, though this was its chief aim. We are now convinced that an unshakable basis for the practical necessity of the class war cannot be obtained by appealing to class-interest, nor by referring to economic or dialectic

<sup>1</sup> Op cit page 16

<sup>2</sup> Op cit page 16



tical necessity. It cannot be obtained by appealing to class-interest because class-interest does not exist, and because, if it *did*, the fight itself would be a class matter, so that no individual need bother about it. Nor can it be obtained by referring to economic necessity, because economic necessity does not exist, and because, if it *did* its success—socialism—would for that very reason be a necessary success, so that no one need fight for its realisation. Nor can it be by referring to dialectical necessity, because that also does not exist, and because if it *did*, its success also need not be fought for. Under each of these assumptions, socialism, if it comes at all, will come as the result of the actions of a higher power, independent of the efforts of men. However the materialistic theory may be interpreted, there is logically no place in it for the real class war.

Turn and twist as you will, there is no escape from the necessity of a decision: either you keep to the doctrine and give up the class war or you keep to the class war and give up the doctrine.

“Work and pray”, the Christian Church says. For the socialist this advice is impracticable, he has only the choice between praying with the dervishes of the Materialistic Church and working with the fighting comrades of his class.

#### 17

The mental fetter which chained the class war to the theory of historical materialism, is broken. The fixed idea which obsessed the minds of left and right wingers in the socialist camp and which on the one hand stamps each revision of the theory as treason to socialism and, on the other, has really driven revisionism into the way of opportunism, this idea has been proved to be an illusion. Thus the way is open for such a revision of the theory as will free us from the dogmatic chains without driving us into opportunism, in short, for a theory which puts the class war on a really scientific basis, independent of all economic and dialectical juggleries. One might call it the theory of revolutionary revisionism.

#### 18

We have seen that the true statements of the so-called scientific socialism are dependent on the assumption of the rightful necessity of socialism, which assumption is not admitted into the theory but is even disputed by it. We have also seen that this assumption

really plays a decisive rôle in the theory as a disguised assertion. It has to remain disguised, because it cannot be based on material facts and thus is, from the materialistic point of view, a belief that cannot have a scientific basis. A theory which builds on ethical principles "transplants" according to Marx and Engels "the whole theory from the field of palpable material facts to that of more or less vague opinions and feelings"<sup>1</sup>

There are two ways of avoiding statements which have no foundation. One way is that employed in the materialistic theory namely to disguise them. But there is another way, which is, to find a foundation for them. In our case that means, to base socialism on the system of objective right—a way that lies clearly before us, as soon as we have left the materialistic fog behind. If this way does not lead to the goal, then this much is certain from what has been said: there can be no more talk of scientific socialism.

#### 19.

But if we suppose that this scientific problem can be solved, nay, if we suppose that it has been solved, there remains still one very urgent question. Is not socialism as a purely rightful claim—however firmly it may be based as such—an idea without weight in the world of facts? Is it not condemned to remain on the battlefield of the real economic and political powers, a thing only for the edification of the mind or at least only a subject for preaching?

Indeed, even the objective—that is to say not purely imaginary—right has no power over facts, just because it is established as nothing else but a demand. There is no moving power inherent in it, and the belief that it *must* be victorious some day is nothing but a pious superstition.

But what can really be concluded from this?

"If we had no better security for the dawning change in the present mode of distribution of products with its obvious contrast of misery and luxury, need of bread and indulgence, than the consciousness that this distribution is unjust and that justice must finally be victorious, we should be very badly off and should have to wait a long time"<sup>1</sup>. That is what Engels says, and with good reason. The only doubtful point is, whether the consciousness of the injustice in the mode of distribution which has been described, leaves us only the empty consolation that justice must one day

<sup>1</sup> Engels "Herrn Eugen Dührings Unwählung der Wissenschaft 12th ed 1923 page 160

be victorious. It is a fact that even in this unenviable position we should not be worse off than with the consciousness that the class-interest or economic or dialectical necessity must in the end be victorious. All this does not give any "better security". Apart from this, the question arises, whether the very conviction that justice *need not* be victorious, may not help us to the better security which is now lacking.

If you think here only of that class that causes injustice, neither the consciousness of injustice nor the understanding of the natural weakness of justice will bring about "the dawning change", for the ruling class will by no means be persuaded to commit suicide. In this case "this appeal to morals and justice" really "does not help us forward a single inch"<sup>1</sup>

But what will be the result if on the workers' side the consciousness of injustice becomes active, combined with the conviction that justice will not be realised of itself? I mean the consciousness that it is the task of the exploited themselves to create a power which can make justice victorious. In short it is the consciousness that the liberation of the working class can be accomplished only by the workers themselves.

We thus come to the demand of the class war. The class war is justified as the fight for justice and the necessity of the class war is based upon the practical necessity for justice.

## 20

Scientific socialism is *not* a dream. The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. The phrase, that in spite of the brain-twisting doctrines still lives and acts in the heads of the oppressed, stands on a firm foundation. This phrase, that in its world-conquering power leaves all attempts at clever calculation and subtle dialectics far behind, is the *categorical imperative*  
"Workers of the world, unite!"

<sup>1</sup> Op cit page 152

PRINTED BY }  
J JOHNSON CUMBERLAND STREET  
SHEFFIELD