

The Certainty of Socialism

The certainty of socialism is an expression somehow of "scientific socialism" as founded by Karl Marx. Before his time socialism, i.e. a better world of freedom and labour in community was often propagated, but only as a wish, an ideal, an utopia. Marx made it an object of science. In natural science the phenomena of nature are observed, certain regularities and rules are perceived ~~and~~ therein (called laws of nature), and predictions on future phenomena are deduced from them. In the same way Marx proceeded from the social phenomena, from what we observe in history. He perceived regularities and sense in the apparent jangle of historical events, ~~and~~ and so he was able to make predictions on future social development.

Marx discovered that ^{the real object and contents of} ~~in the political happenings,~~ ⁱⁿ the wars and revolutions ^{in history} behind the proclaimed aims and catchwords of freedom, justice, religion, order, stood ~~the struggle~~ ^{was} as their real object and contents the struggle of the classes. In the prevailing system of production of the goods, the life necessities, the social classes distinguished ^{and opposed} by their different role in it, ^{as exploiters and exploited,} have to fight for their share in the product and for power; and in this fight the rise of ~~the~~ ^{the} subjected, the decline of the ruling class is the basis of social progress. In the preceding centuries it was the ^{capitalist} ~~rising~~ middle class that in gradual rise and in political revolution had vanquished the feudal powers and established the capitalist production system, then considered the highest and final state of mankind. Marx pointed out that in the ~~rising~~ ^{first rebellions} ~~of~~ the workers against their capitalist exploitation we had to see the beginning of a new class-struggle ^{of} a new rising class, growing in power ~~and~~ through the effects of capitalism itself. It will vanquish the capitalist class, just as this class formerly vanquished the feudal rule, and will use its victory by replacing capitalism by a production system without exploitation: socialism.

Thus socialism, formerly simply a wish, an ~~imagined~~ ^{imagined} plan of social

"The reason why physics has ceased to look for causes is that, in fact, there are no such things. The law of causality, I believe, like much that passes muster among philosophers, is a relic of a bygone age, surviving, like the monarchy, only because it is erroneously supposed to do no harm"

Bertrand Russell ^{new Series}
 1913 in Proc. Aristot. Society. Vol XIII
 (The Nature of 43 p. 55)

Causality rules human history just as it does nature. In nature an effect will happen as determined by its cause, inevitable.

Causality is in nature itself, hence strictly rules.

Here is the error
Causality is not a thing of nature, it is a thing of human mind. It is the form in which our mind expresses the regularities and relationships we observe in nature.

Man is not ruler, not dictator of nature
he tries to find out the ways of nature
Law of nature does not express what nature will do, must do, has to do.
It expresses what we expect it to do

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Socialism depends on the actions of man. Socialism is the work of man. The certainty of socialism hence is the certainty that man will act in a certain way. More precisely: that he will act and fight for his life. In all living beings the urge to assert ~~its~~ its existence is the strongest force living in them. So it is with man. Socialism is certain because ~~in man lives~~ it is certain that in man is the will to live, to work, ~~Socialism is inevitable because in man lives~~ the will to live, to fight for his existence. We are sure that socialism will come as much as, but no more than, we are sure that man will generally assert his life.

Only for masses; rich variety of forms ^{and means} in which man establishes his existence. So thesis is not refuted by ~~the~~ such as worn down by adversity and despair deliberately give up their life, or by the many who sacrifice themselves, in order that the greater community may live and prosper.

Socialism will come only when the working class ^{establishes} creates it. It does not come by some mysterious necessity ~~of~~ of its own, by some law of nature, by some Supreme Power. It must be wrought by man. Just as all happenings, all conditions in society are wrought by man. In the framing of the ever changing society the powers of the social classes stand over against one another, struggling and fighting. And we have to explain in terms of this struggle what we mean with the certainty of socialism. It means that in the present and coming times the working class will get the upper hand, that as master of society it will organise production, and in such a way that capitalist exploitation is replaced by collaborate labour.

(We tell one another that we are sure that we shall win; and we point out that we have good reasons for this ~~certainty~~.)

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What socialism? The name is used for very different forms of social structure. When the workers think or speak of socialism, they always mean a system of social production ^{without exploitation,} assuring their freedom and mastery over production.

When there should be a Law of History that proclaims the certainty of socialism, then we have to ask at once: What socialism? Different things are understood in this name by different people. ~~When the~~ When the meaning of a thing is not certain, how can there be a law proclaims its certainty. A definite law can only hold for a thing definite. Dogmatic formula.
We have to remove its character of a

D.D. en H.H. studenten die de lessen verlangen te volgen van

Prof.
Dr. A. Pannelsek

over: algemeene sterrekunde (astrophysica)

in het jaar 1935-1936 worden uitgenodigd hun namen ^{duidelijk} hieronder te plaatsen.

Naam	Letter cand.
Cyra de Boekhoff	d
M. G. Balk	a
E. H. de Vries	phys. Jngs.
Mien v. Straaten	a
Kolje Westerhof	d.
S. Schwen	d
W. v. d. Straaten	d
J. P. van der Bosch	d.
J. de Groot	c.
H. J. Boom	ad.
G. Hoogheggen	e.
J. W. J. v. d. Molengraaf	a.
E. J. Glirschel	a.
F. C. B. Terne	b.
J. Berghuis	a
P. Tismanas	d.
Ph. Schuurmans	a
J. Schwarz	a.
H. Nijveld	f
J. Weenen.	a.
W. Bloemendaal	a

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2. Discussion on Marxism
in New International. Marxism here of the scholars,
consists in chewing words, makes it difficult -

In reality ^{illuminating} quite easy. Soc. is collection of men, ^{What forces move them?}
all acting and influencing one another.

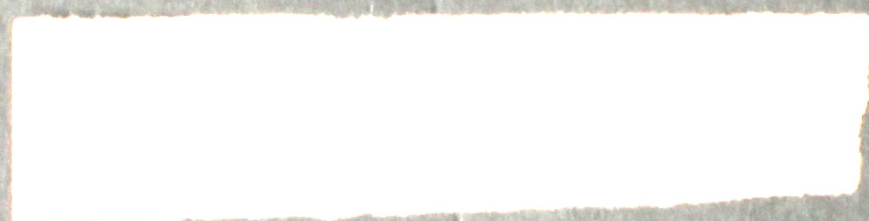
Marx said: socialism will come as consequence of cap. devel.
(His great discovery: formerly only wish, desire, dream -
He detected cap. by its development will bring revolution of
exploited class.)

Is it certain to come. Is it certain? really unavoidable?
That means, independent of human arbitrariness?

There in the midst of queries, of confusion.

Does it depend on human will? Then it is not objectively certain.
Is it certain, indep. of human will? Then all our propaganda
is useless, then Marx' Capital was unnecessary.

Quot. unavoidable or impossible -



The idea of the "certainty of socialism" is an expression somehow of Marx' foundation of what we call scientific socialism. Before his time socialism, a better world of free labor in community, was a wish, an ideal only, a utopia. Marx has shown that it will be the outcome of the class struggle of the workers revolting against cap. & ^{against} because of the suppressive forces of capitalism the working class has to resist, to defend itself, to fight over again, permanently; and getting ever more ~~power~~ force by its growing numbers it will vanquish the bourgeoisie and then it cannot avoid to establish its own mode of production. Thus socialism is not a pious wish of thinkers and utopists, but the necessary outcome of social development.

In this way we speak of the necessity of socialism, and say that it is unavoidable. But this implies that it is the work, the action of man, the result of man's will. What Marx says comes down to the thesis: man will act in a certain way, man's will is determined by the forces and impulses coming from society. This is a new philosophy, a new theory of human thinking and willing. Entirely contrary to the philosophical ideas of professional scholars of the middle class. For people subject to these ideas there is an invincible contradiction in it; they say: when socialist future depends on human will it cannot be absolutely certain; when socialism is certain, i. e. inevitable this can only mean: notwithstanding all that people do and try; hence all their efforts and sacrifices are useless and unnecessary. You are right that such a theory is apt to kill any activity and initiative of the workers. But it is entirely contrary to the theory of Marx, which makes the coming of socialism dependent on the class struggle i. e. the activity, the rebellion of the w. cl.

That the fatalistic theory has so much influence, apart from its origin from middle-class ideas is, I think, first because it is a theory wanted by intellectuals who join the soc. mov. They could quite well choose another way — workers cannot, there is no other way for them — so they need certainty that choosing socialism they bet on the right horse. And then, because they are the party leaders, the union leaders, the politicians in parliament, they do not want too much activity of the workers; there have only to follow, to vote, to act when they are summoned, hence have to believe; then the party put into power will do the real work, the politicians will establish laws to realize soc. They fear independent spontaneous actions of the masses. Where soc. parties have worked during a long time in Europe you see their leaders now take part in, or form, cap. governments. They call this socialism; then again they proclaim the certainty of socialism; for in their rule, they say, it is realized already, and though not completely, yet to a great extent.

Discussion on Marxism

In The N.Y. interests discussion, apt to throw light on this for workers and socialist important ~~mode~~ of thought

It deals with the Inevitability of Socialism, the question whether it is certain that socialism will come, or whether it is only a dream, a wish — ~~certain~~

For all centuries wish, dream, Utopians,

Marx for the first time proclaimed it to be the ~~consequence~~ consequence of social development, the goal towards which capitalism must lead by its own forces. Hence not wish but prediction, not based on sentiment but on science. Was called scientific socialism.

Quotation: at the same time revolt increases -- etc --

1. See Marx doctrine much more simple and understandable than appears in the distorted polemical words.

all events inevitable result of previous events. True; only to exclude arbitrary elements

But only valid if all events are included.

Marx's works and writings included —

2. Event ~~will~~ happens — or will not happen; third is not possible.

Thus applied to strict causality in world.

Then "either must take place, or cannot take place, either inevitable, or impossible. Nothing in between".

Others say: then there is no choice to be made.

No chance that such dogmatism, scholasticism, appears. The outcome of Russian revolution was the precise opposite of what Marx and Marxism had proclaimed; now new class has to uphold old doctrine only by scholastic arguings had to try to adapt them —

In modern world State power ever more gets ascendancy over capitalism. Political power gives power over ~~the~~ production, over wealth, over money; Party ~~power~~ it is the goal of party strife. Instead of party power being a means to socialism, socialism becomes a means to attain party power. Socialism, or communism, is the mighty catchword to win the adherence of the working masses to the Party. In this it is not only the attractiveness of socialism but also the certainty of socialism plays a role. To attach followers, believers, the doctrines of socialism must be absolute truths.

In this way what Marx gave as a scientific result must now become a theological dogma. A dogma that had to be believed, and which to criticize was heresy. No wonder that the theologians ever again come to blows what is the exact meaning of the thesis, attack one another with ~~the~~ quotations of Marx (whose ^{scientific} works thus are degraded to a kind of Gospel), bicker ⁱⁿ ~~and~~ winding arguments on the means of words.

Just as in nature things are not arbitrary it is in society
 All phenomena depend on one another;

Marxism is a theory of the proletarian revolution; it belongs entirely to the class-struggle of the workers and their self-liberation. Since the Russian revolution turned into a new system of exploitation, Marx' results did not fit here. From living ^{every day} ~~daily~~ experienced truths they had to change into dogmatical sentences to be believed

Let us keep to Marx. Marx did not speak of the certainty of socialism. His ^{prediction} ~~statement~~ about the future downfall of capitalism and its replacement by a socialist mode of production was a scientific ^{statement} ~~declaration~~, a conclusion from scientific results. He did not assert that it was absolutely certain; just as no scientist asserts that his predictions, made from his knowledge of the laws of nature, are absolutely ~~that~~ certain. This is the difference between scientific truth and dogmatical, theological truth. ~~The character of such~~ Scientific truth is relative truth, always connected with the consciousness of its limits and conditions; ^{every day corrected and improved} the truth of yesterday may be the error of tomorrow. Theological truth pretends to be absolute truth, unconditioned, indubitable, standing for ever. In science truth and error are not absolute opposites; the truth of yesterday may be the error of tomorrow, not error in absolute sense, but as only partially true enclosed ^{and preserved} in a wider truth.

When you ask a scientist whether tomorrow again the sun will rise, he probably will answer: I feel sure it will. If in 1850 you had asked him whether Newton's law of gravitation was true, he perhaps - by the desire to impose ^{force in a theologic way} upon the ignorant layman and wishing him to believe in the power of science, - ~~had asserted its absolute certainty~~. But then in 1900 he would have said that there are difficulties, and in 1920, that it is a limited, approximate form of a wider truth, given by Einstein's theory.

How then, could it be that afterwards, up to now, discussions ^{on the certainty of socialism} about Marxism and socialism could arise ~~in the way~~ wherein "Marxism" as a theological dogma instead of as a scientific truth?

We see it come about as a phenomenon accompanying the rise of great socialist parties. ^{at first} ~~but then~~ ^{traces} only hesitatingly, in the German soc. Party. But then, in full blaze, in the ~~the~~ propaganda of the Comm. Parties, and especially ^{Russia,}

Are we then allowed to speak of certainty of socialism, in the sense as this word holds for natural phenomena?

It does not hold there either -

Certainty of socialism is not a certainty outside man, but a certainty through man.

It is the certainty that man ~~will~~ ^{shall} act in a certain ~~but~~ determinate way.

as long as workers are obedient followers, ^{are not able to act for themselves} believe that others will act for them, they must go the ways of capitalism, follow and obey their leaders. Because if and when they are self-thinks self-actors persons, capable to take their affairs in the own hands, this means the end of capitalism -

in the groups and parties, who have freed themselves from the deadening dictatorship of Moscow but still strongly are subject to the spiritual influences of the Russia revolution.

reconstruction devised by ~~the~~ humane reformers, ~~now~~ now was the outcome of scientific ~~study~~ study. Its foundation was a new science of society, the gist of which ~~is to~~ ^{is to} be found in short sentences and articles dispersed in his historical pamphlets and his great ⁱⁿ ^{"The Capital"} economical work. ~~Science~~ Science means that things do not happen by chance, ^{irregularly} arbitrarily, but in regular ^{mutual} dependency, ^{which we express together as} causes and effects; so it is in nature; such is the basis of natural science. ~~The~~ The basis of Marxian teachings is that it is so with human society too. ^{here again we detect cause and effect expressing mutual dependency.} Society, in history and at present, is the field of human action, determined by human will. ~~That~~ ^{Marxian theory means that} Hence ^{his} the will of man, the driving force of all activity, ^{not subject to chance and arbitrariness, but} is determined itself by the influences of the surrounding world. Formerly it was said: men should do this; scientific socialism says: men will do this.

The influences that determine mind and will of man are, most conspicuously, those proceeding from his fellow-men. By speech, by communication ~~of ideas~~, by argument and discussion, by reading and writing, by instruction, by propaganda, ideas are transmitted, thoughts are ^{clarified} ~~worked~~, knowledge is increased, ^{feelings are evoked} passions are excited. This is adaptation, equalizing, ^{feelings and} mutual suscitation of ideas and feelings; but where do these ideas, thoughts, ^{world of} passions themselves come from? The basic origin is the ~~real~~ material world, the realities ^{surrounding us and} (of which our life is a part ~~and~~). Our life ^{is part of, and} depends on, the ~~social~~ system of production, the organization of ^{social} labour in which each, according to his class, finds his place and tries to secure his existence.

This seems to be a precise formulation of the issue. But it is ~~only~~ a precision in words only. No natural scientist will express himself in this way. Because he knows that all his laws of nature can ^{only} render the phenomena in an approximate way. They are not absolute commandments ~~imposed upon~~ ^{which} nature has to obey, but rules ~~is~~ formulated by us to express the regularities and dependencies observed. We cannot express them by one cause, one rule, though in some cases of very regular phenomena, e.g. the motions of the heavenly bodies, one cause is so predominant as to render the phenomena with great approximation: So every scientist knows that predictions based on such laws never give certainty.

A century ago ~~astronomer~~ scholars believed ~~in the absolute truth of the~~ that the laws of nature had some absolute truth outside man; and if asked whether Newton's law of gravitation was absolute truth they would have answered: certainly. But many years afterwards it appeared that the moon ever more deviated from the predictions: The alarmed astronomers concluded that there must be more unknown causes at work and awaited a progress of science.

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What do we want the certainty of socialism for?
 The certainty of which socialism? Man may picture
 out for himself a structure of life and society he is aiming
 at, ~~he is working~~, he is fighting for. But always the result
 of all this fight and action is different from what he
 supposed and wished; his will and action was only one of the
 many forces determining the future. Some people call socialism
 the present situation of England, or of Russia; ^(rulers in office, their agents) others say that
 it is exactly the opposite of socialism; ~~that~~ it is quite
 sure that none of the revolutionists, the reformers, the politicians,
 the fighters has wished and foreseen exactly this. So it is
 nonsense to speak of the certainty of what we now imagine
 and wish as future conditions we are aiming at; this certainty
 is nihil.

When in emergency, enclosed under ruins, buried in dark
 underground, man by nature strives and works and exerts
 himself and thinks how to escape, how to win freedom and light;
 not necessary that theoretically to him is explained the certainty
 of escape. Probably, ^{the} only chance, is sufficient. So the working
 class under capitalism. Fighting, acting for better life is the
 natural reaction; of course they picture out then for
 themselves future conditions as the goal of their action.
 Of course they are planning, they put up their demands, they imagine
 other social relations. Of course they hope, they trust that they
 will be able to realize them, or at least great part of it.
 Is it necessary, then, that somebody demonstrates them the
 certainty of their image of the future?

For the leaders, the intellectuals which took part in the
 working class fight, the certainty of socialism has significance.
 They want theoretical clearness. They can go different ways;
 they can choose what class, what party, what program offers the
 best chances to apply their capacities. If the cause of the working
 class were a lost cause, when a rule of mighty rulers or a
 powerful ruling class should impose itself as probable, as prospective,
 then ^{surely} ~~certainty~~ they will not in large numbers join the workers
 and their socialist parties. So for them ^{the demonstration of} certainty of soc. is most
 important; theory of Marx hailed as the science demonstrating,
 leading, determines their taking sides.

Wetenschappelijke mededeling:

door de heer F. Kögl: "Over het vraagstuk der tumorproteïnen."

Koffiemaaltijd: 12 uur.

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It is meant as a threat to the adherent of
Socialism: if you doubt about its certainty,
if you do not assert that ^{socialism} ~~it~~ is certain, then
you say that socialism is impossible. And
~~for this you will not see~~