

# BOOK REVIEW

## Karl Marx, the Man

**KARL MARX; Biographical Memoirs, By Wilhelm Liebknecht, 181 pages. Chas. H. Kerr and Co., Chicago.**

The great figures who have helped to shape the course of history and to mould human thought are always the object of insatiable curiosity to living men. This is particularly true of those who leave a heritage of ideas on which the minds of men are fed. Light on the personalities of the great doers of the past stimulates interest in their work and aids in an understanding of it. Hence the great popularity and the great value of biography.

In this little volume devoted to memories of Karl Marx, the elder Liebknecht brings the founder of the Communist movement nearer to the proletariat as a man and father. Incomplete and inadequate as these sketches are, in consideration of the magnitude of the subject, they have a double merit. They come from one who lived in almost daily contact with Marx for nearly twelve years of his most fruitful activity; and one who, in a lifetime of struggle bore the proud name of "Soldier of the Revolution". Thus he speaks with an exceptional authority.

This is not a treatise on his doctrines. Liebknecht in the book under review, confines himself to a series of reminiscences regarding him as he revealed himself at work and play, the circle of his intimates, in the bosom of his family—in short, Marx the man, whom the world, seeing him from afar, did not know. He draws, if not a full portrait, at least an outline of that great figure which grows in immensity as the world moves to its remoulding on his ideas. And what a man emerges from that outline!

Marx forged the incomparable weapons of the workers' emancipation struggle in a lifetime of the most assiduous and painstaking inquiry and labor. Guesswork had no part in his philosophy; ignorance, especially in one filling the role of leadership, was anathema. Politics, to Marx was a study and the business of a proletarian to know, to understand. "How wild Marx could become when speaking of those hollow skulls who arrange matters for themselves with a few cant phrases." Reading these words of Liebknecht's one can imagine the lion rising from his grave to storm against those who transform his science into a system of catch-words devoid of reality and alien to his method.

### Scientific Truth Was Marx's Guide

Marx was affected not a particle by the superficial judgment of the majority at the moment. Scientific truth was his guiding line. And, rejected in his own day while scamps won the applause and favor of the world, he solaced himself with the self-confident motto of Dante: "Follow your course and let the people talk." He was concerned only to establish the wisdom and verity of that course and that, thereby, it might become the course of humanity's future.

From his evaluation of politics as a science came his contemptuous disregard of "agreements" on a false foundation and his intransigence in questions of principle—a quality which marked the course of Lenin when his bolsheviks were but a handful against the world and which now marks the leadership of Trotsky in the struggle to reform the disrupted ranks of the proletarian vanguard. It was on this point that Liebknecht himself came into conflict with his teacher—not once but twice. The first time, in the days of his London exile, it led to an estrangement there, and the second time—some twenty years later, on a much larger scale—it led to Marx's trumpet blasts against the Gotha Program—a compromise knecht on this decisive question was surely his greatest shortcoming—a shortcoming he did not recognize, for he attempts to justify it in his book about Marx. But history has already answered this question in accents, which all revolutionaries must hear. On the welter of confusion which besets the Communist movement of the world, intransigence must be their motto no less than it was the motto of Marx and Lenin.

Marx knew his value, but the legends spread by his enemies about envy, spite, conceit and vanity—all this, says the author who worked under his direct guidance for

more than a decade—is pure fantasy. He simply insisted on scientific exactitude in the doctrines of the proletariat. Marx could tolerate no blunting of their weapons, whether from ignorance or any other cause. Unworthy personal considerations were not even within his comprehension, to say nothing of their actuating him. "Marx was the most generous and just of men, when it came to acknowledging the merits of others. For envy and jealousy as well as for conceit, he was too great. Only the false greatness, the artificial fame inflated by incompetence and vulgarity, he regarded with a deadly hatred—as he did everything false and adulterated."

He was no man of mush, as Liebknecht draws him, but a doughty fighter and an irreconcilable hater of the false, the superficial, the pretentious. Windbags were an abomination to this man, whose words always stood for facts and deeds. "Woe to him who indulged in phrases. There he was inexorable. 'Phrase-monger' was in his mouth the sharpest censure—and whom ever he once had recognized as a 'phrase-monger' he ignored forever. To think logically and to express your thoughts clearly—this he impressed on us 'young fellows' on every occasion and forced us to study."

### Marx in Exile at London

In this book, Wilhelm Liebknecht paints an unforgettable picture of the group of exiles who gathered around Marx in London in the years 1850 to 1862. During that period he was almost daily in the company of the great teacher, and his reminiscences are a treasure to the present-day disciples of Marx who seek to know the man behind the doctrine. In these pages the legendary figure is brought near, made real, alive and human. We are drawn into the march of the author's charming narrative and move in that immortal company.

The first genius of the proletariat, dead these 47 years, rises and walks before us. We see Marx as Liebknecht saw him thru his days and nights of systematic and undeviating labor on his monumental works; we watch his furious concentration on a game of chess and his child-like exasperation when he fails to win; we see him a play-mate of his children and a plaything in their hands; we walk with the group of family and friends on a holiday to Hampstead Heath, feast with them from the picnic basket and slake our thirst with them in unforbidden British beer; we are with the lion at the grave-side of his son and see him broken and humbled in the dust of grief.

The Marx that Liebknecht describes was a pure-hearted lover of children—his own and of all. The sight of a helpless child in misery tore his great heart with pity. "Time and again he would suddenly tear himself away from us on wandering through districts of poverty in order to stroke the hair of some child in rags or to slip a penny or half-penny into its little hand. He mistrusted beggars. But when a beggar or beggar woman with a whimpering child accosted Marx, then he was lost without fail. . . . He could not withstand the imploring eyes of a child."

In Marx's day as now, society bestowed its honors and rewards on charlatans, cheats and swindlers; persecutions, hardship and poverty is the coin with which it paid those who served it truly. Such was the lot of Marx. He who held up to society the picture of its future and charted the way towards it worked with humiliating want and privation as daily companions. In his ability to endure all this, and to carry on his work and hold to his course in spite of it, he has set a stern example to all those who follow his path. For years, even when the worst of this was past, the pound sterling he received every week for his articles in Horace Greeley's "New York Tribune" was his only certain source of income.

"On 'Capital' he was at work forty years—and he did work! Only a Marx can work so. And I am not exaggerating when I say: The worst paid laborer in Germany has received more wages in forty years than Marx did for a salary."

The economic hardships suffered by Marx and his family were "not a solitary case of want, such as anybody may meet with, especially in a foreign country where points of recourse are scarce; the misery of exile lasted for years in its most acute form for Marx and his family."

### Marx the Teacher

For the exiles grouped around him in London Marx was a teacher who forced them to respect knowledge as indispensable in a revolutionist and to labor to acquire it. In such an atmosphere his first disciples were trained. While the superficial revolutionaries, like many who have come after them, were substituting wishes for knowledge and reality, intoxicating themselves with phrases about the revolution which was to start "tomorrow," Liebknecht tells of the pupils of Marx "sitting in the British Museum and trying to educate ourselves and to prepare arms and ammunition for the battles of the future."

This was Marx's way to train the leaders of the proletariat and make them fit for their occupations. "To learn! To learn! This was the categorical imperative he frequently enough loudly shouted to us, but it also was expressed by his example, yea, by the sole aspect of this forever strenuously working mind."

These are golden words for the guidance and inspiration of the young Communists—and not only for the young ones—who are enlisting in the great battle for restoration of Marxism under the banner of the Opposition. Phrase-mongering ignorance has had its evil day in the ranks of the workers vanguard. Disorganization and defeat are the fruit of it. Those who aspire to re-form the disrupted movement will be successful only insofar as they master the basic truths of Marxism and learn how to apply them as a guide to action. This knowledge will not fall from heaven; it will be acquired only by those who have the mind and the will to study, as Marx required of his first disciples. Wilhelm Liebknecht's little volume of reminiscences will be an aid and stimulus in this direction. It ought to have a place on the bookshelf of every revolutionary worker.—J. P. C.



## Harvester Profits Soar; Lay off Men

CHICAGO—In the face of record profits disclosed in the annual report of the International Harvester Co., the farm machinery trust is laying off men by hundreds in its various plants, according to union reports. The 1929 velvet of Alexander Legge's corporation, the presidency of which he resigned to administer farm relief for Hoover, was \$36,779,998. This unprecedented net profit was just about as large as the entire gross profit in 1927.

At the Milwaukee division of the harvester half of the men have been laid off and in some departments he employment is in a still worse state. The crankshaft department has only 16 out of 46 men left and in the piston and sleeve department just three men are working in place of the former shifts of 48. The trust refused requests from the workers that the work be spread on a 8-hour day, 5-day week basis. The men still on payroll are being worked 9 hours a day and Saturdays.

Total assets of Legge's trust rose from \$346,120,486 at the beginning of 1929 to \$348,078,322 at the beginning of this year.

### NEWARK JOBLESS HAUNT NEWSPAPER OFFICE TO SCAN WANT ADS

NEWARK, N. J.—(FP)—Mobs of ragged and hungry men, sometimes as many as 1,500 of them, crowd the street around the office of the Newark Evening News, day after day. They gather at dawn and wait, clutching pennies in their hands, to purchase the first edition and search the help-wanted columns for possible jobs.

Shortly before noon, when the first papers are carried from the building and offered for sale, the mob presses in and fights for papers. Many who haven't even 2 cents to buy a paper crowd around their more fortunate brothers to read over their shoulders.

The News, in a full page message in Editor and Publisher, addressed to potential advertisers says: "Always plenty of work and money to spend in Newark. Periodical Hard Times Are Practically Unknown. An industrial Status such as this accounts for the perennial condition of prosperity with which Newark is blessed".

### WISCONSIN FEDERATION MEETS JULY 15

LA CROSSE, Wis.—The annual convention of the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor will open in La Crosse July 15.

## The Lessons of Capitulations

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In this way, like many other secondary and superstructural factors, the Party regime—in known and very wide limits—acquires an independent role. Moreover it becomes the center of all deviations, errors, dangers, contradictions and mistakes. It now becomes that link in the general chain, through the medium of which it is possible to get to its other links. Maybe it is still more correct to say, that the Party regime became that Gordian knot which the Party must disentangle at all cost, so that there may be no chance for Bonapartism to cut it with a sword.

\* It is understood that Kaganovitch in his time went through the whole policy of Stalin to the Right. In 1926 the Stalinites condemned the Profintern to liquidation, through its unification with the Amsterdam Trade Union International. Every reference of the Profintern was eliminated from the constitution of the Soviet trade unions. Getting scared of the Opposition, Stalin retreated at the very last moment. Kaganovitch succeeded, however, to read a report in Charkov, in which he defended the entry into Amsterdam with arguments that would do honor to any social-democrat. But no sooner did the book with the speeches see the light of day, then retreat was sounded from Moscow. Kaganovitch then declared in the press that... the stenographer understood him wrongly and that he did not at all have intentions of entering Amsterdam, but burdened with work he had no chance to edit his speech. Since then Kaganovitch got the additional name: the Amsterdamer.



### EXPOSE REVOLTING CONDITIONS IN CANNERIES

NEW YORK—Conditions in fruit and vegetable canneries in New York state are ghastly and revolting. It is revealed in the report of a thorough investigation conducted last summer by the Consumers League of New York. The report was read at the League's annual meeting.

Conditions since an official state investigation in 1911 are virtually unchanged. The industry largely is carried on by overworked women and girls, working in unsanitary and unheated shacks, for from \$10 to \$12 a week. Illegal overtime is common and housing conditions are wretched, the League reports. As a result of the overwork, the women are too fatigued to make proper selection of the food, and much is canned that should not be eaten. More than 5,000 women do seasonal work in New York canneries.

### STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUG. 24, 1912.

Of The Militant, published weekly at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1930.

Before me, a Notary in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Martin Abern, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the Militant and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are: Publisher: Communist League of America (Opposition) 25 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y. Editor: None. Managing Editor: Max Shachtman, 25 Third Ave. New York, N. Y. Business Manager: Martin Abern, 25 Third Avenue, New York City.
2. That the owner is: Communist League of America (Opposition), 25 Third Avenue, N. Y. C. Martin Abern, 25 Third Avenue, N. Y. C. J. P. Cannon, 25 Third Avenue, N. Y. C. Max Shachtman, 25 Third Ave. N. Y. C. Maurice Spector, 25 Third Avenue, N. Y. C. Arne Swabeck, 25 Third Ave. N. Y. C.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities, in a capacity other than of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

Martin Abern, Business Manager Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29 day of March 1930.

Geo. J. Lambert, Notary Public. (My commission expires March 30, 1931)