SOCIALIST REACTION TO MARXISM IN
LATE VICTORIAN ENGLAND

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SOCIALIST REACTION TO MARXISM IN
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For more than half a century, historians, economists, and political scientists have labored to explain why Marxism never won wide acceptance in Britain. The result is a confusing welter of pronouncements. Historians of the British labor movement suggest that the new unionism of the 1880's and its subsequent success virtually ruled out the possibility of English workers embracing Marxism. Several political scientists emphasize the growth and reform of political institutions in Britain. Since the workers had the right to vote, far from being alienated by the State, they looked to it and national political parties for redress of grievances. Some scholars stress that Marx's attacks on long established parliamentary traditions and non-political institutions such as the Church did not appeal to a population which had a choice either to accept or reject them. Still others point to Marx's Germanism; both Marx and Engels were oriented toward Germany in their interests, ways of thinking, associations, and tastes and, therefore, remained aliens in their adopted homeland.

One reason for the failure of Marxism to gain a large following in England, not explicitly covered by these writers, is the partial or complete rejection of Marxism by the
founders of the modern British socialist movement. This study attempts to explain their reaction to Marxism and to evaluate their criticism. The influence of other thinkers on these men is analyzed when that influence appeared to be significant.

The most important primary sources used for the exposition of Marxism found in the "Prologue" are The Communist Manifesto, Volume I of Kapital, the Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Anti-Dühring), and The Civil War in France. Marx and Engels present a general, but incomplete, exposition of their theories in The Communist Manifesto, which appeared in February, 1848. In the first volume of Kapital, Marx summarizes his economic thought up to 1867. Though superseded by Kapital, the Preface to A Contribution is extremely important for the study of Marxism. In addition to some biographical notes, it contains Marx's most succinct explanation of economic determinism. The Anti-Dühring, Engels' most important work, discusses the basic laws of Marxism. In The Civil War, Marx applies his theories to a historical event, the Paris Commune of 1871, and significantly describes his vision of a socialist society under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There is a deficiency of good biographies of Marx and Engels, despite their great contributions to socialist thought.
Of the studies available, the best on Marx are Franz Mehring's *Karl Marx: The Story of His Life*, Leopold Schwarzchild's *The Red Prussian: The Life and Legend of Karl Marx*, and Isaiah Berlin's *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment*. The first two must be used with caution because of their bias: Mehring is too pro-Marxist, and Schwarzchild, too hostile. Berlin has contributed a good history of Marx's intellectual development. Gustav Mayer's *Friedrich Engels: A Biography* is the only biography of Marx's close friend. Of the many good secondary accounts of Marxist theory, the most informative is Mandell Bober's *Karl Marx's Interpretation of History*.

The most important primary sources for the study of late Victorian British socialism are Henry M. Hyndman's four works: *England for All*, *The Historical Basis of Socialism in England*, *The Record of an Adventurous Life*, and *Further Reminiscences*; May Morris's *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist* and *The Collected Works of William Morris*; Stewart Headlam's *The Socialist's Church*; *Fabian Tracts*, *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, *The Collected Works of Bernard Shaw*, and Richard Ellis's *Bernard Shaw and Karl Marx*; and Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England and Britain for the British*. Two of Hyndman's works, *England for All* and *Historical Basis*, contain both his Marxian and non-Marxian views, while *Record and Reminiscences* are autobiographical. May Morris's life
of her father contains a wealth of primary material, including a number of complete essays and one play on socialism written by William Morris. Volume sixteen of Morris, Works, contains his novel about life in the future socialist era, and volume twenty-three includes more lectures and writings on socialism. In The Socialist's Church, Headlam attempts to prove that Christianity is essentially socialistic. Fabian Tracts and Fabian Essays are collections of writings by leading members of that intellectual society. Bernard Shaw and Karl Marx is a series of Shaw's newspaper articles written to defend Marxian economics against the attacks of Philip Wicksteed, but it does include one of Wicksteed's replies to Shaw. Blatchford gives his concept of socialism in Merrie England, the most popular of all the socialist publications of the 1880's and 1890's, and in Britain for the British.

All of these men have biographers. Several studies have been written about Hyndman, but the latest, Chushichi Tsuzuki's H. M. Hyndman and British Socialism, is the best researched and most impartial. Edward Thompson's William Morris, Romantic to Revolutionary, a history of the poet's intellectual growth, is good, but the author appears to exaggerate Morris's Marxism. The only biography of Headlam is that by F. G. Bettany who made good use of Headlam's manuscript autobiographical notes. There are, of course, numerous works on Shaw, but Archibald Henderson, one of Shaw's friends,
wrote the only authorized biography. Blatchford, despite his important work in spreading socialism in Britain, has been neglected by competent biographers, though Laurence Thompson's Robert Blatchford: Portrait of an Englishman, has some value for its general observations on Blatchford's intellectual development.
Karl Marx was born on May 5, 1818, in Trier (Treves), in Rhenish Prussia, the son of a Jewish lawyer. Near the close of his high school years he decided to become a poet, but his father wanted him to enter the legal profession. Deferring to his father's wishes, Marx entered the University of Bonn in the fall of 1835 to study law. A year later he transferred to the University of Berlin where he continued his study of jurisprudence, which he "pursued, however, in connection with and as secondary to the studies of philosophy and history."\(^1\)

In these new subjects, Marx came under the influence of Georg W. F. Hegel and joined a society known as the Young Hegelians. He soon became associated with the more radical element of this student group which generally repudiated the idealistic and metaphysical aspects of Hegelian philosophy but retained Hegel's theory of historical change. Marx eventually made it one of the main points of his philosophy.\(^2\)


Transferring to the University of Jena, Marx received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in philosophy from that institution in April, 1841. Early the next year he began contributing articles to the Rheinische Zeitung, "a liberal newspaper published in Cologne, the center of the industrialized Rhineland. . . ." He became editor-in-chief of the paper in mid-October, 1842, at a time when socialism was gaining new acceptance on the continent, especially in France. At first Marx attacked socialist theories as nothing but nonsense, but finding that he was not competent to judge the merits of socialism, he began to study economics.

In early 1843 the newspaper ran into trouble with the Prussian government which ordered the owners to cease publication. In an attempt to keep their investment going, the owners ordered Marx to tone the articles down. They "conceived the illusion that by a less aggressive policy the paper could be saved from the death sentence pronounced upon it," Marx explained, and "I was glad to grasp that opportunity to retire to my study room from public life." He resigned as editor in March, 1843, and devoted the next six months to his

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4. Ibid., p. 124; Marx, A Contribution, p. 10; Mehring, Karl Marx, pp. 55, 64; Schwarzchild, Red Prussian, pp. 43, 53-56, 60, 65.

economic studies. By the end of the summer, his conversion to socialism had been completed.6

The summer of 1843 was important to Marx for another reason. On June 19 he married Jenny von Westphalen, his childhood sweetheart. In November they moved to Paris where Marx became a correspondent to the German-French Yearbook. But the French government, in response to protests from Prussian officials concerning attacks on the Berlin government in the Yearbook, agreed to expel the owners and the leading contributors. After receiving an order in January, 1845, to leave France, Marx moved his family to Brussels. When he learned that the same officials now demanded his expulsion from Belgium, he renounced his Prussian citizenship.7

During his short stay in Paris, Marx met Frederick Engels, who in 1842 began working in his father's textile mill in Manchester. Both men had developed similar economic ideas independently of each other, Marx in Paris, and Engels in Manchester. In 1844 Engels contributed an article to the Yearbook which so impressed Marx that he immediately began corresponding with the younger German. After an argument with his father in February, 1845, Engels left the family home in

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6Mehring, Karl Marx, pp. 71-72, 77-78; Schwarzchild, Red Prussian, pp. 64-68, 74.

Barmen, Germany, and joined Marx in Brussels. It soon became obvious to both men that "they were meant to compliment each other, and that their spiritual development had been along the same lines." 8

By the spring of 1845, Marx had completed his theory of dialectical materialism, concluding that class conflict had determined all previous social relations and institutions. During the next two years, Marx completed three books, two in collaboration with Engels, at once expounding their theories, attacking other socialists and radicals whom they feared would lead the working classes from the true socialist creed, and disavowing the use of coups in overthrowing capitalist governments. But it was not until 1848, with the publication of The Communist Manifesto, that the world took notice of their views. Commissioned by the Communist League in early December, 1847, to draft a proclamation of its program, Marx and Engels composed the Manifesto which was published in London in early February, 1848, but the outbreak of revolt in

Paris later the same month soon diverted their attention from the work of the League. 9

Alarmed by the February Revolution and the activities of revolutionaries within her own borders, the Belgian government ordered Marx, among others, to leave the country. He returned to Paris in early March, 1848, and Engels, who had repaired to Brussels to work on the Manifesto, soon followed his friend to France. They tried to gain control of the Parisian proletariat, but disunity among the workers and their leaders checked them at every turn. As the revolutionary tide swept over Europe, the political struggles in Germany began to occupy their attention. Arriving in Cologne on April 10, 1848, they founded a newspaper called the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, the first issue of which appeared on June 1, 1848. It soon lost many of its backers, however, because Marx and his collaborators attacked the liberal movement in Germany and glorified the socialist rebels of the June Days in Paris. As a result of the victorious reaction of 1849, Marx was expelled from Prussia (May, 1849). He returned to Paris, but the French government refused him asylum. On August 24, 1849,

he arrived in London after participating in the French and German revolutionary movements of the past year and a half, and in November Engels joined him from his sanctuary in Switzerland. These two socialists took up residence in London expecting that they would soon return to the continent to lead the working classes to victory in further revolutions.10

But the insurrections Marx and Engels expected in 1849 never materialized, and their residence in London became permanent. This prolonged stay in England became the most important connecting link between Marxian philosophy and the late nineteenth century English socialists. It was in London that he gathered the material necessary for the completion of his ideology. He spent weeks at a time in the British Museum reading "from the financial columns of the Economist newspaper, from economic histories, from statistical material to be found in government Blue Books (which he was the first scholar to put to serious scientific use) and other sources . . . ."11 It was from British industrial civilization, as he found it in his research, that "he drew his sociological conclusions and upon which he based his hypotheses."12 He


11 Berlin, Karl Marx, p. 175.

regarded Britain as the classic example for the proof of his theories and repeatedly used the English experience to illustrate the development of his ideas.\textsuperscript{13} England, Marx believed, had established the pattern of economic development through which other European nations, sooner or later, must pass. From Britain, they could learn what the future held for them.\textsuperscript{14}

The publication of the Manifesto had been just as much a call to action as a proclamation of dogma, and it required elaboration. But Marx and Engels, indeed, never gave a complete exposition of their theories in a single work, nor even in the three volumes of Das Kapital (1867-1895). One reason for this omission was that they devoted the rest of their lives to such a vast number of projects and causes that they did not have time to summarize their views. Engels spent the years from 1850 to 1869 working in his father's firm in Manchester to support Marx's family, something that Marx would not do himself. They both wrote a great number of articles on current events for British and European journals


\textsuperscript{14}Marx to S. Meyer and A. Vogt, London, Apr. 9, 1870, The Selected Correspondence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (Moscow, 1953), p. 287 (hereafter cited as Marx and Engels, Correspondence); Marx, Capital, I, 13-14, 787; Beer, British Socialism, Pt. IV, p. 202; Schwarzchild, Red Prussian, p. 233; Wilson, Finland Station, p. 205.
and newspapers. In the decade preceding the American Civil War, Marx was a foreign correspondent for the New York Tribune. They continually engaged in polemics with men whom they regarded as enemies: Blanqui, the French revolutionary; Proudhon, the French anarchist-socialist; Lassalle, who organized the first socialist political party in Germany; and Bakunin, the Russian anarchist. These struggles outlived their instigators. Marx and Engels also participated in several political movements at home and abroad, the last days of the Communist League, and in the founding and directing of the International Working Men's Association. But probably the most important reason for failing to produce a definitive synthesis was that they were not systematic writers. Only their works on economics have any cohesion; their theories of history, economic determinism, and dialectical change are scattered throughout their earlier writings. The latter ideas are usually assumed rather than explicitly stated in their later writings. Finally, it should be noted that "neither Marx nor Engels were at sufficient pains to define the terms they used or, if they did so, to stick to their definitions ..." 15

Marx completed only one book during the decade of the fifties: *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. He intended it to be the first volume of a definitive work on economics, but he discontinued this project to do more research in the British Museum. Resuming his writing in the early 1860's, he published the first volume of *Kapital* on September 2, 1867. With its publication the Marxian system was virtually complete, though Engels, using Marx's notes, published two more volumes after the latter's death. In *Kapital* Marx expounded the economic theories he had presented more generally in his earlier works. The main difference between the *Manifesto* and *Kapital* is one of emphasis, not concept. Marx did not alter his main theories after the publication of *Kapital*, his later works being merely fuller explanations of previously stated ideas.  

The Marxist philosophical system falls naturally into two interdependent branches: pure theory and analysis. Under the former heading belong the general laws of history that Marx developed or borrowed and changed to suit his own purposes, and under the latter, his exposition of modern (mid-nineteenth century) capitalist society. Notwithstanding that Marx and Engels insisted that their philosophy was

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"scientific," it is not science since Marxian analysis always depends upon Marxian pure theory. According to the scientific method, theory may, indeed, precede observation and conclusion, but the validity of the theory must be demonstrated by observable data.¹⁷

Marx believed that capitalist society was evil and that it must change. He therefore searched for proof that it not only would change, but also that it would change for the better. He eventually developed two universal laws of history: first, all important historical evolution is dialectical and inevitable, and that the agent of this change is the class structure of each civilization; second, all civilizations, past and present, are determined by certain special economic factors known as the means of production.¹⁸

Hegel had popularized the theory of dialectical change in the early nineteenth century. After modifying the concept, Marx made it a central feature of his philosophy. According to the dialectical method, every subject and situation (known as the thesis) brings into existence opposing forces and antagonistic contradictions (the antithesis). These forces

¹⁷Frederick Engels, Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (New York, 1939), pp. 33, 310 (hereafter cited as Anti-Dühring); Wilson, Finland Station, pp. 328-329.

¹⁸Marx, A Contribution, pp. 11-13; Marx, Capital, I, 25-26, 639; Engels to F. A. Lange, Manchester, Mar. 29, 1865, Marx and Engels, Correspondence, p. 208; Berlin, Karl Marx, pp. 5-6, 124; Mayo, Marxism, pp. 31, 79, 178-181.
challenge the old order, and change inevitably occurs, giving birth to a higher stage of development (the synthesis) which contains the best elements of the old thesis and antithesis combined with new factors. This synthesis in turn becomes a new thesis, again creates its own opposition, and the process of change evolves to another stage. But where Hegel taught that the dialectic was both idealistic and metaphysical, Marx identified it with economics and the class struggle. Marx later declared that he had placed the concept upright, on its feet, by coupling it with materialism.¹⁹

According to Marx's materialistic interpretation of history, productive forces, collectively known as the means of production, form the substructure, or foundation, of all civilizations. The major means of production are workers, items provided by nature (land, water, timber, animals, ore), machinery, branches of science, and technology. These forces of production differ in degree and kind from one epoch to another, but they are always the determining and motivating factors in each era. All human existence is determined by

"the method by which a society utilizes natural resources and produces the goods by which it lives . . . ." 20

The substructure of any given civilization determines the form and the direction of the social relations and political, cultural, and intellectual institutions of its society, i.e., the superstructure. Marx used the following example to illustrate how the superstructure is determined by its economic foundation: "The windmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist." 21 But harmony between the economic foundation and the social structure does not endure. The superstructure becomes a hardened reactionary force while the methods of production are being continually revolutionized. The existing social order, thesis, begins to act as a fetter on the rapidly progressing forces of production, antithesis. The old society must be overthrown to allow the instruments of production to continue their development. 22

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22 Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, pp. 318, 327; Karl Marx, The Civil War in France, ibid.,
The improvement of the forces of production and the subsequent revolutionary changes leading to a new synthesis take place dialectically, but the dialectic is only the manner of change and neither the catalyst nor the actor. Dialectical change is carried out by classes, the dynamic element in history, who revolutionize the tools of production, control the dominant superstructure, and effect the changes that bring the new synthesis into being.23

All human beings, according to Marx, belong to a class. The most important characteristic of a class is whether or not it owns the means of production; thus are classes economically determined. In every historical age, the class that owns "the property needed in the process of production constitute one class, and those who do not own it form another."24

23 Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, p. 351; Marx to J. Weydemeyer, London, Mar. 5, 1852, Marx and Engels, Correspondence, p. 86; Engels, Feuerbach, Basic Writings, pp. 233-234; Berlin, Karl Marx, pp. 5-6, 125-126; Bober, Marx's Interpretation, pp. 99-100, 110; Cole, Socialist Thought, I, 252; Mayo, Marxism, p. 97; Wilson, Finland Station, p. 301.

24 Bober, Marx's Interpretation, p. 97.
The class that owns the means of production uses its advantage to exploit the other class. Although the method of exploitation differs in each epoch, it is always associated with the process of employment. Those who are not members of the possessing class do not have the wherewithal essential in the production of a livelihood. They must, therefore, acquire employment from those who do own the means and resources. In past civilizations this employment has taken the form of slavery and serfdom, and in modern capitalistic society it takes the form of wage slavery.  

The possessing class has another advantage. Ownership of the tools of production means control of the substructure and consequently command of everything that is determined by the economic foundation. Thus the dominant class controls all the various institutions of society such as the state, political parties, laws, morals, religion, ideology, and nationalism. These institutions change each time the economic foundation changes, but they always adapt to the new conditions and to control by the new dominant class. Marx denies that these institutions have a history independent of the forces of production: like shadows they are dependent upon the existence of something else. The dominant class uses these

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25 Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, p. 321; Marx, Poverty of Philosophy, p. 119; Berlin, Karl Marx, pp. 125-126 and 132; Bober, Marx's Interpretation, pp. 97-100, 109-110; Mayo, Marxism, p. 97; Schwarzchild, Red Prussian, p. 123; Wilson, Finland Station, pp. 301-302.
institutions "to prop up and explain away, or defend, their
own privileged, unnatural, and therefore unjustified, status
and power," and to keep the other class in a submissive
position. Thus these institutions present a reflection of
the thinking and action of the dominant class. Ownership
means rulership.

The state has at its disposal military and police powers;
防盗 the law through the use of courts and prisons,
and it maintains itself by taxation, tariffs, and national
debts. All of these powers are used by the exploiting class
"for the forcible holding down of the exploited class in the
conditions of oppression . . . determined by the existing
mode of production." Political parties are not much more
than social clubs and debating societies. They, too, reflect
the wishes of the ruling class. Analyzing the two political
parties in the United States, Engels once declared,

Here the great parties, to which the predominance
alternately falls, are in their turn ruled by
people who make a business of politics. . . .
We have here two great rings of political specu-
lators, that alternately take possession of the

26 Berlin, Karl Marx, p. 133.

27 Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings,
p. 318; Marx, A Contribution, pp. 11-13; Marx, Poverty of
Philosophy, p. 119; Berlin, Karl Marx, pp. 5-6, 126, 132, 195;
Bober, Marx’s Interpretation, pp. 97-100, 108-111, 115, 128-
129, 138, 143-145; Mayo, Marxism, p. 5; Schwarzchild, Red
Prussian, pp. 114, 123.

28 Engels, Anti-Dühring, p. 306.
power of State and exploit it with the most corrupt means and to the most corrupt purposes. In short, the state is an instrument of oppression. To soften their crass use of political power, the upper class effectively uses emotional institutions such as ideology, national pride, morality, and religion. In each historical epoch the dominant class has employed these institutions for the same reason that it has used the state. Morality is always the morality of the ruling class, and the exploited class is forced to accept it. "What harmonizes with economic conditions is moral; what does not is not." The only reason for the existence of morality is to protect the economic interests of the dominant class. The same is true of the other emotional institutions. Religion is used as a smoke screen for oppression: it directs the attention of oppressed people away from their true situation to some future life that does not exist. Religion "is the opium of the people."

29Engels, "Introduction," in Marx, Civil War in France, Other Writings, pp. 379-381, 400-402; Marx, Capital, I, 823-824; Engels, Feuerbach, Basic Writings, pp. 235-237; Bober, Marx's Interpretation, pp. 128-138; Cole, Socialist Thought, II, 82-83.

30Bober, Marx's Interpretation, pp. 143-144.

31Ibid., pp. 147-156; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, On Religion (New York, 1964), pp. 41-42; Marx, Capital, I, 15, 91-93, 303n, 668n; Engels, Feuerbach, Basic Writings, pp. 237-239, 245; Engels, Anti-Dühring, pp. 103-105, 344-346; Berlin, Karl Marx, pp. 133, 195-196; Mayo, Marxism, p. 56; Schwarzchild, Red Prussian, pp. 114, 123; Wilson, Finland Station, p. 304.
The oppressed class gradually becomes aware of the antagonisms between itself and its oppressors as the latter revolutionize the tools of production, thus causing a transition to a new synthesis. The exploited class, believing the change will lead to an improvement in its welfare, supports the transition. But the ruling class, fearful that a change in the status quo will result in the loss of its hegemony, uses the institutions of the superstructure to halt the transition. This effort to prevent change is the fundamental cause of the class struggle, the dialectic manifested in history. The "haves" (thesis) are now opposed by the "have-nots" (antithesis); the struggle between the two inevitably leads to a new synthesis. The substructure, freed from its fetters, continues its development. As new classes arise, the process begins again.\(^3^2\)

The development of Marx's interpretation of history paralleled his analysis and criticism of capitalistic society. Despite his view that all human history fell into four great epochs, he almost completely ignored the first three and concentrated on the fourth: that of capitalism. The middle class or bourgeoisie destroyed feudalism because it had the

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\(^{3^2}\) Marx, Poverty of Philosophy, pp. 136-137; Engels, Anti-Dühring, pp. 201, 307-308; Berlin, Karl Marx, pp. 7-8, 126; Bober, Marx's Interpretation, pp. 99-100, 103-104; Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, pp. 318, 321, 326, 329-330; Class war is "the only justifiable war in history . . . ." Marx, Civil War in France, ibid., p. 424.
most to gain from the continued improvement of the means of production and a change in social relations. As the middle class gained control of the tools of production, they slowly displaced the feudal nobility as the ruling class.

The bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world-market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.33

When the bourgeoisie overthrew feudalism, it had been a revolutionary class, but as it gained control over the substructure, it became reactionary and oppressive like all past ruling classes and for the same reason: to maintain its privileged position. The nature of a dominant class is to dominate.34

The bourgeoisie introduced new inventions, the factory system, and the extensive use of machinery to increase output. It revolutionized these forces far beyond a point previously thought possible and centralized the means of production in its own hands, in contrast to the feudality whose control had been territorially decentralized. But the bourgeoisie, like


34 Ibid., pp. 292-294; Marx, Capital, I, 823-824, 836, 787; Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, pp. 321, 323-324, 332, 341; Marx, Civil War in France, Ibid., pp. 380-381, 400-402.
all previous dominant classes, carried the seed of its own
destruction. 35

When "the bourgeoisie arose out of the burghers of the
feudal period . . . , it was always and inevitably accompanied
by its shadow, the proletariat." 36 This is the class, the
immense majority of the population in a capitalist society,
that will one day destroy bourgeois civilization. Since the
bourgeoisie controls the instruments required to maintain
life, and the laborers must make use of them to survive, the
two classes establish economic and social arrangements. The
proletariat is allowed to use the capitalist's land, machinery,
and factories and is given a bare subsistence wage in return
for the production of commodities. From this arrangement
arises the capitalist exploitation of the proletariat, for
exchange value, Marx insisted, is created by and dependent
upon labor power. Every commodity produced for social ex-
change has value only because some individual has expended a
certain amount of labor power to produce it. Man's labor
power is a unique commodity because it is the only one that
can create value. The worker sells his labor to the capital-
ist in order to gain access to the tools of production. But
the wage he receives is not equal to the value he adds to the

35 Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings,
pp. 323-328, 334; Marx, Civil War in France, Ibid., p. 408;

36 Ibid., p. 117.
commodity which, in turn, the capitalist adds to the price of the product. The difference between the worker's wage and the true value of his labor (the worker's commodity) is what Marx called surplus value. If a worker labors for twelve hours, and only six are required for subsistence, which is what he receives in wages, the rate of surplus value is 100 per cent of his wage and 50 per cent of the value of his total labor. The capitalist simply expropriates the value created by six hours of unpaid labor. Since the capitalist includes all other expenses in the price of his products, surplus value is clear profit. By his analysis, Marx attempted to show that the laborer is robbed of what is rightfully his and that profit is exploitation.\(^{37}\)

The capitalist, moreover, exploits his laborers in other ways. By continually introducing new machinery into his factories in order to compete with other capitalists for markets, he displaces workers and thus swells the ranks of the unemployed. But machinery cannot create value, and the capitalist is forced either to lengthen the working day, or to compel his workers to increase their output. If he did neither, the rate of surplus value would decline. Capitalism,

\(^{37}\)Marx, Capital, I, 41-55, 81-84, 163-173, 184-186, 189-191, 336-337, 482, 612, 785-786, 809; Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, pp. 321, 333; The best short, general example of how labor value and surplus value work in a capitalist society is given by Engels in his introduction to Marx, Wage-Labor and Capital, pp. 10-17.
therefore, degrades and debases the life of the proletariat.

"In proportion as capital accumulates," Marx declared,

the lot of the labourer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse... It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with the accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole...

As the misery and degradation of the worker grows, he has no time for proper rest, "for education, for intellectual development, for the fulfilling of social functions...

His health is impaired by low wages, bad working conditions, poor food, and adulterated medicine.

The exploitation of the worker has created, however, the very dialectical contradictions which will undermine bourgeois civilization. The capitalist has developed the instruments of production to the point where individuals can no longer compete successfully against socialized, collectivized labor in producing for a world-wide market. But the distribution of wealth in a capitalist society is not socialized; it goes to a few individuals while the vast majority suffer on

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39 Marx, Capital, I, 291.

subsistence wages. Allocation of raw materials is not a social decision but a private one made by each capitalist. These are the major contradictions. They lead to terrible economic crises in the form of international depressions and wars which prove that the bourgeoisie is no longer fit to rule over the immense majority of the world's population. To correct these abuses and to prevent future exploitation, the masses now demand the socialization of all society, the redistribution of wealth, and the reallocation of raw materials. These goals will be achieved by the proletariat as they play their historical role in the class struggle.  

Marx thought that a violent proletarian revolution would accomplish the final destruction of capitalism. But this revolution was still in the future; meanwhile, the workers had to awaken to the true nature of the struggle against capitalism and organize. The creation of an awareness of the antagonisms existing between the workers and their employers is a slow process. When large numbers of the proletariat finally realize the situation, they will organize in unions which, though not very successful by

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themselves, will at least indicate to the laborers the next key phase in the struggle. 42

"Every class struggle is a political struggle," Marx proclaimed. 43 The purpose of unions, therefore, is to convince the workers that the formation of a political party is necessary if, in the immediate future, they are to make progress toward winning full political rights and reforming the capitalist system. Marx had no faith that reforms would greatly alter the basic nature of capitalism, but demands for redress of grievances would help to aggravate the class struggle and awaken a class consciousness within the working class. The only party for the proletariat is, of course, the communist party. Communists, Marx defines as those workers and intellectuals who clearly and completely understand the meaning of the class struggle, capitalist society, and future socio-economic trends. They are "the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties..."44

42 Karl Marx, "Address to the Central Authority of the Communist League," Other Writings, p. 367; Marx, Capital, I, 836-837; Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, pp. 329-330, 355; Marx, Poverty of Philosophy, pp. 186-191; Marx to Engels, London, Feb. 18, 1865, Marx and Engels, Correspondence, pp. 198-201; Engels to the Communist Correspondence Committee, No. 3, Paris, Oct. 23, 1846, ibid., p. 37; Engels to A. Bebel, London, Mar. 18-28, 1875, ibid., p. 356.

43 Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, p. 330.

44 Ibid., p. 334.
They always represent the interests of the proletariat and explain to them just what those interests are and how they can be achieved. "The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of the other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat." 45

The political activity of the proletariat intensifies the class struggle; the revolution draws nearer. Both Marx and Engels believed that the revolution would begin during a crisis, when the bourgeoisie, concentrating on the crisis and not the class struggle, are at a disadvantage, and when the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat is more acute than usual because of the intensity of the pressures created by the crisis. The proletarian revolution must be violent in order to destroy capitalism completely. The expropriators will be expropriated. 46 The revolution will be an international

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46 Marx, Capital, I, 837.
movement with the proletariat of all nations united in one cause, but national differences must be settled before international communism is established. The successful completion of the revolution, Marx prophesied, would result in a transitional era leading to the establishment of the final and everlasting epoch of history, communism.47

During this transitional period, known as the dictatorship of the proletariat, the workers will establish a democratic state which will prepare the way for a communist society. The governors of the state, democratically elected, will be directly responsible to the people and subject to recall for disloyalty or malfeasance. The two major functions of this government will be to guard against a bourgeois counter-revolution and to finish the socialization of the new substructure and the new superstructure. The latter task will be accomplished through the proletarian program

which, from one country to another, may differ in detail, but not in principle. All private property will be abolished, and rent, collected by the state, will be used to further the interests of the commonweal. Banks and other fiscal institutions, the means of communication and transportation, and farms and industries, all will be centralized under state control and operated for the benefit of the proletariat. Work and education will be compulsory.  

Once this program of socialization has been completed, the era of communism dawns. As the final epoch of human history, it possesses several characteristics not found in the previous four. With the end of classes, the class struggle with its inherent exploitations will cease. For lack of exploitation, all the institutions used to implement it also will disappear. The state will wither away, leaving only some administrative organizations. "The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the processes of production." Religion and class morality will disappear, too, and be replaced by a higher, completely realistic morality. Communism will

\[\text{References:}\]
\[\text{Marx, Capital, I, 837; Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, pp. 342-343; Marx, Civil War in France, Ibid., pp. 400-412; Marx, "Gotha Program," Basic Writings, p. 127; Engels, Anti-Dühring, pp. 173-175, 214, 306; Marx to J. Weydemeyer, London, Mar. 5, 1852, Marx and Engels, Correspondence, p. 86; Berlin, Karl Marx, p. 160; Hunt, Marxism, p. 138; Mayo, Marxism, pp. 131, 135.}\]
\[\text{Engels, Anti-Dühring, p. 307.}\]
establish the true relationship of man to man, and of man to all other aspects of life. In contrast to the capitalist society in which the bourgeoisie had been the idle rich living off the blood and sweat of others, everyone in the communist society will work so that no one will be able to exploit the toil of others. The fundamental economic principle of communism is utilitarian: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" The essence of communism is "humanity's leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom." The grinding mill of dialectical materialism will cease to turn in this workers' paradise, for in a classless society, there is nothing to sustain it.

Marx and Engels did not live to see societies founded and revolutions fought in their names. They did, however, witness the formation of Marxist political parties on the continent. England, the country that was supposed to lead all others along the tortuous path to the communist Utopia, refused to play the role Marx had assigned her. Socialism, long dormant in England, did not show signs of stirring until

50 Marx, "Gotha Program," Basic Writings, p. 119.
the late 1870's. It was then awakened, not by Marx, but by various other factors: an economic depression, dissatisfaction with the policies of the Liberal Party, the need for trade union reforms, and the work of people like Henry George.

Marx died on March 14, 1883, before this revival was well under way, leaving "the movement to what leadership it could get." Although Engels lived until August 6, 1895, he never rose to leadership in the British socialist movement. His last years were spent in finishing, editing, and publishing many of Marx's works as well as his own. Thus the intellectual direction of the movement in England was left to others, the most important of which were H. M. Hyndman, William Morris, Stewart Headlam, George Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, and Robert Blatchford during its formulative years (1881-1901).

Hyndman was the only important English socialist of the period who had known Marx, having paid him frequent visits during the last three years of the old socialist's life. Since he did not accept the entire Marxian system, and modified much of what he did accept, Hyndman may be considered one of the first Marxian revisionists. Morris also accepted

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certain Marxist theories and revised others, but he empha-
sized factors not previously stressed by Marx. Like other
English socialists, Morris was influenced by several men in
the formulation of his ideas. Headlam, the leading Christian
Socialist of the fin de siècle was more influenced by the
 teachings of his faith than by Marx. As a Christian, he was,
of course, opposed to Marx's attacks upon religion. Shaw
began as a Marxian socialist but later decisively repudiated
the central tenets of Marxian economics. Shaw, together with
Webb and other leading Fabians, developed much of what became
the basic philosophy of English socialism. Blatchford, an
intelligent man, but one who did not concern himself with
deep philosophical theories, was England's only important
socialist journalist of the 1890's. He converted thousands,
perhaps millions, of Englishmen to a non-Marxist socialist
creed.
CHAPTER I

HENRY M. HYNDMAN AND THE SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

In the spring of 1880 Karl Hirsch, a veteran German socialist, took Henry Hyndman to meet Karl Marx who then resided at 41 Maitland Park Road, Haverstock Hill, London. When the two visitors left after a two hour interview, Hirsch asked his companion what he thought of Marx; Hyndman replied: "He is the Aristotle of the Nineteenth Century." ¹

Although Marx had been a resident of London for more than thirty years, he was not well-known among the English masses. Socialism, as an idea or movement, was almost non-existent in Britain in 1880. Hyndman, despite the great impression which Marx had made on him, was not yet interested in socialism. Indeed, he was more interested in a parliamentary career.²

When Disraeli dissolved parliament on March 8, 1880, and called for a general election, Hyndman was "suddenly determined . . . to stand for Marylebone as an independent candidate." Seeking the support of the working class, he ran on an anti-Russian, anti-Anglican, anti-Gladstone platform. He soon withdrew from the race, however, because of stiff Liberal opposition and his failure to obtain much support from the laborers. Gladstone, speaking in Marylebone after Hyndman had retired from the race, derisively invited his audience "to shed tears over the extinction of the independent candidate."

After the election was over, Hyndman sailed to the United States to inspect his mining interests in Utah. In transit he read the first volume of Kapital, and, later in the American West, he studied Henry George's Progress and Poverty, which had been published in 1879. Rejecting Georgism, Hyndman became a convert to the economic theories of Marxian socialism. He returned to London in October, 1880, with a vague plan for founding a new political party dedicated to social and political reform. But he soon changed his mind and decided to pin all his hopes for reform on the Conservative Party. In late March or early April, 1881, he interviewed

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3 Hyndman, Record, pp. 201-202.

4 Frederick J. Gould, Hyndman: Prophet of Socialism (London, 1928), p. 53; Enser, England, p. 64; Tsuzuki, Hyndman, pp. 29-30. According to Hyndman, his anti-Russian program which coincided with Marx's anti-Russian bias "constituted a link between us." Hyndman, Record, p. 274.
the ailing Lord Beaconsfield concerning the latter's ideas on a British reform movement under Conservative direction. The ex-Prime Minister believed that reform would be beneficial, but that the Conservatives would never become the vehicle for such a movement. He also indicated that Hyndman would have a hard time arousing the English people even for such a worthwhile cause.5

Apparently as a result of Disraeli's discouragement, Hyndman returned to his original idea of founding an independent reform organization which would resemble that of the Chartists. Since he now saw Marx frequently, he asked the old socialist what he thought of reviving the Chartist movement. Marx, who had taken an interest in Chartism in its last years, was sympathetic but remarked that such a plan probably was not feasible. This time, however, Hyndman would not be discouraged.6

On March 2, 1881, a meeting of various Radical Clubs of London, held at the invitation of Hyndman, approved a resolution calling for the formation of a strong democratic party and parliamentary representation for the working class. After two more preliminary meetings, held on March 5 and 19, they


6Hyndman, Record, pp. 223, 273, 276-277.
agreed to the establishment of a new reform organization which would work for universal manhood suffrage, legislative independence for Ireland, and land nationalization. The name given to this party was the Democratic Federation.\footnote{Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party, p. 16; Tsuzuki, Hyndman, pp. 38-39.}

The inaugural conference of the Democratic Federation took place at Memorial Hall in Farrington Street on June 8, 1881. On July 16, the Federation published its objectives and program. Its aims were to provide an organization for workers, to agitate for the adoption of its program, and to propagate political and social reforms. The program included support of universal manhood suffrage, triennial parliaments, payment of members of parliament, abolition of the House of Lords, legislative independence for Ireland, and nationalization of the land. The program reflected Hyndman's attempt to revive the long defunct Chartist movement. The only policy which could be considered socialistic was that favoring land nationalization.\footnote{Hyndman, Record, p. 250; Beer, British Socialism, Pt. III, pp. 30-31; Ibid., Pt. IV, p. 247; Gould, Prophet of Socialism, p. 68; S. Maccoby, England Radicalism 1853-1886 (London, 1938), p. 330; Tsuzuki, Hyndman, pp. 40-41.}

The Federation was not a socialist organization in the first year and a half of its existence, and many of the radical members resigned before the end of 1881 because of Hyndman's socialistic views, thus reducing the Federation to...
a small, middle class group. Some of these tendencies were
made manifest at the inaugural conference when Hyndman distrib-
uted to each of the members and visiting representatives copies
of England for All, a book he had just completed. Although
the book dealt primarily with the Empire and suggestions for
its reorganization, revealing what Hyndman's main interests
were at this time, two chapters discussed surplus value and
the labor theory of value. Much of what he wrote about these
subjects was lifted directly from the first volume of Kapital.9
In the preface to his book, Hyndman frankly confessed, "For
the ideas and much of the matter contained in Chapters II and
III, I am indebted to the work of a great thinker and original
writer, which will, I trust, shortly be made accessible to the
majority of my countrymen."10

Marx had observed that all true economic thinking is
based on these two fundamental concepts: that labor creates
all value and that surplus value invariably means the exploi-
tation of the workers by an idle class. Hyndman had actually
accepted these two points of the Marxian system before writing

10 Hyndman was referring to the fact that the first vol-
ume of Kapital was available only in French and German editions.
ed. (London, 1881), p. I; Hyndman, Record, pp. 248, 250; Gould,
Prophet of Socialism, p. 9; Maccoby, Radicalism, p. 330;
Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party, p. 22; Edward Thompson,
344; Tsuzuki, Hyndman, pp. 41-42, 46-47; Beer, British Social-
ism, Pt. IV, p. 227.
England for All, but this book was the first public expression of his conversion. He continued to expound Marx's economic theories the rest of his life in his books, newspaper and journal articles, and lectures. Writing to The Times in December, 1887, he declared that "in Great Britain at least two-thirds of the value of wealth produced goes into the pockets of non-producers . . . ."\textsuperscript{11} And in 1920, the year before he died, Hyndman still was attempting to get his countrymen to accept Marxian economic theories.\textsuperscript{12}

Hyndman, following Marx's lead, believed that the class struggle resulted from economic conditions which allow the rich to get richer while the poor get poorer. He believed, too, that the class struggle resulted from the dominant economic conditions of any given historical period. A year after the publication of England for All, he wrote, "He who writes the history of class-war writes the history of civilized peoples,"\textsuperscript{13} a statement quite similar to a more famous one on the same subject: "The history of all hitherto existing

\begin{footnotes}
\item The Times (London), December 6, 1887, p. 6.
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society is the history of class struggles."

Both men, however, ultimately revised their rigid stand on this point of the class war, agreeing that communism, or class cooperation, had been the basis of primitive society, and that class cooperation tends to create a cyclical pattern of history rather than a stairopstep progression of continuous struggle, the concept usually held by Marxists. Like Marx, Hyndman thought that the class struggle was inevitable in a capitalist society, but again he gradually modified his views. He once predicted, for instance, that some of the major struggles of the future would take the form of national, rather than class, confrontations.

But the class struggle did exist, and Hyndman never denied it; the only course left open to the workers, therefore, was organization against the bourgeoisie. Both Marx and Hyndman, convinced that the coming revolution was inevitable, urged the unification of the working class, but for

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14 Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, p. 321.

different reasons. While Marx wanted unification for the purpose of strengthening the discipline and education of workers and eventually bringing about the violent revolution, Hyndman desired organization for the purpose of peaceful political action. To later revolutionary Marxists, Hyndman's attitude toward the revolution was rank heresy, but on the point of peaceful transition to communism he did not deviate completely from the gospel according to Marx. The latter, indeed, had confided to Hyndman that the great social changes that were to come in Britain could be brought about peacefully, and Engels, in the Preface to the first English edition of *Capital*, confirmed this view. But Hyndman, on his own part, did not pay much attention to the reservations that Marx and Engels attached to their predictions. Marx repeatedly emphasized to Hyndman that history did not prove that the change from capitalism to communism could be peaceful; Engels recalled that Marx "certainly never forgot to add that he hardly expected the English ruling class to submit, without a 'pro-slavery rebellion,' to this peaceful and legal revolution."16 Thus Hyndman adopted a fragment of Marxism and

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16 Engels, Preface to the first English translation of *Capital*, I, 32.
conveniently forgot that the philosophy, as a whole, assumed the use of violence. 17

After many years of analyzing the theory of revolution, Hyndman finally defined it as "a thorough economic, social and political change in any great human community." 18 For him revolution did not mean physical violence, but the state of society after the changes had been made. The new civilization could be created by parliamentary means, not violence, but he qualified this possibility by observing that it would be possible only where legal outlets such as freedom of speech, assembly, and the secret ballot were available to the working class, all of which had been enacted into law in England by 1885. In a very non-Marxist statement, Hyndman cautioned the British socialists "to be careful, lest, in getting rid of the excessive influence of one dominant class, we do but strengthen the power of a meaner and worse one in its place." 19

One way to avoid such a condition was peaceful, parliamentary


18 Hyndman, Evolution of Revolution, p. 12; Hyndman, Economics of Socialism, p. 4.

19 Hyndman, England for All, p. 86.
change. In 1920 he severely criticized the Bolshevik Revolution for its violence, radicalism, and undemocratic methods.

Probably the two major reasons for the contrasting views of Marx and Hyndman toward the revolution were their totally divergent concepts of the state and the fact that Hyndman was an Englishman, an ex-Tory, who was steeped in English political traditions. Both Marx and Engels viewed the state as an instrument of oppression which must be destroyed before communism could be founded. Hyndman, on the other hand, thought that the state must play an important role in bringing about the era of class cooperation.

If the theories now gaining ground all over the Continent, as well as here with us, are to be met peacefully, and turned to the advantage of all, the necessary change . . . can no longer be delayed. The State, as the organized common-sense of public opinion, must step in, regardless of greed or prejudice, to regulate that normal individual freedom which simply strengthens the domination of the few.

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Thus the state, as "organized common-sense of public opinion," not only could promote the transition to the co-operative society, but also could insure that the transition be peaceful. Hyndman believed that the state could act for the benefit of all and, in a more conservative moment he declared: "We shall be able to satisfy the legitimate claims of the many without trenching upon the rights and privileges of the few [i.e., the bourgeoisie]." Marx had taught that reform never could be completely successful, since capitalists always would find ways to circumvent them. Reforms, moreover, only served to emphasize the exploitation of the workers. But Hyndman believed that the state had been partially successful in relieving the misery of the British working class and in removing social injustice through reforms in the past. He wanted more of this kind of legislative action.

Hyndman was certain that the state, as it existed under capitalism, would have to be changed, but he never advocated the withering away of the state. The state in the past had caused and perpetuated inequalities because political power rested in the hands of a small, minority class. The old


state must give way to a democratic state where political power rested upon the will of the people.\textsuperscript{24}

Hyndman definitely believed that the destruction of the state, by whatever means, would result in complete anarchy, a contingency that must be avoided. He repeatedly tried to convince Prince Peter Kropotkin, the Russian anarchist, of the need for a governmental organization freely constituted by the people. "Hitherto the State has been regarded as an enemy," Hyndman declared, but "the time is coming when all will be ready to recognize that its friendly influence is needed to prevent serious trouble, and to lead the way to a happier period."\textsuperscript{25}

This philosophy of the state led Hyndman to urge the Democratic Federation to resort to direct political action as a means of promoting the transition to socialism. The governmental reforms advocated by the Federation in July, 1881, were but "stepping-stones" to socialism. For the rest of his life, Hyndman urged socialists to run for seats in national and local governmental assemblies to gain valuable political and administrative experience. Socialists would have need of such knowledge when they assumed control of the

\textsuperscript{24}Verbatim Report of a Debate, p. 10.

state. "No party of the people can," he declared, be effectively active or even keep itself alive on abstractions and theories alone. Without a high ideal nothing can be achieved, even if the economic and social development is understood. But without some immediate object to strive for, and some opportunity of testing growth and strength at intervals, it is impossible to keep men together.  

Hyndman's statement not only reveals a modification of the theory of economic determinism, but indicates the reasons for his attitude toward political action. In one sense this is a conscious revision of another aspect of Marxism; Marx, Hyndman thought, could not see the advantages of immediate political goals, because he lacked knowledge of practical English politics.  

Hyndman met frequently with Marx and kept him informed about the founding of the Democratic Federation, but Marx soon formed an unfavorable opinion of this new disciple. Hyndman aroused Marx's suspicion when he published an article in the January, 1881, issue of The Nineteenth Century in which he turned some Marxian concepts against violent revolution. But it was the publication of England for All that

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caused an open breach between the two men. Hyndman, it will be recalled, had indeed acknowledged in the Preface his indebtedness to a "great thinker and original writer" for the labor theory of value and the concept of surplus value, but had not mentioned Marx by name. This was a blow to Marx's ego, for he had long sought notoriety in England. That he felt slighted by Hyndman's meager and indirect acknowledgement of his contributions seems clear from a letter written to F. A. Sorge, a friend in America. After praising two recent articles on his work by Englishmen in British journals, he went on to review Hyndman's book:

It pretends to be written as an exposé of the programme of the 'Democratic Federation' . . . . The chapters on Labour and Capital are only literal extracts from, or circumlocutions of, the Capital, but the fellow does neither quote the book, nor its author. . . . Vis-à-vis myself, the fellow wrote stupid letters of excuse, for instance, that 'the English don't like to be taught by foreigners,' that 'my name was so much detested, etc.' With all that, his little book--so far as it pilfers the Capital--makes good propaganda, although the man is a weak vessel, and very far from having even the patience--the first condition of learning anything--of studying a matter thoroughly.  

Engels apparently helped to convince Marx that Hyndman was an ambitious ex-Conservative interested only in making money and a reputation. Years Later, Hyndman maintained that there had been a reconciliation with Marx just before the latter's

death, but he never met Engels despite the fact that they both lived in London.  

In 1882 the Federation focused its attention on the Irish Question, and it was this issue which led to a meeting between Hyndman and Henry George, who later became a guest in Hyndman's home for about a month early in 1882. Within several years, however, the two men became public antagonists, and Hyndman finally characterized George as "a sort of intellectual anarchist" who could not see the forest for the trees. George, he complained, placed too much emphasis on nationalizing land while by-passing the more important issue of surplus value, and he agreed with Marx that Progress and Poverty was the "capitalists" last ditch.

Not until June, 1883, did the Federation, as an organization, issue its first strictly socialist pamphlet, Socialism Made Plain. This manifesto expounded Marxian economic theories, demanded nationalization of the means of production and distribution, a system of free and universal education,

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30 Hyndman, Record, pp. 231, 290; Hyndman and George, "Socialism and Rent-Appropriation," The Nineteenth Century, XVII (Feb., 1885), pp. 369-380; Clayton, Rise and Decline, p. 10; Tsuzuki, Hyndman, pp. 45-46; Marx to F. Sorge, London, June 20, 1881, Marx and Engels, Correspondence, pp. 414-417.
an eight hour day, a graduated income tax on revenue over £300, and the establishment of state controlled cooperatives for the unemployed. It also revived the Chartist demands for annual parliaments, universal manhood suffrage, a republican form of government, and it concluded with a declaration that the Democratic Federation had been founded to support and spread this program. The document was signed by the chairman of the Federation, Hyndman, and some recent important converts. William Morris, the famous Victorian poet who had joined a few months earlier, signed as the treasurer of the group. Henry H. Champion, a socialist and an early leader of the movement to form an Independent Labor Party, signed as the secretary of the Federation. Another important signatory was Ernest Belfort Bax who had been drawn to socialism by the tragic example of the Paris Commune and who, within the last ten years, had studied and accepted much of the Marxist creed. Marx praised him for an article he had written in a British monthly review explaining Marxism. Bax, moreover, was one of the few English socialists that Engels accepted on friendly terms. 31

In November, 1883, Hyndman brought out his second book, *The Historical Basis of Socialism in England*. This time he made appropriate acknowledgments of the intellectual contributions of Marx and Engels. The work emphasized the historical development of capitalism in England, applying Marxian economic concepts wherever possible. But for the first time, Hyndman publicly rejected economic determinism. Although vague, the rejection was there; this denial was extremely important because Marx had made it, along with dialectical change, the center of his philosophical system. Without economic determinism, the Marxian concepts of the substructure and superstructure lose their meaning. As the years passed, Hyndman's disavowal became more pronounced. In *The Historical Basis*, he accepted the Church as an independent and important institution in historical development. He held that the Church had played an important and constructive role in the past and could play a significant role in bringing about the era of class cooperation, though he was not optimistic that it would. He later cited the Crusades as an example of the type of historical event that was dominated by factors other than dialectical materialism. He emphasized, too, that social, political, and intellectual institutions and customs influence the economic system which supports them.  

Hyndman credited William Morris with putting "us on the right track to this consummation and fulfillment of the idea side of our great material creed,"\(^\text{33}\) for abstract ideas often had been more influential than economic factors. To Hyndman it was ridiculous even to suggest that such subjects as arithmetic and chemistry had evolved from anything other than abstract reasoning. But he was not alone in revising the theory of historical materialism. Even Engels modified the theory of economic determinism in a series of letters written a few years before his death. "According to the materialist conception of history," wrote Engels,

> the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I has ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure ... also exercise their influence upon the course of historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form.\(^\text{34}\)

But this explanation is a modification of what both Marx and Engels had written, and later in the same letter, Engels as much as admitted it: "Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame ... We had to emphasize the main principle vis-à-vis our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the

\(^{33}\)Hyndman, *Record*, p. 367.

time, the place, or the opportunity to give their due to the other elements involved in the interaction."  

Hyndman, shortly before his death in 1921, stated that "economic causes produce social revolutions. But national antagonisms and racial oppression, as well as economic rivalry, have often brought about wars." 36 "All wars are no more of necessity economic wars than all internal national conflicts are of necessity class struggles..." 37 He believed that wars of emancipation could not be considered economic wars. His views on war contrast with those held by Marx who not only believed that wars are economically motivated but also that they could provide the impetus for the proletarian revolution. 38

Marx believed that the pre-revolutionary period was the time to educate the proletariat, and Hyndman, to fulfill this necessity, suggested to the Federation that it needed a propaganda organ. On January 19, 1884, the Democratic Federation published the first number of its weekly newspaper, Justice: the Organ of the Social Democracy. All the objectives that had been approved in the past were reaffirmed as the Federation's present program. The phrase "Social

36 Hyndman, Evolution of Revolution, p. 366.
37 Quoted in Gould, Prophet of Socialism, p. 192.
38 Ibid.
Democracy" certainly suggested a blueprint for a new political, social, and economic society. The original contributors included Hyndman, Morris, Bax, Champion, and George Bernard Shaw, and later in the year, Walter Crane became the semi-official political cartoonist of the paper.

Besides gaining some notoriety for the Federation, the appearance of Justice undoubtedly assisted the organization in acquiring additional members during 1884. Two future labor leaders, John Burns and Will Thorne, joined. Tom Mann, another future labor leader, became affiliated with the Federation but did not join until the next year. Late in the year, Edward Aveling and his common-law wife, Eleanor Marx Aveling, Marx's youngest daughter, became members. The organization had a number of speakers who were popular with the working class of London, but the man who probably drew the most public attention to the Federation at this time was William Morris, because of his prestige in the literary world.

Hyndman's first public debate with Charles Bradlaugh also aroused public interest. Bradlaugh was at that time an important figure in the working class movement, and his own

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40 Hyndman, Record, pp. 346-350, 357-358, 370-372; Bax, Reminiscences, p. 55; Clayton, Rise and Decline, pp. 11, 29; Thompson, William Morris, pp. 350, 385.
organization, the National Secular Society, had branches in most of the industrial cities of England. He had achieved national notoriety in 1880 by refusing to take the Parliamentary Oath affirming a God in which he could not and would not believe. He was denied his parliamentary seat and later imprisoned because of this refusal, all of which made him a martyr to his followers. Bradlaugh, a Radical democrat, was staunchly opposed to socialism. 41

In the debate, held on April 17, 1884, Hyndman, defending Marxian economic theories and using all the proper clichés, characterized capitalism as an anarchistic struggle for existence that must be superseded by socialism. The workers, who produce all value, were poor because "the surplus value is divided up by the idle or non-producing classes of the population." 42 He contended that exchange was actually war between individual capitalists. The workers received cheap, filthy, and unhealthy products as the result of such anarchy, to say nothing of subsistence wages and uncertainty of employment. He reasserted the necessity for state intervention and claimed that where the state had intervened, constructive


42 Verbatim Report of a Debate, pp. 5-6.
measures had resulted. Hyndman was careful to acknowledge
the indebtedness of all scientific socialists to Karl Marx
for his many and important contributions. To Bradlaugh's
charge that socialism would destroy individual initiative,
Hyndman retorted: "My opponent says all individuality will
be crushed. I say that individuality is crushed to-day." Thus,
Hyndman supported the Marxian idea that true individu-
almism could be achieved only within a collective society.

When Bradlaugh protested that socialism meant violent
revolution, Hyndman contended that the proletarian revolution
could come peacefully if the state did not resort to reaction-
ary tactics. Hyndman then pointed out that a sort of mental
revolution was already taking place. "The revolution is here
amongst us. The very fact that we are here debating Socialism
to-night, organized revolutionary Socialism, is itself a
revolution." The revolution, moreover, would be made by
the intelligentsia and not by those who were hungry and ig-
norant. Marx and Engels never seemed to have been quite
certain whether the revolution would be carried out by the
masses or by a small revolutionary group leading and directing
the masses, but Hyndman had obviously taken up the idea of

43 Ibid., p. 25.
44 Hyndman, Record, p. 337; Verbatim Report of a Debate,
pp. 5-6, 8-10, 16-18, 24-25, 36; Gould, Prophet of Socialism,
p. 90; Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings,
p. 343.
45 Verbatim Report of a Debate, p. 22.
an educated vanguard. He apparently believed that the Federation served this function.  

At the Fourth Annual Conference of the Federation, held in early August, 1884, the members approved a change in the name of the organization, now to be known as the Social Democratic Federation (better known as the S. D. F.), and reaffirmed the program and principles as stated in Socialism Made Plain. The first executive council of the S. D. F., comprised of Hyndman, Morris, Bax, Burns, Champion, and the Avelings, was elected.  

But a crisis already was brewing within the S. D. F. The more revolutionary wing of the organization led by Morris, Bax, and the Avelings had attacked the emphasis placed on political action and the idea of forming a political party, which, under the guidance of Hyndman, had been a dominant part of the Federation's program. The anti-parliamentarians believed that they had won an important victory when they eliminated most of the political policies, but they actually had instigated a struggle for leadership within the S. D. F.  

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47 Beer, British Socialism, Pt. IV, p. 252; Clayton, Rise and Decline, p. 11; Gould, Prophet of Socialism, pp. 94-95; Thompson, William Morris, pp. 398-399.  

The radical group also resented what they regarded as Hyndman's authoritarian personality, and they accused him of attempting to subordinate the principles of socialism to his own ambitions for a parliamentary career. Charging that Hyndman had tried to undermine the influence of one of their confederates in Glasgow, Morris broke with Hyndman and took Bax and the Avelings with him. On December 27, 1884, the leftists voted no confidence in Hyndman, and then handed in their resignation. They explained that they had resigned because of Hyndman's attempt "to substitute arbitrary rule therein for fraternal co-operation contrary to the principles of Socialism...". Four days later Morris and Bax drew up a new manifesto which laid the foundations for the Socialist League. This split was momentarily disastrous for the S. D. F. The generous monetary bequests of Morris were, of course, withdrawn, and Justice suffered from competition with the paper brought out by the League. Both Hyndman and Bax later concluded that the split set the socialist movement in England back about twenty years.


50 Bax, Reminiscences, pp. 77-81; Hyndman, Record, pp. 359-360; Morris to Scheu, Dec. 6, 17, 18, and 28, 1884, Morris, Letters, pp. 218, 219-220, 221, 224-226; Morris to Mrs. William Morris, Dec. 18, 1884, ibid., pp. 220-221; Morris to Mrs. Burne-Jones, Dec. 24, 1884, ibid., pp. 223-224; Morris to Thompson, Apr. 6, 1885, ibid., p. 235; Clayton, Rise and Decline, p. 12; Gould, Prophet of Socialism, pp. 95-96; Tsuzuki, Hyndman, pp. 61-62, 68.
That Hyndman was interested in forming a new political party cannot be doubted. At a conference of the S. D. F. held in April, 1885, he succeeded in restoring the political aspects of the program which had been repudiated the previous August by Morris and Bax. Hyndman later declared that "with a political programme we develop into a party." In the General Election held in November, 1885, several members of the Federation became candidates, but all were overwhelmingly defeated. The consequences of the election were almost as serious as those caused by the Hyndman-Morris split of the previous year. Champion had accepted contributions from some Tory Party members to help the S. D. F. candidates. When the news of this action became public, the Socialist League and the Fabian Society strongly condemned the S. D. F., whereupon Fabians who were members of the Federation and many of the working class members withdrew. The Federation could never again be considered a working class organization, except for its program. After the Tory Gold incident, it became and remained a small group under middle class leadership. Engels later referred to it as a sect which, along with other English socialist organizations, had the disastrous effect of dividing rather than uniting the working class.

51 Quoted in Tsuzuki, Hyndman, p. 69.

52 Engels to K. Kautsky, Ryde, Aug. 12 and Sept. 4, 1892, in Marx and Engels, On Britain (Moscow, 1953), pp. 528-531; Hyndman, "The Radicals and Socialism," The Nineteenth Century,
In an effort to revitalize the organization's prestige, Hyndman and Burns took the initiative in agitating for unemployment compensation. The S. D. F. gained nationwide notoriety for its participation in the "Black Monday" Riot. The Fair Trade League, a non-socialist organization, called a meeting to demonstrate in favor of the unemployed; the meeting was scheduled for Trafalgar Square on February 8, 1886, but the S. D. F. decided to undermine the proposed meeting and capture it for its own propaganda. Hyndman and others held a counter-demonstration in the Square and succeeded in taking over the assembly. After about an hour had elapsed, the Federation leaders persuaded the crowd to march to Hyde Park for yet another meeting. Rioting occurred on the way. Shops were broken into and looted and fights broke out all along the route. For days thereafter rumors spread through London that new rioting was about to occur. Within forty-eight hours the Mansion House Relief Fund swelled from £1,000 to £75,000. Hyndman, Burns, Champion, and others were arrested and tried for sedition in Old Bailey but were acquitted on April 12. The S. D. F. again gained attention the next year for its part in the "Bloody Sunday" Riot (November 13, 1887), but it is doubtful that such public notice actually helped the Federation, because it remained a small organization. But Hyndman, despite the rioting, still protested that

XVIII (November, 1885), pp. 833-839; Cole, Socialist Thought, II, 403; Gould, Prophet of Socialism, pp. 97-99; Thompson, William Morris, p. 478; Tsuzuki, Hyndman, pp. 69-72.
legislation alone could bring about the desired transformation of society and that the transition could be peaceful. 53

A major reason for the Federation's failure to increase in size was the rapid growth and progress of the British trade union movement in the last two decades of the century. Hyndman, contrary to Marx's program for unification, never could accept trade unions as part of the "true" working class movement. Not only did this bias keep workers from joining the S. D. F., but it also led to the resignation of several important members. When Tom Mann suggested an alliance between the S. D. F. and the trade unions, Hyndman declared that such a union was impossible with the result that Mann left the S. D. F. in 1888 to devote more time to his union. Henry Champion resigned in the same year for the same reason. In 1889 John Burns joined them in this work. Although Hyndman supported union strikes once they had begun, he considered them almost useless in solving the great social problems of the day. He eventually came to believe that trade unions helped tighten capitalism's control over the working class since strikes tacitly recognized the existence of wage slavery. Although Hyndman and

53 Hyndman, Record, pp. 400-407; Bax, Reminiscences, p. 84; Clayton, Rise and Decline, pp. 26-28; The Times (London), Feb. 9 and 11, Nov. 17 and 18, and Dec. 27, 1886, Jan. 11 and Nov. 18, 1887; Cole, Socialist Thought, II, 404; Gould, Prophet of Socialism, pp. 104, 107; Tsuzuki, Hyndman, pp. 72-73, 75; Beer, British Socialism, Pt. IV, pp. 260-263.
the Federation advised workers to join unions, they did so because they believed any organization was better than none at all. Even Engels attacked the S. D. F. for its doctrinaire and inflexible policy, declaring:

It has ossified Marxism into a dogma and, by rejecting every labour movement which is not orthodox Marxism . . . that is, by pursuing the exact opposite of the policy recommended in the Manifesto, it renders itself incapable of ever becoming anything else but a sect.  

Hyndman's heretical attitude toward religion also hurt him with trade union leaders, especially the older ones who were generally of Nonconformist descent. It will be recalled that he had used religious movements as examples to justify his view that history was not completely motivated by economic forces. He even praised some of the leaders of the Christian socialist movement for their efforts to overthrow anarchy in religion; Marx and Engels, by contrast, had condemned Christian socialism as "the Holy water with which the priest consecrates the heartburnings of the aristocrat." But like Marx, Hyndman believed that organized religion would


55 Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, p. 345.
decline and disappear with the establishment of an ethical
religion of collective humanity. His most Marxian statement
on religion appeared in *The Times*, January 25, 1887:

We Social Democrats have found that the ministers
of religion in the metropolis, as elsewhere, with
few honorable exceptions, side with the rich against
the poor. . . . Social Democrats are no more anti-
Christian than anti-Mohomedan, anti-Buddhist, or
anti-Confucian. Christianity, as seen in this
country, is merely the chloroform agency of the

Also like Marx, Hyndman criticized the immorality of capitalism, and like Engels, he concluded that socialism would usher in an era in which man would be so completely ethical that there would be no need for religious commandments. But the average, uneducated laborer understood such theorizing as atheistic and generally rejected it. Shortly before his death, Hyndman confessed that the masses had a need for religion and that socialists could no longer ignore this important force, nor attack it, if they expected to be successful in England.\footnote{Hyndman, *Economics of Socialism*, pp. 16, 220; Hyndman, *England for All*, p. 1; Hyndman, *Evolution of Revolution*, pp. 16, 288-291; Hyndman, *Historical Basis of Socialism*, p. 450; Hyndman, *Record*, pp. 225, 311-312; Hyndman, *Reminiscences*, p. 448; Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 104; Clayton, *Rise and Decline*, p. 30; Gould, *Prophet of Socialism*, pp. 129, 241; Mayo, *Marxism*, p. 179; Tsuzuki, *Hyndman*, pp. 109, 271.}

The revival of organized, international socialism in the late 1880's paralleled the rapid growth of the new British
unionism, and, here too, Hyndman broke with the Marxists. In 1888, the Possibilists, a French socialist group that advocated reforms and a peaceful transition to socialism, appealed for the creation of a Second International. Their plan was to hold the initial conference in Paris on July 14, 1889, in commemoration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. But the revolutionary Marxists in France and their German allies decided to hold a separate international meeting of their own in Paris at the same time. The British socialists and trade unionists divided their loyalties. William Morris and other Socialist League representatives, and Keir Hardie, a delegate of the Scottish Labor Party, attended the revolutionary Marxist congress. Hyndman and the S. D. F. delegates attended the Possibilist convention led by Paul Brousse.  

Hyndman, the self-appointed disciple of Karl Marx in Great Britain, had several reasons for not going to the Marxist conference. He believed that it would be controlled by the Engels "family clique," and he had never had good relations with Engels. He disapproved of the openly revolutionary attitude of the Marxists and thought, moreover, that their congress would be too anti-nationalistic. As he observed

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later "anti-nationalism, not Internationalism, was already proclaimed from the other side." 59

Hyndman, it will be recalled, emphasized the role of the state in solving socio-economic problems, a concept which he probably derived from his view that the solution of the class struggle was a national problem. Throughout his life, Hyndman remained an Englishman; he was never cosmopolitan in his world outlook. It was only natural for him, therefore, to attempt to create a philosophic system of socialism which would be acceptable to the English, a sort of Anglo-Marxism. 60

Marx never underrated the importance of the national development of the proletariat, and he stated that the establishment of international socialism would come after national class strife had been settled. Although Hyndman wrote of the eventual internationalization of the movement, he emphasized state sponsored reforms and patriotic feeling to the point that he, consciously or unconsciously, eliminated internationalism altogether. 61

Convinced that his countrymen would not learn from foreigners, Hyndman was sure that Marx and Engels had been


60 Gould, Prophet of Socialism, pp. 54, 60; Tsuzuki, Hyndman, pp. 31-32.

poor preceptors. In 1920 he observed in retrospect:

Admirable as they were in their exposition and analysis of economic history and sociological tendencies, they were not only very bad judges of character, but they were—especially Engels—exceedingly dictatorial and much addicted to intrigue. It is difficult to imagine people less qualified to inspire ordinary English workers with their ideas.62

This statement not only reveals Hyndman's belief that Marx and Engels had been poor leaders for the English, but also that he himself had pioneered the correct course by forming a political organization in accordance with most British traditions and customs, by advocating a peaceful transition to socialism, and by urging moderate measures until socialism was established. Despite his adoption of Marxian economic theory, he rejected or modified most of Marx's other ideas, and even when he expounded Marxian economics, he had to make it acceptable to Englishmen. This he did by referring only occasionally to Marx or, when using Marx's name, linking the German with English socialist and even non-socialist political reformers of the early and mid-nineteenth century. Hyndman's statement in the Bradlaugh debate is typical of this technique:

It is perfectly true that for the organized scientific Socialism we are indebted to another great man, a foreigner this time, who lived thirty years in our midst; we are indebted to Dr. Karl Marx for that organization, but I say that he himself was deeply indebted to these Englishmen.

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62 Hyndman, Evolution of Revolution, p. 316.
[Robert Owen, David Ricardo, Brontë O'Brien, and Fergus O'Connor], and acknowledged his indebtedness in everything he ever wrote. . . .

In the same debate, Hyndman claimed that these classical social reformers were really socialists ahead of their time.

The Democratic Federation had been founded to revive the Chartist program, and after the Morris-Hyndman split, that policy was reaffirmed. According to Hyndman, Owen's socialism lacked only the conscious, scientific understanding of itself, and O'Brien, he emphasized, had used the term "social democracy" long before it was used by Marx and Engels, and Hyndman believed that Marx's philosophy was really nothing more than "the doctrines of the Chartists put in logical form. . . ."

The nationalistic spirit of Hyndman's Anglo-Marxism was manifest in his conclusion that international socialism could be led by a nation as well as by a class, and that Britain was best qualified for this role. British citizens already


64 Hyndman, Economics of Socialism, p. 46; Hyndman, Evolution of Revolution, p. 270; Hyndman, Record, p. 309; Hyndman, Reminiscences, pp. 11-12, 60, 251, 457; Verbatim Report of a Debate, pp. 34-35; Gould, Prophet of Socialism, p. 60.

had achieved many of the goals for which workers on the continent were striving; e.g., freedom of assembly, of speech, of the press, and a long tradition of peaceful settlement of political problems "without that dangerous excitement which has attended the endeavour to solve them elsewhere."\(^6\)

England not only could, but should, "lead the way . . . in that great social reorganisation. . . ."\(^6\) Although he does not appear to have repeated the call for national leadership in bringing about socialism after 1883, the spirit of nationalism continued to pervade Hyndman's thinking.\(^6\)

A patriotic Englishman and an imperialist at heart, Hyndman never abandoned jingoism, even after becoming a socialist. Despite the Federation's condemnation of Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1882, Hyndman personally supported Gordon's invasion of the Sudan the following year. His admiration of the British Empire was such that he denied that any of its dependents had the right to secede in order to become independent. The Empire was inviolable, but it should be reorganized by creating more dominions and especially by establishing home rule for Ireland. Marx had believed that the proletarian revolution in England could not come until

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\(^{6}\) Hyndman, England for All, p. 194.

Ireland had won her independence from England. During some agitation on the Irish question in the late 1860's, Marx had made this point a central requisite of the revolution in England, but it is not certain that Hyndman knew of this opinion. Although he initially opposed the Boer War, Hyndman eventually came to believe that the natives would be better off under British rule than under that of any other European power. Needless to say, he turned a deaf ear to Marx's strictures on the evils of colonialism.69

To protect the mother country and her empire, Hyndman supported the policy of maintaining a large navy, and at the turn of the century, he advocated an accelerated naval construction program to counter the threats of Germany and France. Although Marx and Engels believed that the British Empire would crumble along with the destruction of nation states, they, too, supported a large British navy, but for a different reason. Instead of protecting the Empire, they hoped that the navy would be used to counter the growth of Russo-German hegemony in Europe following the Franco-Prussian War. Marx and Engels believed that Russia and Germany

represented the greatest threat to the international proletarian movement because they were so powerfully reactionary. Hyndman developed a friendlier attitude toward France after the Entente Cordiale was signed in 1904 and supported that agreement as another method of thwarting German aggression.  

Thus Hyndman transformed Marxism into Anglo-Marxism. The only Marxist tenets that he accepted without reservation were the labor theory of value and the theory of surplus value for which Marx himself owed much to Ricardo. Because of this acceptance and because many of Hyndman's contemporaries misunderstood his use of the word "revolution," they considered him to be a Marxist.  

The S. D. F., which Hyndman controlled until after the turn of the century, likewise was regarded as a Marxist organization, but it was Marxist only in its economic theorizing since it was designed to fit into the British political system and peacefully bring about the transition to state socialism which apparently would never wither away. In 1912 Karl Kautsky, the leading German Marxian theorist of the day, praised Hyndman for founding an English Marxism, a

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71 Sidney Webb was one of the few who recognized that Hyndman wished for and worked toward a peaceful transition to socialism. Sidney Webb, "Historic," Fabian Essays in Socialism, ed. Shaw (New York, n.d.), p. 48; Webb, Socialism in England, pp. 4-5; Tsuzuki, Hyndman, pp. 77-78.
socialism that was not imported. Hyndman should be considered as one of the original revisionists of Marxian philosophy.  

Hyndman and his S. D. F. helped to revive socialism in Britain. His organization attracted to socialism many important socialist and labor leaders of the future, and there can be little doubt that it stimulated the growth of other socialist and labor organizations. But where Hyndman modified most of the Marxian dogma, except the economic theories, most other English socialists rejected it all. Except for the short existence of the Socialist League (1885-1890), Hyndman's S. D. F. was the only quasi-Marxist organization in the field of converting Englishmen before 1900.  

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CHAPTER II

WILLIAM MORRIS AND THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE

When William Morris led his contingent out of the Social Democratic Federation on December 27, 1884, he already had formulated plans for a new socialist group. Three days later he founded the Socialist League and retained its leadership until his resignation in 1890. Just how much of the Marxian system he accepted is a question still debated by historians. This issue is complicated by Morris's tendency to dilute what he borrowed with his own theories of art, the "life of pleasure," and "works of intelligence." Morris, moreover, had developed much of his social philosophy before he became a socialist. Marx, Morris declared, had clarified his social philosophy, given him hope for the future, and had broadened his understanding of the importance of economics.¹

Morris was born on March 24, 1834, into a prosperous middle class family. In accordance with his father's wishes that he enter the ministry, Morris began his education in 1853 at Exeter College, Oxford. But while there he abandoned theology for the study of art and literature which were closer to his natural inclinations. He became a close friend of

Edward Burne-Jones, who introduced him to Dante G. Rossetti, the leader of the pre-Raphaelite school of art then gaining popularity in England. Morris, as a result of his studies and contacts with these men, decided to become a painter. 2

At Oxford he became aware of history as a discipline and also of contemporary criticism of modern society. He fell under the influence of John Ruskin, the internationally acclaimed art critic and social reformer, and Charles Kingsley, the Christian socialist. Morris later maintained that Ruskin's works had revealed to him many new subjects including some socio-political ideas which probably would have developed but for the appeal of art and poetry. 3 But these "ideas" did evolve, and when they did, they bore the imprint of Ruskin's thought and revealed the impact of events of the late 1870's and early 1880's on the poet's sensitive mind. 4

Morris did not accept all of Ruskin's political views, but the latter's philosophy of art, love of medieval life, and vision of the future, all had profound influence on him. The first volume of Ruskin's The Stones of Venice, was published in 1853, Morris's first year at Oxford, and the other

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two volumes appeared the following year. This work which "taught the laws of constructive art, and the dependence of all human work . . . on the happy life of the workman," made a tremendous impression on Morris. If the art of any given era was bad, Ruskin asserted, it was inevitably because the life of the people of that period was impoverished. Ruskin believed that modern industry retarded artistic development, and Morris agreed with him that modern society was destroying art, and, therefore, the life of the workers. From Ruskin, Morris also borrowed the idea that since life and art are inseparable, art and beauty depend upon the satisfaction of the working man with his life and profession. These ideas were inclined to be revolutionary, and they eventually led Morris to socialism.

After leaving Oxford, Morris spent nearly a year studying architecture. In 1861 he founded, along with several friends, a company which manufactured all sorts of artistic articles, including stained glass windows, wallpaper, and carpets. Morris published his first volume of poems in 1858, continued to produce literary works of great importance during the 1860's,

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and in 1870, published the third and final volume of the best known of his pre-socialist works, *The Earthly Paradise*, a collection of poetic stories gathered from various sources, and connected by a skeletal narrative similar to that found in *The Canterbury Tales*. Despite the title, the poem does not reveal a paradise on earth, but the author's thinly disguised enmity toward modern civilization and his despair for the building of a better society. His decision to speak publicly on the evils of modern society coincided with the Near Eastern crisis and the domestic agitation which eventually led to the fall of the Disraeli government. By taking a stand on the Eastern Question, Morris placed himself, for the first time, in the political arena. 7

In 1875, the Serbs of Herzegovina, in alliance with the Bulgarians, revolted to win their independence from Turkey. Irregular troops sent into Bulgaria by Sultan Murad V destroyed about one hundred villages, killed more than thirty thousand people, and carried off thousands of Christian women as slaves. These events, which became known as the "Bulgarian Horrors," (May-September, 1876) shocked most British citizens. A demand for war against the Turk arose throughout the island.

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kingdom, but the Cabinet, fearful of Russian intervention, favored a war against Russia on behalf of Turkey. The object of such a move was to protect the Straits. Morris deplored the Horrors and demanded that his country not ally herself with the "thieves and murderers!" 8

In May, 1877, Morris, appealing as one worker to his comrades, issued a manifesto addressed "to the working-men of England." He exhorted them not to be hoodwinked into a war with Russia by a class of people who had nothing to lose and much to gain. Turning to the domestic situation, he declared,

Working-men of England, one word of warning yet:
I doubt if you know the bitterness of hatred against freedom and progress that lies at the hearts of a certain part of the richer classes in this country; their newspapers veil it in a kind of decent language; but do but hear them talking among themselves, as I have often, and I know not whether scorn or anger would prevail in you at their folly and insolence;--these men cannot speak of your order, of its aims, of its leaders without a sneer or an insult: these men, if they had the power (may England perish rather) would thwart your just aspirations, would silence you, would deliver you bound hand and foot for ever to irresponsible capital--and these men, I say it deliberately, are at the heart and soul of the party that is driving us to an unjust war:--can the Russian people be your enemies or mine like these men are, who are the enemies of all justice? 9


Thus 'irresponsible capitalism,' the Cerberus of modern civilization, not only devoured art but also oppressed the workers. Although Morris was still a Liberal and had never heard of Karl Marx, he was unconsciously moving toward socialism. 10

As a Liberal he campaigned hard for his party in the general election of 1880 and rejoiced when it was returned to power. But when the Second Gladstone Ministry introduced the Irish Coercion Bill and supported the Egyptian war, Morris realized that he had been betrayed. Disgusted with politics and politicians, he returned to his business firm and his lectures on art. 11

It was about this time that Morris concluded that "art cannot have a real life and growth under the present system of commercialism and profit-mongering." 12 Present civilization had developed to the point where something was needed "to lift the standard of revolt against the sordidness which the people are so stupid as to think necessary. . . ." 13 His


despair over the position of art in modern society had gradually led him to the conviction that a revolution was necessary to change modern society into something better.

In July, 1881, he lamented:

Just think of the mixture of tyranny and hypocrisy with which the world is governed! These are the sort of things that make thinking people so sick at heart that they are driven from all interest in politics save revolutionary politics: which I must say seems like to be my case. Indeed I have long known, or felt, say, that society in spite of its modern smoothness was founded on injustice and kept together by cowardice and tyranny: but the hope in me has been that matters would mend gradually, till the last struggle, which must needs be mingled with violence and madness, would be so short as scarcely to count. But I must say matters like this and people's apathy about them shake one's faith in gradual progress.14

These statements forecast Morris's future position on politics, revolution, and the need for education. He realized, of course, that to complain and criticize without acting was a waste of one's life. He now began to look for an organization whose objectives were similar to his own.15

By 1882 Morris's study of socialist literature had markedly increased. He read and reread George's Progress and


Poverty, Wallace's Land Nationalisation, More's Utopia, and Bacon's New Atlantis. In October, 1882, Hyndman, who had met Morris in 1879, asked him to join the Democratic Federation. Morris accepted the invitation and became a member on January 13, 1883. He was identified on his membership card as "William Morris, designer," a designation that identified him with the working class. "The meaning of my joining that body," he explained in 1894, "was that I had conceived a hope of the realization of my ideal." Not until later did he find in Marxism the vision of the socialist utopia he longed for.

When Morris joined the Democratic Federation he was completely ignorant of the sophisticated economic arguments supporting socialism. Reminiscing on this period of his life, he later confessed, "I had never so much as opened Adam Smith, or heard of Ricardo, or of Karl Marx." He had, according to his own account, become convinced that socialism was the right path for the future by reading some of John Stuart Mill's attacks on it. Soon after joining the Federation,

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18 Morris, Works, XXIII, 277.
Morris began reading *Kapital*; he wanted to learn socialist economics. Although he "enjoyed the historical part" of Marx's book, he had considerable difficulty understanding "the pure economics of that great work." As late as August, 1884, he confided to a friend that he did not completely understand the economics of socialism and complained that "I want statistics terribly..." What knowledge he did acquire about Marxian economics he probably gained as the result of his conversations with his friends. Before the split with Hyndman, Morris visited him regularly on Monday nights for the purpose of studying economics and working for the Federation. Shaw, who became one of Morris's closest friends, undoubtedly instructed him in the discipline. Morris also learned economic theory from Belfort Bax, his close collaborator. Since Morris was the type of man who was never tired of learning, he willingly submitted to what he called "Baxinations." These were one-sided conversations dominated by Bax, consisting of large doses of Marxism and metaphysical lectures about ethics and the religion of socialism. Eventually Morris understood the subject well.

19 Ibid., p. 278.

enough to be able to expound the labor theory of value and the theory of surplus value. 21

Following Marxist dogma, Morris maintained that there are two great classes in modern society: the capitalists, who own all the means of production, produce little, and grow increasingly richer, and the workers, who possess only the ability to work, i.e., the power to create value, produce all of society's economic wealth, and grow poorer. The reason for this exploitation is that the capitalists, instead of paying the proletariat the true worth of their labor, pay them a subsistence wage. Wages are only a small fraction of the amount of wealth produced by the laborers. Wages decrease and profits increase as the capitalists introduce and use machinery, women, and children in positions formerly held by men, lengthen the working day, and insist on increased output. Competition among workers for jobs also leads to a lowering of wages. Thus Morris did, indeed, restate Marx's concepts, but they did not become the focus of his socialist philosophy. He discussed them in his lectures only in a general and fragmentary way, and he almost never credited Marx as their originator. 22


22 Morris, Works, XXIII, 9-10, 12, 71-72, 74, 101-102, 107, 109, 125-128, 220-223; Morris, News From Nowhere, A Dream of John Ball, and A King's Lesson, ibid., XVI, 272-273;
Morris believed that the class struggle as expounded by Marx revealed the true meaning and course of history. He accepted Marx's exposition of past class struggles and agreed that since the Middle Ages the alienation between the "haves" and the "have-nots" had progressively deepened. Morris declared that the middle class had "created the proletariat for its own interest, and its creation will and must destroy it. . . ."23 Thus Marxian inevitability gave Morris hope for the future; the despair so prevalent in his pre-socialist thought disappeared. Certainly, as Bernard Shaw recognized, this ability to renew men's faith in the future was one of Marx's greatest contributions to the British socialist movement. "Compare Mr. William Morris after Oxford, or Mr. H. M. Hyndman after Cambridge," Shaw demanded,

with the same gentlemen after Marx. In the first stage they are conscious of having been incommoded by a useless dose of 'the dismal science.' In the second they are crying out with a burning conviction that the old order is one of fraud and murder . . . that is changing and giving way to the new . . . ."24

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The Federation was elated over making such an important convert, and Morris, with his international literary reputation, gave publicity to the cause. Quickly rising within the organization, he was elected to the executive council in May, 1883, and later in the same year was made treasurer. He not only lectured for the Federation and took part in agitational and ceremonial functions for it, but he also gave generously from his own funds to publish *Justice* and stood on street corners with Hyndman and others to sell it.  

As early as June, 1884, dissension appeared within the membership of the Federation. The division, which continued to grow during the summer and fall, centered around several issues. Morris, the leader of the dissenters, did not like Hyndman's tight control of the organization, and there were differences of opinion as to the method of bringing socialism into existence. Hyndman's leadership of the Federation reflected his vain and authoritarian personality; he was the sort of person who had to dominate every situation. Commenting on this aspect of Hyndman's character, Shaw quipped that "had Morris been accompanied by Plato, Aristotle, Gregory the Great, Dante, Thomas Aquinas, Milton, and Newton, Hyndman would have taken the chair as their natural leader without

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the slightest misgiving. . . .” 26  The differences over method were underscored at the Federation's Fourth Annual Conference. After the contingent led by Morris had won approval of their anti-parliamentary proposals, Hyndman began a series of attacks on lesser members of the organization who adhered to Morris's program. These attacks grew more pronounced and frequent during the winter. Finally, on December 27, 1884, Morris, Bax, the Avelings, and several other members presented a joint resignation to the executive council of the Federation. They cited as reasons for their resignation, Hyndman's attacks, his dictatorial leadership, and the dispute over methods. 27

The day before this mass resignation, Engels summoned Morris, through Edward Aveling, to meet with him. The ensuing conversation centered on the formation of the new socialist organization. Engels made a number of suggestions concerning the proposed society, but Morris apparently accepted only one: Engels' proposal that the association's propaganda organ be published monthly rather than weekly to facilitate the other


work of the members. Morris agreed but privately reserved the right to ignore Engels' advice on other matters. The inaugural conference of the Socialist League took place several days later.28

On New Year's Eve, 1884, Morris and Bax wrote the manifesto which established the philosophical basis of the League. The declaration clearly reflected Morris's thinking about the major issues confronting socialists and the strategy to be followed. Morris and Bax, in contrast to Hyndman, believed that propaganda and educational activities were more important than the formation of a political party or even taking part in politics. Anti-parliamentarianism and denunciation of political activity became central themes of Morris's thought.29

Morris, like all good Marxists, believed that in modern society, governments and the means of enforcing the law were controlled by the capitalists. Bourgeois governments fulfilled two major functions: protection of private property at home and use of military power to gain markets abroad. Like Marx,

28 Morris to Scheu, London, Dec. 28, 1884, Morris, Letters, pp. 224-226; Bax, Reminiscences, pp. 55-56; Thompson, William Morris, pp. 434-437. The exact date of the inaugural is still debatable, but it apparently was held on Dec. 30, 1884.

Morris believed that capitalists would not surrender their privileged position without a fight. Although the capitalist state might allow some reforms, it would never submit to a program which revolutionized the entire socio-economic and political structure. Morris's opposition to socialist participation in politics was a logical consequence of his conception of the bourgeois state. Political cooperation between socialists and capitalists "would encourage the self-seeker and threaten the purity of the Socialist ideal with the corruption and compromise inevitably involved in politics." Marx, by contrast, had demanded that the proletariat take part in political activity. Bakunin's anti-political philosophy eventually became a target of Marx's trenchant criticism, and Engels later criticized Morris for the same reason.

"The Policy of Abstention," as Morris called his anti-parliamentary strategy, had, however, a positive side which became the League's raison d'être. Morris had voiced the

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30 Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party, p. 32.
keynote of this positive program more than a year before his resignation from the S. D. F. He had urged a program to educate the workers. The proletariat must be made aware who exploited them and how the capitalists managed it. They must be taught the significance of the class struggle, how to organize for it, and how to prepare for the future. "History teaches us," he asserted, "that no revolts that are without aim are successful even for a time; even failures (some of them glorious indeed) had a guiding aim which only lacked completeness." Education was a prerequisite to revolutionary action and change. The socialist revolution would be absolute; therefore, education for it must be thorough. Morris succinctly expounded this educational strategy, which he called "the making of socialists," in 1886 in a resolution presented to a conference of the Fabian Society:

Whereas the first duty of Socialists is to educate the people to understand what their present condition is, and what their future might be, and to keep the principle of Socialism steadily before them; and whereas no Parliamentary party can exist without compromise and concession which would hinder that education and obscure those principles, it would be a false step for Socialists to attempt to take part in the Parliamentary contest.33

32 May Morris, William Morris, II, 234.

Morris and Hyndman both called themselves Marxian socialists, but obviously they advocated two different methods of establishing socialism. While Hyndman did not underrate the necessity of educational propaganda, he placed greater emphasis on political organization, agitation, and programs. He adopted the Marxian concept that the transition to socialism could be accomplished by a small, highly educated elite. Morris, too, resorted to Marxian precedents to justify his program. Morris's emphasis on education now and revolution later was a theme Marx developed after 1848. In contrast to Hyndman, Morris believed that the advance to communism would be accomplished by the immense majority, hence the need for complete education. Since Marx had advocated both ideas at one time or another, he was himself responsible for the confusion over which revolution he really thought the future held in store for the capitalist society: that of the socialist elite for the proletarian masses.  

Morris and Bax endorsed the "principles of Revolutionary International Socialism," declaring that socialism could not be established in one nation without the help of workers throughout the civilized world, a Weltanschauung quite different from that of Hyndman's nationalistic Anglo-socialism.

34 Morris, Works, XXIII, 36, 191, 251; May Morris, William Morris, II, 235, 326, 452; Berlin, Karl Marx, pp. 179-182; Cole, Socialist Thought, II, 91-92; Hunt, Marxism, pp. 143-144.

In an article on the Irish Home Rule Question, Morris warned the separatists, "Your revolutionary struggles will be abortive or lead to disappointment unless you accept as your watchword, WAGE-WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES UNITE!" Thus they echoed the challenge of the Communist Manifesto.

Following Marx's lead, Morris and Bax condemned imperialism as the great enemy of proletarian internationalism. All national rivalries, they affirmed, resulted from the capitalists' never ending quest for markets and competition to exploit them. The spoils of conquest and consolidation only increased the wealth of the bourgeoisie and accentuated the poverty of the masses. The leaders of the League, in contrast to Hyndman, never missed a chance to attack imperialism. Typical of Morris's attitude was his reaction to British intervention in the Sudan. When news reached London in January, 1885, of the massacre of General "Chinese" Gordon's troops, the British press poured out a stream of lamentations for the great Christian heroes, but the League did not share this grief. It issued an anti-jingo statement, condemning Gordon's expedition as the "foulest stream of well-planned hypocrisy and fraud that has ever disgraced the foreign policy even of this commercial age. . . ." 


37 Quoted in Thompson, William Morris, p. 455.
protest meeting in early April, 1885, Morris declared that the
war had been forced on the workers by the bourgeoisie, who
needed new markets if they were to survive.38

In its educational program, the Socialist League used
protest meetings, street agitation, and plays, but the
Commonweal, the League's newspaper, constituted its major
propaganda instrument. First published on February 1, 1885,
under the general editorship of Morris, it continued as a
monthly until May 1, 1886, when it became a weekly. In
addition to Morris and Bax, the early contributors included
such distinguished socialists and social reformers as Engels,
Bernard Shaw, Stepniak, the author of Underground Russia, and
Paul Lafargue, one of Marx's sons-in-law. But these methods
did not always reach the working class. If the goal were to
educate the proletariat, socialists would have to attract
the workers' attention. The free speech and unemployment
agitation that began in the mid-1880's and lasted till the
end of the decade brought the movement a great amount of
publicity, but it also changed Morris's thinking about riots
and revolutions.39

During the winter of 1885-86, S. D. F. members were active
in unemployment agitation. It will be recalled that they


played an important role in the riots of "Black Monday," February 8, 1886. Writing "frankly" about the events of this day, Morris interpreted them as "the first skirmish of the Revolution." He believed, however, that the riots had been aimless and that socialists must guard against such situations. The only insurance was education. He predicted that similar revolts would occur again and again in a bourgeois state and as many workers as possible must be educated in economics, organization, and administration. He proclaimed "that our business is more than ever Education!"

Since the League had not been connected with the riots, it maintained a position of official neutrality throughout most of the demonstrations in behalf of unemployed workers. This policy of noninvolvement not only contradicted Morris's view that socialists should take part in popular movements when it seemed possible to influence them, but it also conflicted with Marx's directives to the proletariat. The non-intervention tactic came to an end the next year.

Demonstrations supporting the demands of unemployed workers intensified during the fall and winter of 1887.

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41 Ibid.; Bax, Reminiscences, p. 84; Morris to J. Carruthers, Mar. 25, 1886, Morris, Letters, pp. 249-252; Arnot, William Morris, pp. 79-80.
42 May Morris, William Morris, II, 228-235; Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto, Other Writings, pp. 330-331.
Initially the League adhered to its policy of neutrality while covertly supporting the workers' cause. But when Sir Charles Warren, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, issued an order on November 8, 1877, closing Trafalgar Square to further protest meetings, the Socialist League joined the workers' movement. An alliance of the League, the S. D. F., and several Radical clubs in London decided to test Warren's order by holding a demonstration on the Square, Sunday, November 13. Because of the advance publicity given the meeting by these groups, the police were prepared. As thousands of demonstrators converged upon the Square, the police attacked them as well as innocent bystanders, beating and arresting people whenever possible. Three people were killed, over 200 were treated at hospitals for injuries, and 75 were arrested. Although Morris led a contingent from the League, he was not arrested, but Wyndman, John Burns, and Cunningham Graham, the Radical M. P. for N. W. Lanark, were. Some years later Walter Crane, the socialist-artist, recalled his impression of that day, "I never saw anything more like real warfare in my life—only the attack was all on one side." A week after the event, Shaw confided to Morris, "On the whole, I think it was the most abjectly disgraceful defeat ever suffered by a band of heroes outnumbering their foes a

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43 Crane, Reminiscences, p. 267.
thousand to one." 44 Morris, too, was reflecting on the lessons of "Bloody Sunday." 45

As has been seen, Morris had contemplated the necessity of revolutionary change before he had heard of Marx. After his conversion to socialism, Morris concluded that a violent revolution by the proletariat was the only means of completely overthrowing capitalist rule. The amount of violence, he believed, would depend upon the reaction of the middle class. During these years, he was certain that the great workers' revolt would occur in the immediate future. He eagerly awaited its advent, predicting that it would come suddenly and be speedily completed. These optimistic views paralleled those held by Marx before the revolutions of 1848, but because of the emphasis on immediacy and suddenness, they conflicted with Morris's educational strategy. The education of the masses could not be accomplished quickly. "Bloody Sunday," the rise of municipal government, and the decline of the


Socialist League, all combined to change his theory of revolution and his opposition to political activity. 46

After that November confrontation with the London police, Morris abandoned all hope that a proletarian revolution would occur in the near future and began to doubt that he would live to witness "the dawn of a new epoch." Obviously the present bourgeois state had enough coercive power to withstand attack. Morris now realized that the educational process would take a long time; it was not the time for sudden militancy, but "Education towards Revolution. . . ." 47

In News from Nowhere, published in 1890, he describes a vision of the great revolution which takes place in 1952 and is quite violent. But, according to Shaw, Morris by 1893 had accepted the Fabian view of gradual political change, and evidence tends to support this contention. The collapse of the Socialist League apparently was an important factor in bringing about this shift of opinion. 48


In the summer of 1886, a split appeared in the League's membership on the issue of political action. Attempts to negotiate a compromise failed, and in the ensuing showdown at the League's Third Annual Conference in May, 1887, Morris's faction, which still opposed political involvement, outvoted the group favoring parliamentary action. Defeated, many of the supporters of political action, including Bax, left the League. Thus weakened, the League fell prey to its anarchist members who had been attracted to the society since its inception because of its openly revolutionary strategy and anti-political program. Although Morris was "anxious to discover how . . . [anarchism's] appetite for freedom could be reconciled with the positive side of Communism," he was opposed to the anarchists' methods.\textsuperscript{49} At the Sixth Annual Conference held in May, 1890, the anarchists captured control of the League. Six months later on November 15, Morris and his disciples, now in the minority, withdrew from the League and formed the Hammersmith Socialist Society.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{49}Shaw, \textit{Morris as I Knew Him}, p. 13.

This episode with the anarchists made a deep impression on Morris; he publicly repudiated anarchism and excluded the anarchists from membership in the H. S. S. The collapse of the League and the rise of municipal government in Britain apparently changed his opinion about participation in politics. In March, 1892, Morris confided to a friend his vision of a true socialist party in Britain and wondered if it would ever come about, and in August of that year, after the general election which saw the election of two important labor leaders, Keir Hardie and John Burns, to Parliament, Morris asserted that, while it was still important to continue the education of the workers and to destroy private property, such reforms as better public education, shorter working hours, better working conditions, and the extension of municipal ownership of industry were good in themselves. The revolution was still the ultimate goal, but Morris now recognized the usefulness of palliatives so long advocated by Hyndman. The next year (1893), Morris expounded the idea that the newly socialized municipal bodies could be instrumental in bringing about the desired communal life. He still denounced political intrigue and compromise but now realized the need to gain control of the nation's political machinery. 

Intrigued by the idea of a socialist party, Morris attempted to unite the existing socialist bodies. During the spring of 1893, he, Hyndman (representing the S. D. P.), and Shaw (representing the Fabian Society), worked to achieve this goal. The major result of their conversations was a joint declaration issued on May 1, 1893: "The Manifesto of English Socialists," which was drafted by Morris and edited by Hyndman and Shaw. Shaw objected to everything that sounded like S. D. P. policy, while Hyndman objected to the Fabian tone of the document. As Shaw admitted, "There was nothing for it but to omit both policies and substitute platitudes that any Church Congress could have signed." Although all three men signed it, it did nothing to bring about the desired unity of British socialist organizations. By 1894 Morris's conversion to political action was complete; he confessed that it was a necessity and had to be accepted.

As another result of the decline of the Socialist League and the failure to achieve socialist unity, Morris began to neglect the movement. In 1891 he founded the Kelmscott Press, which published beautiful editions of medieval literary masterpieces such as the famous Kelmscott Chaucer. The major

52 Shaw, Morris as I Knew Him, p. 45.

part of the last years of his life was spent in producing such excellent works. In 1895 his health, which had not been good for several years, began to fail, and on October 3, 1896, he died.54

William Morris embraced socialism because of his love of and concern for art. His philosophy of art became the nucleus of his socialist theories just as it was already the center of his life. His acceptance of the revolutionary method of change was pre-Marxian and the result of his despair over what he believed to be the decline of art in modern society. Although Morris accepted Marxian economics, he grafted it on, rather than incorporating it in, his criticism of bourgeois civilization. The most important legacy he received from Marx was renewed faith in a better tomorrow. As a result of this ideological evolution, Morris's criticism of capitalism was overwhelmingly esthetic and moral.55

'Now the chief accusation I have to bring against the modern state of society is that it is founded on the art-lacking or unhappy labour. . . .'56 There were many reasons

54 Helmholtz-Phelan, Social Philosophy, p. 101; Mackail, William Morris, II, 253, 267, 320, 335.


56 Morris, Works, XXIII, 173.
for attacking capitalism, but the "chief accusation" was esthetic. Morris believed that work and art are inseparable; nature intended man to labor, and it meant work to be a pleasure. Pleasurable, intelligent work produces art. "To a Socialist a house, a knife, a cup, a steam engine . . . anything . . . that is made by man and has form, must either be a work of art or destructive to art." Unfortunately, Morris lamented, popular art, art produced by the workers, no longer existed, and the cause of its demise was exploiting capitalism which had established wage slavery. Machinery was also a corrupting influence. It not only divorces the laborer from direct participation in the art-producing process, but it substituted unconscious reaction for intelligent craftsmanship in the labor process. Certainly Morris would have agreed with the Chinese sage who perceived that "whoever uses machines does all his work like a machine. He who does his work like a machine grows a heart like a machine. . . ." Morris envisioned the destruction of most machinery before the establishment of the communal epoch.

58 Quoted in McLuhan, Understanding Media, p. 69.
In Shaw's judgment, Morris's real value lay in his ability to describe in poetic and poignant language his vision of the future and to articulate human values that went much deeper than the theory of surplus value. This appraisal closely paralleled Morris's own conviction that "we need not be afraid of scaring our audiences with too brilliant pictures of the future of Society, nor think ourselves unpractical and utopian for telling them the bare truth..." In the future, Morris saw a transitional era of expanding social and political democracy and, perhaps, of state socialism which would culminate in a classless society. The state would wither away, though Morris never used that Marxian phrase, and nations would cease to exist.

Morris's future socialist civilization would be completely communal. Everyone would live in common apartments, use large halls for common meals, and mingle freely in open markets. Local public assemblies, the only semblance of government left under communism, would democratically administer things, not people. The religion of this ideal

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60 May Morris, William Morris, II, 391, 400.
community would be the brotherhood of man which holds man responsible to his peers, no less than to himself, for his own action. Institutionalized religion would cease to exist since its true function in the process of exploitation would disappear in a classless society. As a Marxist, Morris believed that the capitalists used religion to fool the masses, but unlike Marx, he did not attack religion. Morris was not an atheist, and he was unwilling to debate the existence of a supreme being because such discussions always degenerated into verbal quibbling in which he refused to engage. "If there is a God," he declared, "he, or it, is a very different thing from what the religionists imagine." Morris realized, of course, that religious ideas of many of the socialist leaders offended many potential socialists, but, being a man of principle, he refused to accept bourgeois morality just to gain converts.

In Morris's socialist paradise, anxiety over economic security would no longer exist because everyone would work;

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"or as the formula of us Communists has it: to everyone according to his needs, from everyone according to his capacities." The major function of education would be to discover what a man's capabilities are and to educate him for suitable occupations. Individuals would engage in a variety of interesting tasks to the discouragement of boredom and the enhancement of creativity. This would be possible because of short working hours in each employment. The machinery that still existed would be used only to expedite repugnant work. But this longed for civilization would not be completely utilitarian. "We must begin to build up the ornamental part of life . . . ." Under capitalism work had been separated from pleasure and intelligence, but these prerequisites to the production of beautiful artifacts would be reinstated under socialism. The incentive to labor would be love of life and desire to create beautiful, useful objects. Articles would be useful because there would be a true demand for them. No longer would workers produce dull, wasteful products for an artificially created market. But for Morris the most important result of the establishment of socialism would be

64 Quoted in May Morris, William Morris, II, p. 201.
65 Morris, Works, XXIII, 111.
the return, on a much higher plane, of the popular art that had flourished in the Middle Ages. 66

On December 14, 1884, Morris attended a small socialist gathering in Glasgow. His resignation from the S. D. F. was imminent, and the Glasgow group was divided over which faction it would follow. When Morris finished his remarks, a staunch Hyndman disciple demanded to know if he accepted Marx's theory of value. Hyndman had always used this question to test the validity of a man's socialism. Morris, resentful of the implication, replied emphatically that he did not understand Marx's value theory and that he was damned if he wanted to understand it. The importance of this statement is that it eventually became a part of the "Morris myth." Some of his biographers have used it to "prove" that Morris did not understand Marxian economics and, therefore, was not really a Marxian socialist. More recent biographers, overemphasizing Morris's Marxism, either have overlooked it altogether or have misunderstood it. The statement apparently was meant to be nothing more than a snide remark. Morris knew Marxian economics well enough to expound these theories in his lectures and writings, albeit in a general way. But the second portion of his reply, usually neglected, is of greater significance.

When, after reflection, Morris continued his answer, he not only revealed his basic familiarity with the theories of labor and surplus value but also the priorities of his socialist interests.\(^{67}\)

Unlike most of the leading English socialists of his day, including Hyndman, Morris never specifically criticized any of Marx's major theories. Morris was a Marxist in that he accepted Marxian economics and inevitability and advocated the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. But there were differences in the philosophies of the two men. Because of his artistic and philosophic interests, Morris gave priority to esthetics and human fellowship. He emphasized the decline of art and the lack of brotherhood among men which he blamed on capitalist exploitation; Marx was more interested in the method of exploitation. Morris envisioned a future life when popular art and fraternity would be restored; Marx, stressing the need to destroy bourgeois civilization, did not pay much attention to the future. Marx's criticisms were economic; Morris's were esthetic and moral. Engels indeed denounced Morris's socialism as emotional and unpractical.\(^{68}\)

Until the last few years of his life, Morris completely rejected the political aspect of the proletarian movement. Marx had repeatedly emphasized the necessity of political

\(^{67}\)Glasier, William Morris, pp. 30-32.

\(^{68}\)Lynd, Eighteen-Eighties, p. 394.
organization and activity, and when Morris changed his mind on this issue, he was too late to exert much influence on the movement which already had developed in that direction. Morris rejected Marx's absolute statements about economic determinism. He believed that capitalism was destroying art, but that the economic substructure of the Middle Ages apparently had had little or no influence on medieval art. Renaissance art was not the reflection of expanding international trade but was the culmination of the efforts of medieval man. Morris frequently criticized capitalism by comparing it to the life and standards of the Middle Ages, an un-Marxian practice indeed. And Morris seems to have regarded socialist society as nothing more than medieval society on a higher plane and without classes.69

Although both Hyndman and Morris believed themselves to be Marxian socialists, they held different views about several issues. Hyndman believed the Empire should be protected and under certain circumstances extended; Morris attacked imperialism whenever and wherever possible. Hyndman affirmed peaceful political change while Morris advocated revolutionary change. On the latter issue both men could certainly point to Marx's teachings. While Hyndman was generous in his praise

69 Morris presents his vision of the future in News From Nowhere, "and if others can see it as I have seen it, then it may be called a vision rather than a dream." Morris, Works, XVI, 211.
of Marx after the England for All incident, Morris seldom mentioned him. He did, however, frequently cite Ruskin when discussing such topics as property under capitalism, and the division of society into classes. When, in 1894, Morris wrote "How I Became a Socialist," he briefly recalled his difficulty in understanding Kapital and then credited Ruskin for the development of his social ideals; it was through Ruskin "that I learned to give form to my discontent. . . ."70 Morris eagerly accepted Marxian philosophy because its promise of a better future gave him comfort. But just as economics took second place in his philosophy, so did Marx's influence on his thought.

Morris's vague exposition of Marxian economics did not impress his contemporaries in the socialist movement as much as his philosophy of esthetics and human fellowship. Dialectical materialism needed an idealistic side, and Morris provided it. Therein lay his contribution to socialist philosophy and his failure to influence the British workingman who was more interested in bread, wages, and politics.71

70 Ibid., XXIII, 279.
CHAPTER III

STEWART HEADLAM AND THE GUILD OF SAINT MATTHEW

Modern historians have devoted little attention to the late nineteenth century Christian socialist movement in England. In his famous work on British socialism, Max Beer does not mention Christian socialist developments after the 1850's. The probable reason for this neglect is that after 1854, the movement never again was directed by a single, strong organization. With the revival of Christian socialism in the early 1880's, it became a movement of individuals, only one of whom, Stewart D. Headlam, founded an organization that was outstanding in the late Victorian Era. On Saint Peter's Day, January 18, 1877, Headlam founded the Guild of Saint Matthew (G. S. M.), but several years passed before it became the "red-hot center" of Christian socialism. Bernard Shaw asserted that it was one of only four socialist bodies in existence in England in 1885, and Hyndman, in his memoirs, complimented Headlam for advancing "Christian Socialism far beyond the Christian Anarchism commonly preached."¹

Although Headlam was not a Marxist, and, therefore, not a serious student of Marxist literature, he was at least familiar with the tenets of Marxian theory. He probably acquired this knowledge through his association with men like Hyndman, Shaw, Morris, Bax, and Philip Wicksteed, the famous Unitarian minister, Dantean scholar, and economist. Headlam, however, attacked modern capitalistic society and certain aspects of modern Christianity with the same zeal that characterized Marx's writings on these subjects.

Headlam was born near Liverpool on January 12, 1847. Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, he took the B. A. degree in April, 1869, and entered the Anglican priesthood in 1872. The teaching of Frederick Denison Maurice, which had led him into the Church, also helped to bring him into the socialist movement.  

Maurice, an Anglican priest and the central figure in the Christian socialist movement of the 1840's and 1850's, "desired to see Christianity not only a faith, but a deed."  

Sharing this dream with Maurice, and working closely with him, were Charles Kingsley, the famous novelist and Anglican clergyman, and John M. Ludlow, a professional journalist. Ludlow, who was living in Paris when the February Revolution

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2 Bettany, Stewart Headlam, pp. 1, 18, 33.
broke out, wrote to Maurice on March 2 that socialism had made a deep impression on the Parisian workers and "that it must be Christianized or it would shake Christianity to its foundation, precisely because it appealed to the higher and not to the lower instincts of man." To promote the cause of a Christianized socialism, the three founded a newspaper in May, 1848, but it had to be discontinued two months later for lack of funds.

In 1850 Maurice and Kingsley issued Tracts on Christian Socialism, but this venture, too, was unsuccessful. Another attempt to found a newspaper the same year met the same fate, and their efforts to found cooperatives as a solution for the economic problems of modern society were no more successful. By 1854 the Christian socialist movement of Maurice, Kingsley, and Ludlow was dead, but the teachings of Maurice lived on to be an inspiration for Headlam.

Headlam confessed that he was a follower of Maurice, but declared that he went much further than his teacher in certain respects. While accepting Maurice's attempt to Christianize socialism, Headlam rejected his social philosophy. It would

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4 Ibid., 184.
be an understatement to say that Maurice and Kingsley were conservative. Maurice believed that monarchy was the only form of government sanctioned by God, and, therefore, "the only form of which a Christian could approve. . . ." He saw democracy as a threat to monarchy and thus concluded that it was evil. Both Maurice and Kingsley believed in the saving grace of the aristocracy. Kingsley, a staunch supporter of the House of Lords, contended,

that when you put workmen into human dwellings, and give them a Christian education, so far from wishing discontentedly to rise out of their class, or to level others to it, exactly the opposite takes place. They become sensible of the dignity of work, and they begin to see their labor as a true calling in God's Church. . . .

Neither Maurice nor Kingsley endorsed or anticipated 'scientific socialism.' They would have opposed expropriation of capitalists or landlords, whether by forceful or peaceful means. Headlam could not, and did not, accept this part of their teaching.

Maurice did not believe, as did many Christians, that the basis of Christian theology was the Trinity. For him all

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7 Binyon, Christian Socialist, p. 80.


human morality was based upon man's relationship with God rather than upon fear of eternal damnation or the expectation of an everlasting reward in heaven. The relation between man and God derived from the Incarnation, that God became man, and from the Atonement, that man was reconciled with God through the sacrifice of the Son. The brotherhood of man existed under the fatherhood of God. But Maurice found, when he took a close look at modern society, that the brotherhood of man was not working as God had intended, and he attempted to correct this condition with his cooperatives. Headlam reached the same conclusion about modern society and believed that it should be reformed, but several years passed after the founding of the G. S. M. before he became a socialist.  

In the autumn of 1870, Headlam accepted a curacy at Drury Lane, London. His vicar believed that the clergy should make frequent visits to the homes of their parishioners, and it was through such parish work that Headlam obtained first hand knowledge of proletarian life. In 1873 Headlam was forced to leave Drury Lane because, following Maurice, he did not believe that on Judgment Day, half of the people would be saved and half would be damned. Moving across town to Saint Matthew's Church in Bethnal Green, he continued the practice of visiting his working class parishioners. When he arrived

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10 Binyon, Christian Socialist, pp. 84-85; Bettany, Stewart Headlam, pp. 19-21.
in Bethnal Green, he decided to live among his people and took a flat in a working class building. Regarded as an eccentric by his superiors, Headlam joined the local Radical Club and began speaking and debating in public.¹¹

Headlam's work among the urban laborers brought him into contact with Charles Bradlaugh, who believed that a god might exist somewhere in the universe but that man could never comprehend such a being. He, therefore, rejected the gods of all religious literature. To spread his liberal religious, economic, and political ideas, Bradlaugh had founded the National Secular Society. In the 1870's and early 1880's, Bradlaugh "wielded powerful sway over the minds of the more independent members of the working class—notably the younger generation."¹² To Headlam, a zealot himself, secularism was a force hostile to Christianity, and he was eager to do battle for the Lord. The public platform, he thought, would make the best field of combat. In the spring of 1875, Headlam debated some of Bradlaugh's lesser known followers and engaged the notorious Bradlaugh himself on April 4. Headlam gives this account of the debate:

I gave them [the audience] my name and office, and fired away for my ten minutes--thanked him [Bradlaugh] cordially for his grand speech, and told them that the Bible religion which Bradlaugh

¹¹Ibid., pp. 26-33, 36-37, 41.

¹²Ibid., p. 47.
had said favoured slavery might be made to favour anything, which brought much applause, which increased when I said that I did not believe in any infallible book, but in Christ. . . . that I was a Christian because I obeyed Christ's spirit speaking into my heart, and that Mr. Bradlaugh was a Christian too. . . . Bradlaugh said that he did not know what to say; was very courteous; said I was very liberal, but if he were a barrister and the Bishop would give him a brief, he would convict me of heresy. . . .

But platform speeches and debates were not enough for Headlam. On Saint Peter's Day, 1877, he founded the Guild of Saint Matthew to combat secularism. Initially it was nothing more than a parish organization, but it soon shed its parochial character. The first of its three original objects was "To get rid, by every possible means, of the existing prejudices, especially on the part of Secularists, against the Church, her sacraments and doctrines, and to endeavour to 'justify God to the people.'" The second was to encourage the observance of the teachings of the Anglican Church, and the final goal was "to promote the study of social and political questions in light of the Incarnation." The Incarnation became the center of all of Headlam's thinking about socialism; it was "the raison d'être of all our Christian Socialism and efforts towards social and political reform." In the years immediately following the

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14 Bettany, Stewart Headlam, pp. 79-80.

15 Quoted in Ibid., pp. 30-81.
founding of the Guild, Headlam formulated his thoughts on socialism. Like Maurice, he found modern capitalistic society to be unchristian, and robbery, the fundamental cause of the great contrast between the rich and the poor. Those who worked the hardest and produced the most had the least, while those who produced nothing had everything. The capitalists robbed the working man. Marx would have agreed, of course, with this thesis, but Headlam eventually offered an explanation of this robbery which Marx considered a capitalist trick. The anarchism of capitalism also led to the destruction of personal morals, and, although Marx believed that ethical values resulted from the economic orientation of society, he denounced the same moral evils that Headlam condemned: drunkenness, prostitution, the lack of brotherhood among mankind, and the destruction of true individualism. 16

According to Headlam, capitalists had captured the Church and were using it to further their own materialistic interests. Marx had arrived at the same conclusion, but here the similarity ended. Headlam believed that the workers could recapture the Church and use it to help establish socialism. Marx, on the other hand, maintained that capitalists had captured the

Church because of their dominant economic position and would never give it up. There was no possibility, therefore, that the workers could ever make use of it. Marx had argued that religion was only a reflection of the real, economic world and had no existence independent of economics. Headlam, of course, rejected this idea.17

For Headlam, Christianity was socialistic, as the teachings of Jesus and the Church revealed. In support of this conclusion, he cited, among other examples, Jesus' remark that it would be difficult for a rich man to go to heaven. The reason for this difficulty was not the man's wealth, Headlam argued, but the rich man's acceptance of poverty as the natural state of the masses. But Headlam contended that extremes of wealth and poverty were not natural, nor did Jesus think they were, despite his statement: "You always have the poor with you. . . ."18 Jesus, Headlam explained, was simply reporting a condition that was a historical fact up to and during his lifetime; he was not sanctioning it. As Headlam observed, Jesus did not say that "there always should be poverty."19

17 Headlam, "Christian Socialism," Fabian Tracts, No. 42, p. 9; Headlam, Socialist's Church, pp. 15-17, 21-22; Marx, Capital, I, 91-92, 668n.
The signs or miracles that Jesus worked were "distinctly secular, socialistic works..."20 He improved the health of the ill; he destroyed ugliness, discord, and misery, and replaced them with beauty, harmony, and pleasure. Jesus made certain that his followers were always properly fed, and he went to extremes to show that premature death had no place on Earth. But if the miracles were not enough to prove that Jesus was a socialist, other parables could be quoted.21

In the "parable of Judgment," Jesus described the verdicts he would render upon his return to Earth. He would summon all the nations of the Earth, not individuals, for judgment. The nations which enter heaven are those "which took care to see that its people were properly clothed, fed, and housed, which looked after those who were in difficulty and distress..." The socialistic kingdom of heaven will be established on Earth, and those Christians who say the Lord's Prayer actually are pleading for this great event to come.22

Jesus was a socialist, and there could be no doubt about it. He preached the brotherhood of man and the need for a socialistic life, but he was not a pure economic socialist because socialism could not be independent of moral teachings,

20 Ibid., p. 2.
21 Ibid., pp. 2-3; Bettany, Stewart Headlam, p. 111.
and the people of Jesus' day were not far enough advanced to understand such economic theory. Although the Christian Church had been temporarily captured by antisocialistic elements in modern society, the Church had accepted socialism in its teachings and its sacraments.  

The Church Catechism was full of socialistic ideas. It stated that all men must work, which meant that no man should live off the production of another. The two great sacraments which the Church held to be necessary for salvation were socialistic in nature. Baptism was the sacrament of equality. It abolished all class distinctions by admitting everyone into the Church. Holy Communion was the sacrament of Brotherhood, which, by allowing the influence of Jesus to enter each man's life, made all men brothers. The only recourse left for socialists was to recapture the Church.

Headlam stressed that Christianity would be necessary in the future society because sin will not entirely disappear. Indeed, he wrote,

just because our whole life will be more intense and the joy of living more real, it will be the more important not to miss the mark, to walk in the right way, to submit ourselves to the Will of God. And so we may as well clearly understand from the beginning that, though the establishment and maintenance

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23 Bettany, Stewart Headlam, pp. 82, 111; Headlam, Socialist's Church, pp. 20-21, 39-40.

24 Headlam, "Christian Socialism," Fabian Tracts, No. 42, pp. 7-8; Headlam, Socialist's Church, pp. 5-7.
of righteous industrial conditions by means of . . . Socialism is one important part of the Church's work, it is only one part of it, and that work will continue when that part is accomplished.\textsuperscript{25}

Marx, of course, thought that such "eternal truths" would be abolished, and Engels argued that there would be no need for "moral laws" in the socialist Utopia since only lunatics would commit crimes against other people. But Headlam found that Christianizing socialism and talking about brotherhood were not enough. Economic and political programs had to be developed.\textsuperscript{26}

In 1883 Headlam purchased \textit{The Church Reformer}, which became his personal medium of expression and the unofficial organ of the Guild. Headlam edited the paper and usually contributed the lead article. Its pages carried articles, letters, reviews, and reports of the activities of the G. S. M. and the Church and Stage Guild, an organization founded by Headlam to promote better relations between the Anglican Church and different theater arts. The newspaper was finally abandoned in 1895, when it became a financial liability.\textsuperscript{27}

Headlam was also a co-founder of the Land Reform Union, an organization that evolved from a series of discussions of

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., pp. 69-70.

\textsuperscript{26} Marx and Engels, \textit{Communist Manifesto, Other Writings}, pp. 341-342; Engels, \textit{Anti-Dühring}, p. 104.

Henry George's Progress and Poverty. The most important result of George's first tour of Britain was the founding of Land Restoration Leagues which, in turn, mobilized popular support for his doctrines. Headlam was attracted to George's philosophy and praised him for his application of religion and morality to public affairs. In May, 1884, George's followers in the Land Reform Union, led by Headlam, seized control of the organization and renamed it the English Land Restoration League.28

Headlam's biographer, Bettany, contends that Henry George had the same sort of inspiring influence on Headlam in the field of economics that Maurice had in religion.29 Using Hebrew terminology, Headlam declared that George was "God sent." He was attracted to the American's economic theories because they "went right down to root principles."30 He became a Georgite and remained one the rest of his life.31

Headlam, like Marx, represented the modern worker as landless and working for a subsistence wage. The competition of modern urban laborers for jobs and housing depressed wages


29Ibid., p. 84.

30Headlam, Socialist's Church, pp. 60-61.

and increased rents. But, following George's lead, Headlam arrived at a conclusion regarding the cause of the worker's plight which differed greatly from that of Marx. Headlam contended that until "the whole community gets absolute ownership and control of the land, the aims of Socialism cannot be attained. . . ." Thus, he viewed the land question as the crux of the workers' problems. Headlam advocated the nationalization of land which he maintained was monopolized by landlords. Socialists who regarded capitalists and manufacturers as the workers' chief enemies were, Headlam believed, shortsighted. To him landlords, who monopolized the earth, were the principal enemies of the laboring man. It was the duty of Christian socialists to oppose the landlords. Convinced that industrial and agricultural workers created the value of all property, but landlords cheated them of their creation, Headlam thus held a vague theory of labor value. But it was not in the factory by capitalist expropriation of surplus value that the worker was robbed. Headlam, like George, advocated a land tax that would be high enough to destroy the landlord's monopoly; this was the cure-all. "When Labour and Land are married, the standard of comfort will be raised, grinding poverty will disappear, wealth will be

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32 Headlam, *Socialist's Church*, p. 57.
distributed. . . ." Thus did Headlam challenge the basic assumptions of Marxian economic theory.  

Contrary to George, who advocated only the socialization of land, Headlam called for the nationalization of all the means of production. In this respect Headlam developed a more socialist program than George, but he cautioned that "the collective ownership of industrial enterprises is good so far as it goes, but until the Land question is tackled the evils of property will remain." He translated his views on land into a socialist program for the G. S. M.  

Although the Guild had been founded in 1877, it did not hold its first annual meeting until September, 1884. The influence of George is clearly seen in the resolutions that were adopted. The membership declared that the great gulf between the masses, who produced much but gained little, and the bourgeoisie, who produced little but consumed much, was contrary to the Christian teachings of justice and brotherhood. The G. S. M. urged all clergymen to support programs

33 Ibid., p. 63.  
35 Headlam, Socialist's Church, p. 57.  
that would "tend to restore to the people the value which they give to the land. . . ."\(^{37}\) would bring about a more equitable distribution of the wealth, would provide all the people with a bigger voice in their government, and would "abolish false standards of worth and dignity."\(^{38}\) Headlam desired to achieve this program with a minimum of violence, and this aim meant a political program.\(^{39}\)

Like almost everything else in his life, Headlam's thinking on revolutionary change was influenced by his religious training and beliefs and his acceptance of Georgism. He repeatedly argued that Henry George, by his program of taxing landlords out of existence, had shown the way to a peaceful and just revolution. Once begun, the revolutionary changes could be carried on, Headlam contended, by committees which educated the laboring class, demonstrated for socialist objectives, encouraged the workers to vote, and make suggestions for the solution of the workers' problems. Socialists, he believed, should convert as many members of the middle class as possible in order to make the transition to socialism easier. This program obviously bore little resemblance to the Marxian Revolution. Headlam's religious convictions also persuaded him that the Christian Church was the true


\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Lawrence, *British Isles*, p. 76.
communistic society since it was founded by God, sought equality through its teachings and sacraments, and demanded the brotherhood of all men. But for the present, the Church was controlled by the upper classes to the detriment of the entire population. So soon as the workers realized the true nature of the Christian Church (and it was the duty of the Christian socialists to teach it to them), they would recapture it and learn that Jesus' Atonement was "an all-sufficient blood-shedding... ." When all classes learned this truth, violence would stop, and the new society would peacefully emerge.

To bring about the era of socialistic brotherhood, Headlam urged socialists to capture the political machinery of the nation from the local school board all the way up to Parliament. In contrast to Marx's dictum that the state was an instrument of oppression in the hands of the bourgeoisie which must be destroyed, Headlam concluded that the workers could gain control of the present state machinery and use it to the advantage of all men. In 1885 he drew up a series of questions for workers and clergymen to ask parliamentary candidates. Headlam particularly sought and supported candidates who advocated free education, the use of public money

40 Headlam, Socialist's Church, pp. 24-25.

to improve dwellings of the poor, an eight-hour working day, an increase in the powers of the municipal governments, and an increase in the land tax. At this time he proposed a 20 per cent tax on land value.  

Headlam coordinated the work of the G. S. M. with the program of the Land Restoration League apparently in the hope of giving the Guild a more influential voice in socialist circles. But he also wanted to join a more socialistic organization. Although he liked the political program of the S. D. F., he could not accept the strong anti-Christian bias of its membership. He rejected the Socialist League because of its opposition to parliamentary action. Finally in December, 1886, he joined the Fabian Society and probably convinced many of the G. S. M. Members, especially the clergymen, to follow suit. He served on the executive committee of the Fabian Society for a number of years and was instrumental in the framing of the Fabian Basis written in 1887, ensuring that the more extreme declarations concerning land and land policy were included. Nonetheless, both Shaw and Webb, who wrote short recollections of Headlam which appear in Bettany's biography, contend that he did not have a great deal of influence on the other policies of the Society. This

view is probably correct. As Shaw observed, the Fabian Society, throughout its history, was controlled by a handful of men who wanted to retain their exclusive position. Headlam attempted to keep Georgism alive in the Society, but Shaw, Webb, and others would not accept the "Single Tax" as a cure-all solution in itself. Headlam did not always agree with Fabian policy; moreover, he did not like the Fabian emphasis on research and statistics. He believed that the focus always should be on people, their needs, and the effort to teach them Christian socialism. This attitude led Shaw to remark years later that Headlam was more a mystical catholic than an industrial collectivist, an appraisal which is, at least, partially true. Although most Fabians did not share his views, Headlam remained a member of the Society for the rest of his life. He felt the need for belonging to a secular socialist society, and at the time, the Fabian Society was the only one that welcomed professing Christians into its ranks. 43

Despite his minority position in the Society, he did contribute much to it. He took an interest in all the programs advanced by the organization, earned a reputation as one of its more brilliant speakers, contributed an essay to the Fabian Tracts, and encouraged the Fabians to hold their

meetings in his home. When H. G. Wells joined the Fabians, the two men became close friends and together pressed for a larger organization and for more emotionalism in the Society's propaganda. Headlam was prominent in the free speech movement of the mid-1880's which led to the riots in 1885 and 1886. After Bloody Sunday, he was instrumental in forming a Socialist Defense League. He repeatedly exhorted the Anglican Church Congresses, attempting to convert the Bishops and other Church leaders to his socialistic views. May Morris tells of the 1887 Congress:

Headlam said he endorsed Ruskin's division of men into 'workers, beggars and robbers,' etc., and urged 'the priests and especially the bishops of the Church to follow the example of the Guild of Saint Matthew, in exhorting the idle rich to cease their dishonest practices and learn to live by their own labour.' Yes, there was never anyone more outspoken or fearless than Stewart Headlam; you have to imagine the atmosphere in which he spoke these words . . . facing the indignation, the enmity of the orthodox clergy gathered there.44

It is doubtful that Headlam had a great deal of influence on those Church leaders of 1887, but after the turn of the century, the Anglican Church became more progressive. Many of these new churchmen had been members of the G. S. M. or influenced by Headlam in other ways. But Headlam's most measurable success was his election as an Independent Progressive candidate to the school board of the London County Council. He and another Fabian, Annie Besant, were elected

to the newly formed board in 1888. Headlam remained a member so long as the board remained in existence and even drew heavy opposition from the S. D. F. in the 1894 election.  

His election to the school board marked a turning point in his career. Headlam was the sort of man who devoted a great amount of work and enthusiasm to a cause, and his aim now was to improve and enlarge educational opportunities for the children of London. He became increasingly involved in the educational problems of the London school system and municipal politics. When the board, at Headlam's urging, accepted trade union rate wages, it became the first public body in Britain to do so. The London County Council soon followed suit. Among the board's other accomplishments which bear the stamp of his leadership were such innovations as serving meals in schools, the establishment of clean and free schools, the prohibition of religious teaching in public schools, and the placing of pianos in London schools. His days as an activist in the socialist movement were almost over, and the Guild suffered as a result of these new activities. But he was justly proud of his accomplishments on the school board.

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After 1893 the Guild declined partly because of Headlam's neglect and partly because of competition. In the summer of 1889, a group of High Church Anglicans led by Canon Scott Holland, the Rev. Charles Gore, and several members of the G. S. M. founded the Christian Social Union. The C. S. U. was never a socialist body, however, and the Rev. James Adderley, a member of both religious bodies and also a Fabian, commented years later that he was not content with the Union "chiefly because I had committed myself to the political Socialists, and that was just what a real leader of the C. S. U. must never do." The Guild remained the only Christian socialist body in England during the last years of the nineteenth century, but its influence declined as it lost membership to the more moderate organizations such as the C. S. U. The Guild was too much a one man show, and that man, Headlam, was hostile to Puritan practices and sympathetic toward Catholic beliefs. These attitudes plus his socialism kept moderates from joining his group. In April, 1909, Headlam dissolved the Guild of Saint Matthew on the ground that it no longer did profitable work. He continued his connection with the Fabian Society, still advocating Henry George's plan for the salvation of society and insisting that socialism was Christian and that the Church must play a prominent

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role in the establishment of the new order. Stewart Headlam died on November 18, 1924.48

Headlam's fundamental concept of socialism as the Christian way of life was diametrically opposed to Marx's belief that socialism starts with atheism. In the opening paragraphs of The Socialist's Church, Headlam attacked the atheism of Marx no less than Belfort Bax's teaching that socialism not only is a religion, but also is an adequate substitute for Christianity. On this issue Headlam was certain to be more successful than either Marx or Bax, for the British had been Christians too long to forsake their religious heritage for an economic program. It was, moreover, too great a responsibility to deny the existence of God. The work of the Christian socialists proved that Christians, agnostics, and atheists could work together to solve social and economic problems without requiring people to give up their religious beliefs.

Headlam's acceptance of Georgism was, in itself, anti-Marxian. Advocating the Single Tax as the solution to all of society's evils was far removed from the Marxian program. Like George, Headlam believed that landlords cheated capitalists as well as workers. He did not blame the problems of modern civilization on capitalist exploitation as did Marx.

The only philosophical similarity between the two men is that each called himself a socialist or communist and that each looked forward to a classless society, but even on this last point there was a difference. Marx prophesied the evolution of a classless society only after the destruction of the capitalist state, but Headlam believed that this same capitalist state could and must establish the classless, Christian, socialist society; all his years on the school board were devoted to realizing this principle.
CHAPTER IV

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW AND THE FABIAN SOCIETY

Of all the major socialist organizations founded in late Victorian Britain, the Fabian Society is the only one which has survived to the present. Its ideological system, moreover, has remained throughout the twentieth century an important factor in shaping British socialist legislation. The chief architects of the organization's viable policies were George Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb. In the early years, Shaw supplied the link between Marx and the Fabians and contributed much of the Society's economic theory, while Webb developed its political philosophy and tactics.¹

At the age of twenty-six, Shaw was attracted to the study of economics by Henry George. On the evening of September 5, 1882, Shaw attended George's lecture in Memorial Hall on Farringdon Street, London. That night the speaker converted him from "barren agnostic controversy to economics."² After the lecture, the young Irishman purchased a copy of Progress and Poverty and "plunged into a course of economic


study. . . . "3 George's lecture and the study of his book convinced Shaw that political economy was "the science of social salvation. . . ." 4 Uncertain as to what to do with this new interest, he attended a meeting of Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation where he expounded George's program of land nationalization and received a curt critique for his boldness. He was told that he knew nothing about economics and should study Karl Marx, if he wished to learn the truth about the subject. Ignorant of Marxism, Shaw took the advice and began reading, in the British Museum, the first volume French translation of Kapital. This event constituted a turning point in his life, for the study of Kapital converted him to socialism. Upon the completion of his reading of Marx's massive work early in 1883, Shaw abandoned George's Single Tax as the panacea of all social evils and "accepted instead the belief that all forms of capital should be nationalised." 5 His acceptance of this tenet of communism and the retention of the spirit of Marxism were permanent. 6

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3 Henderson, Playboy, p. 149.

4 Shaw's appendix to Pease, Fabian Society, p. 260.


6 Shaw's appendix to Pease, Fabian Society, p. 260; Shaw, Morris as I Knew Him, p. 6; Shaw, Sketches, pp. 66, 96-97; Ervine, Shaw, pp. 105, 112, 125; Henderson, George Bernard Shaw, His Life and Works: A Critical Biography (Cincinnati, 1911), pp. 96-98; Henderson, Playboy, pp. 84 and 153; Frank Harris, Bernard Shaw (New York, 1931), p. 133; William
After informing the S. D. F. of his conversion to socialism, Shaw decided to expound his Marxism in a novel, the only literary medium in which he then felt competent. On July 9, 1883, he began *An Unsocial Socialist*, the last novel he ever wrote, which reveals the tenor of his early political thought. Completed by early November, this work treats all of Britain's major socio-economic problems from a purely Marxist point of view. In it,

A bargeman illustrates the subsistence law of wages; a shepherd exposes capitalistic greed hiding behind Malthus's doctrine of population. A lecture on bourgeois medical ethics is intruded at a deathbed, and another on exchange value at the graveside. In headlong flight from two parsons and a dozen policemen, the hero pauses to summarize to his wife with admirable clarity and completeness the whole contents of *Capital* and 'The Communist Manifesto'.

During the next year, *An Unsocial Socialist* was serialized in *To-day*, a socialist magazine edited by several leading members of the S. D. F., including Bax. In the spring of 1884, Shaw applied to the Federation for membership, but before the

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7 Shaw, *Sketches*, p. 131.

8 Irvine, *Universe*, p. 31.
process had been completed, an event occurred which caused him to withdraw his application.  

In May, 1884, Shaw chanced upon a four-page tract, "Why Are the Many Poor?" published by a small and then completely unknown body called the Fabian Society. Shaw later maintained that it was the name of the group, denoting an erudite middle classness with which he forever associated himself, that attracted his interest. He found the Society's address on the pamphlet and attended the meeting of May 16. On the margin of the minutes, he later wrote: "This meeting was made memorable by the first appearance of Bernard Shaw."  

Elected a member of the Society on September 5, he was appointed to its executive committee four months later. Whether or not Shaw's initial appearance was, as he claimed, "memorable," it is certain that his leadership soon became a decisive factor in the Society's history.  

Only four months old when Shaw attended its mid-May meeting, the Fabian Society was the only major socialist body

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9 Shaw, Sketches, p. 97; Ervine, Shaw, pp. 111, 119; Henderson, Playboy, pp. 85, 100; Irvine, Universe, p. 47; Rattray, Chronicle, pp. 44-45.

10 Quoted in Fremantle, British Fabians, p. 33.

11 Bernard Shaw, "The Fabian Society: What it has done and how it has done it," Fabian Tracts, No. 41, p. 4; Shaw, Sketches, pp. 97, 110; Pease, Fabian Society, pp. 40, 44, 273; Shaw, "Early Days," Webbs and Their Work, p. 7; Beer, British Socialism, Pt. IV, p. 275; Irvine, Universe, pp. 48, 60; Fremantle, British Fabians, pp. 32-33.
in late Victorian England not dominated by its founders, who had seceded from The Fellowship of New Life. The socialism of the Fellowship "was ethical and individual rather than economic and political. . . ." 

Thomas Davidson, the founder of the Fellowship, wished to establish an isolated communal society somewhere in the United States or Brazil, but the less utopian members had opposed this project on December 15, 1883, and had withdrawn. Three weeks later on January 4, 1884, the leading secessionists, Edward R. Pease, Hubert Bland, and Frank Podmore, met in Pease's apartment and founded the Fabian Society.

Although the charter members condemned competition for enslaving the many while enriching the few, their original objective was no more ambitious than to discuss among themselves the major social problems of the day. But recognizing that this purpose was inherently exclusive, they agreed to keep abreast of the ideas and work of similar organizations. Podmore suggested the society's name, explaining that it was a reference to Fabius Cunctator, the Roman general, and his victorious policy. At a later date, Podmore also contributed the Society's political maxim:


13 Ibid., pp. 26-33; Shaw, "Early Days," Webbs and Their Work, p. 7; Clayton, Rise and Decline, pp. 40-41; Ervins, Shaw, pp. 123-124; Fremantle, British Fabians, pp. 11, 26-28; Henderson, Playboy, pp. 139-141.
For the right moment you must wait, as Fabius did, most patiently, when warring against Hannibal, though many censured his delays; but when the time comes you must strike hard, as Fabius did, or your waiting will be in vain, and fruitless.\textsuperscript{14}

In emulation of Fabius’ tactics, the society which now bore his name hesitated three months before officially endorsing socialism and waited almost three years before developing its famous policies and theories.\textsuperscript{15}

During its early years, the Society struggled with a variety of socialist schemes and ideas, and Shaw contributed to the confusion by introducing Marxism. He had been a Fabian only two weeks when he presented the Society with "A Manifesto," the pamphlet which became Fabian Tract Number Two. A mixture of Marxism, Georgism, and Radical Liberalism, it condemned capitalistic competition as the instigator of "adulteration, dishonest dealing, and inhumanity. . . ."\textsuperscript{16}

To remedy this situation, Shaw suggested the nationalization of land, state competition with private business and industry, equal political rights for both sexes, and improved educational benefits. While advocating increased state interference in economic affairs, he warned that if Parliament was incapable

\textsuperscript{14}Quoted in Pease, Fabian Society, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., pp. 33-34, 37-38, 43-44, 46; Fremantle, British Fabians, pp. 28-29; Henderson, Playboy, pp. 141, 144-145.

\textsuperscript{16}For the text of this tract, see Pease, Fabian Society, pp. 40-41.
of bringing about social democracy, violence would be the only solution. Shaw did not state that violence is the inevitable result of the class struggle, but this was probably his opinion in 1884, since he then was deeply influenced by Marxism.\textsuperscript{17}

The advocacy of violence by the first Fabians was not unusual. "The Fabian Society was warlike in its origin . . .," Shaw later declared, and it would settle for nothing less than the prompt and complete reconstruction of society.\textsuperscript{18} Webb later recalled that some members looked forward to a socialist revolution which they expected to occur in 1889, the anniversary of the French Revolution. But, in general, their debates dealt with abstract and utopian subjects. Shaw, for example, once proposed the abolition of currency. The varied experiences and intellectual backgrounds of the members themselves produced the initial diffusion of philosophies and programs. Some were individualists, while others were anarchists, Marxists, or Millites. The religious spectrum from Anglo-Catholicism to atheism also was represented. But

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18}Shaw, "The Fabian Society," \textit{Fabian Tracts}, No. 41, p. 3.
events of the next three years transformed this confusion into a homogeneous philosophy. 19

Of momentous consequence for the future course of the Society was the recruiting of Sidney Webb in 1885. Shaw had met Webb in the winter of 1879 at a meeting of the Zetetical Society, a club organized for the discussion of political and social questions. . . . 20 Impressed by Webb's cogent use of facts, Shaw had made friends with him. "In reading Das Kapital, Shaw had been especially impressed by Marx's extensive use of documents containing the true history of the leaps and bounds of England's prosperity." 21 Convinced that this sort of attack would convert people to socialism, but equally aware that it was not in his own literary nature to write such works, Shaw concluded that the Fabian Society needed Webb, that "ratiocinating card-index file." 22 But Webb was a cautious fellow who apparently "feared the violence

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21 Henderson, Playboy, p. 158.

22 Irvine, Universe, pp. 63-64.
and extremism of the Society." 23 In the end, however, Shaw's persistence prevailed: on May 1, 1885, Webb became a Fabian. 24

Soon after his own conversion to Marxism, Shaw had persuaded Webb to read the first volume of Kapital. When Shaw learned that Webb had finished the massive tome in about an hour, he remarked with admiration that his friend "was a miraculously quick reader." 25 But Webb, a disciple of John Stuart Mill, was unmoved by Marxian arguments, and as Shaw soon realized, Webb "had nothing to learn from Marx theoretically or from me." 26 Like Mill, Webb believed "that under private property and free contract everybody except the proprietors would be reduced to bare subsistence wages." 27 His political philosophy, too, was Millite, and over the next few years, he reshaped Shaw's political views. But the denouement of Shaw's economic theories was the work of someone else. 28

23 Ibid.

24 Shaw, Sketches, pp. 93, 107-108, 110-111, 132; Shaw, "Early Days," Webbs and Their Work, pp. 7-8; Pease, Fabian Society, p. 46; Henderson, Playboy, p. 121; Irvine, Universe, pp. 62, 64; Rattray, Chronicle, p. 34.


26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

As one of his biographers has noted, Shaw "also learned economics by defending Marx—unsuccessfully." 29 In January, 1885, he became involved in a polemic with Philip Wicksteed, a Unitarian minister, which led to the former's repudiation of Marxian economics. Wicksteed, a disciple of the economic theories of Stanley Jevons, 30 contributed an article to the October, 1884, issue of Today, criticizing from the Jevonian point of view Marx's theories of value and surplus value. Although he did not reject the important role of labor in production, Wicksteed did discount Marx's contention that labor was the source of all exchange value. Following Jevons' lead, Wicksteed contended that abstract utility determines the value of any given commodity.

Now the "common something," which all exchangeable things contain, is neither more nor less than abstract utility, i.e., power of satisfying human desires. The exchanged articles differ from each other in the specific desires which they satisfy, they resemble each other in the degree of satisfaction which they confer. 31

Labor, he conceded, was one of the sources of value, but

29 Irvine, Universe, p. 75.

30 William Stanley Jevons (1835-1882), received the B. A. in chemistry and botany from the University of London in 1852. His interest, however, turned to economics, and he took the B. A. and M. A. degrees in economics from University College, London. His best known work is Theory of Political Economy and Selected Papers and Reviews on Economic Theory, ed. Lionel Robbins (London, 1946), II, 801-809.

31 Ibid., p. 713.
utility was more important:

A coat is made specifically useful by the tailor's work, but it is specifically useful (has a value in use) because it protects us. In the same way, it is made valuable by abstractly useful work, but it is valuable because it has abstract utility.\footnote{Ibid., p. 714.}

The editors of To-day expected the Jevonian argument to be destroyed by a curt reply. They asked Hyndman to demolish the naive economic system, but he refused, apparently considering such a task unworthy of his attention. The editors next turned to Shaw who accepted the challenge. His reply appeared in the January, 1885, issue.\footnote{For the complete texts of Wicksteed's article, Shaw's reply, and Wicksteed's rebuttal, see ibid., pp. 705-733.}

In his article, Shaw demonstrated the trenchant sarcasm which later won him a world-wide reputation, but his economic arguments were almost nonexistent. "His reply was not so much a defence of Marx and the labour theory of value, as a light skirmishing assault on the Jevonian theory..."\footnote{A. M. McBriar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics, 1884-1918 (Cambridge, 1962), p. 31.}

Wicksteed's rejoinder, which appeared in the April issue, was only eight paragraphs long, but it dealt a decisive blow to Shaw's ineffectual arguments. Shaw later confessed that Wicksteed had "brought me to a standstill by a criticism of Marx which I did not understand."\footnote{Shaw's Appendix to Pease, Fabian Society, p. 260.} Concluding that he could...
learn something from Wicksteed, Shaw sought the friendship of the Unitarian minister, who belonged to the Beeton Club, a society for the study of economics. Other leading economists of the day, including Alfred Marshall, also belonged to the circle. Shaw gained entry into the club and "held on to it like grim death. . . ." Wicksteed frequently gave lectures in Jevonian economics at the meetings. It took Shaw about a year and a half to master the Jevonian system, and once he had, he abandoned Marxian economics. Meanwhile, other events occurred which brought the Fabian philosophy closer to maturity.

Late in 1885, several Fabians established the Hampstead Historic Society for the study of Marxian and other economic theories. Though composed of the leading Fabians and some of their friends in other socialist organizations, the Society was dominated by Shaw and Webb. Among its members who already were familiar with Marx's writings were Shaw, Webb, Pease, and Ernest Belfort Bax. Initially Shaw, Bax, and a few others defended Marx against all criticisms, but as Shaw grew more familiar with Jevons' teachings, he interposed them against the labor theory and Marxian surplus value.

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36 Quoted in Henderson, *Playboy*, p. 223.
The Fabians, however, concluded from these debates that "even the ideal capitalist society is unjust" and that "the remedy for the ills of existing society lies in moving away from it rather than towards it." Thus the theory of surplus value appealed to them, but they divorced it from its Marxian foundation by distinguishing between rents of land, machinery, and ability. This revision was probably the work of Webb, who had introduced Ricardo's law of rent into the discussions, noting that Marx had skillfully evaded the issue by his use of the Hegelian dialectic. These fortnightly debates were important to the development of Fabian thought as they furnished much of the material for the Essays, which, in turn, became the basis of Fabian ideology and policy.

As the majority of Fabians moved toward a collectivist philosophy, the anarchist members attempted to increase their influence within the Society. At the meeting of September 17, 1886, they, with the support of William Morris and several of his colleagues from the Socialist League, forced a vote on the issue of political action. Their opponents won the vote but did not, at this time, force the whole Society to accept

38 Ibid.

the decision. As an alternative solution, the majority founded the Fabian Parliamentary League (F. P. L.), "which any Fabian could join or not as he pleased."40 The Society's entire leadership immediately joined the F. P. L. and in February, 1887, issued its preliminary declaration advocating the dissemination of educational propaganda, active participation in national and local politics, and support of candidates who would further the cause of socialism until an "opportunity arises for putting forward Socialist candidates to form the nucleus of a Socialist party in Parliament."41 Thus the Fabian leaders publicly endorsed political activity while carefully avoiding any pronouncement as to its form. Thereafter the anarchists gradually left the Society, and, as they did, the F. P. L. merged with the whole membership and disappeared.42

On June 3, 1887, the Executive Committee issued "The Basis of the Fabian Society," a brief statement of its creed "to which new members were asked to subscribe."43 The purpose of the "Basis" was twofold: to summarize Fabian

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41 Ibid.


43 Ibid.
philosophy and to prevent nonsocialists from entering the Society. The latter objective was later strengthened by rigid rules governing membership application, but the former was superseded two and a half years later by the famous Fabian Essays.  

Preparations for the publication of Fabian Essays in Socialism took almost a year. Originally they were lectures delivered from September to December, 1888, before the Hampstead Historic Society. Once the decision had been reached to publish them in book form, each lecture was subjected to the criticism of all the essayists. The Essays, therefore, reflected the thinking of the seven leaders of the Society. Shaw not only contributed two of the essays but also edited the rest.

Editing, for him, implied much more than merely inviting people to contribute to the work, and seeing the book through the press: it included frequent consultations with the other contributors and, in some instances, collaboration in writing chapters.  

Within a month after the Essays appeared in December, 1889, the first edition of 1,000 copies, though published privately and without advertisement, had completely sold out.

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44 Pease, Fabian Society, pp. 71-72. Pease gives the complete text of the "Basis" on p. 269. As early as 1892, the Society restricted membership "by insisting on stricter guarantees of the sincerity of the applicants' acceptance of our basis. . . ." Shaw, "The Fabian Society," Fabian Tracts, No. 41, pp. 22-23.

45 Ervine, Shaw, pp. 204-205.
Still in print, Fabian Essays is "one of the classics of Socialism." 46

Shaw's essay on the economic foundation of socialism revealed his complete break with Marxian economics and his acceptance of Jevons' theory of value and Ricardo's theory of rent. Marx had started, Shaw asserted, with the assumption that "the exchange of one commodity for another implies that the two must be commensurable..." 47 But the German socialist had arbitrarily selected abstract labor as the common measure of all products to the exclusion of their utility simply because they are used for different purposes. Despite Marx's assertion that boots and tables are valuable because of the labor embodied in them, Shaw argued that their value is determined by their usefulness. In criticizing the labor


47 Shaw, Bernard Shaw and Karl Marx, pp. 191-192. This discussion of Shaw's economic philosophy is based on his essays in Fabian Essays and Bernard Shaw and Karl Marx. The latter contains three of Shaw's essays, written in August, 1887, reviewing Volume I of the first English translation of Kapital.

In the 1920's, Shaw expounded his theory of "equality of income" (first proposed in 1913), which maintains that all workers in a socialist society should have an equal income, a very non-Marxist idea and one which most socialist leaders have ridiculed. Henderson, Playboy, pp. 242-243; Shaw, The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism, Works, XX, pp. 45-54, 75-77, 79-88, 104; Harris, Shaw, pp. 130-131.
theory of value, the Fabians astutely observed that "labour, too, is disparate: one is bootmaking, the other tablemaking," and that utility can be as abstract as labor. Many different commodities, moreover, are necessary to fulfill human needs. Marx's theory of value, therefore, rests upon a metaphysical fallacy. As Shaw explained,

The utilities of the soap and nails were summarily rejected as disparate because they were specifically different. Yet when the embodied labours were found to be also specifically different, they were not rejected: they were examined and found to be reducible from specific soapboiling and nailmaking to "expenditure of human labour in general." But why was this not done with the utility? There is specific utility and abstract utility just as truly as there is specific labour and abstract labour. Fastening things together and cleansing them are two specific ways of doing the same thing, i.e., satisfying human needs.

But Shaw himself employed the same trick by discussing commodities abstractly, albeit from a different point of view. His next step was to demonstrate that usefulness, not labor, created the value of commodities. Again resorting to example, Shaw argued that a piece of broken china would still embody abstract labor though it no longer commanded a price in the market. It was worthless because it had lost its utility.

In accordance with Jevons' theory of "final utility," Shaw contended that the exchange value of a product decreases as the amount in supply increases. A person might find one

48 Shaw, Bernard Shaw and Karl Marx, pp. 192-193.
49 Ibid., pp. 132, 136-137.
umbrella very useful, the second a luxury, but a third would be worthless to him. The true exchange value of a commodity is determined by the price consumers are willing to pay for the last item produced. "If there were but one umbrella in the world, the exchange value . . . would be what the most delicate person would pay for it on a very wet day sooner than go without it." If, however, the supply of umbrellas increases beyond the point of demand, they will become useless, and their value will fall to the cost of production.

At this point, rent becomes important in Shavian economic theory. All of the cultivable land is owned by a class which, seeking to rid itself of all work, rents it to those who can afford to pay. But the great majority of the people, the proletariat, cannot afford the price of rent and thus are denied use of the means of production. To survive, the laborer sells himself to the highest bidder for a wage; this is the most important result of the monopoly in land and the subsequent rents. But workers are valueless because their supply exceeds the demand. The workers' value has reached final utility. "The commodity which the proletariat sells is one over the production of which he has practically no control. He is himself driven to produce it by an irresistible impulse." The major economic result of this

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51 Ibid., p. 33.
overproduction is that the workers, if employed, are paid nothing.

This is the condition of our English laborers to-day: they are no longer even dirt cheap: they are valueless, and can be had for nothing. The proof is the existence of the unemployed, who can find no purchaser. By the law of indifference, nobody will buy men at a price when he can obtain equally serviceable men for nothing. What then is the explanation of the wages given to those who are in employment, and who certainly do not work for nothing? The matter is deplorably simple. Suppose that horses multiplied in England in such quantities that they were to be had for the asking, like kittens condemned to the bucket. You would still have to feed your horse--feed him and lodge him well if you used him as a smart hunter--feed him and lodge him wretchedly if you used him only as a drudge. But the cost of keeping would not mean that the horse had an exchange value. If you got him for nothing in the first instance--if no one would give you anything for him when you were done with him, he would be worth nothing, in spite of the cost of his keep. That is just the case of every member of the proletariat who could be replaced by one of the unemployed to-day. The wage is not the price of themselves: for they are worth nothing: it is only their keep.52

Rent, as Shaw defined it, is the difference between a worker's production and the wages he receives. Rent and the ownership of land by the few have caused all of the evils of modern civilization. The growth of the proletariat who have nothing breeds degradation, filth, disease, dishonesty, drunkenness, obscenity, and murder. The employed laborer is a slave; the unemployed worker is dead.

52Ibid., pp. 33-34.
The Fabian Society had proposed solutions for the evils of modern society in the "Fabian Basis," and Shaw upheld them in the Essays. He believed that nationalization of the land and collection of rent by the state would solve the major social, economic, and moral problems of his day. Following the lead of Henry George, he suggested taxation as the best means of accomplishing these objectives. But George, Shaw observed, was not a socialist because he never mentioned what should be done with the revenue collected by the state. Shaw, on the other hand, proposed that these funds should be devoted to the public welfare.53

Marxian economic thought, Shaw asserted, contained several fallacies. First, Marx confused the materialistic world with his metaphysical philosophy with the result that his economic system had no reality whatever. Secondly, his arbitrary dismissal of any connection between the labor supply and overpopulation as capitalistic apologetics, compelled him to deny the importance of utility. Thirdly, his reliance upon Ricardo's value theory to the exclusion of Ricardo's law of rent led to a misconception of the nature of surplus value. With these arguments, Shaw boasted publicly that he had killed Marx, meaning that he had destroyed Marxian economics. Nonetheless, his high regard for Kapital remained undiminished.

To Shaw it was the most valuable book he had ever read. Marx's great contribution, he thought, was the scathing attack on capitalism which was supported by copious data. The German socialist, moreover, had discovered the true destiny of human history, the inevitable march toward socialism, a view which Webb shared with Shaw. "Read Jevons... for your economics," Shaw advised, "and read Marx for the history of their working in the past, and the conditions of their application in the present. And never mind the metaphysics." Most Fabians accepted Shavian economics until the 1930's, when the writings of John Maynard Keynes forced major revisions in their economic philosophy.

The Fabian Essays also contained the Society's repudiation of Marxian class war and revolution. Both Shaw and Webb were aware that the vast differences between social classes had caused conflicts in the past, but such friction, they thought, did not mean that open war between classes was inevitable. After his short career as an avid Marxist, Shaw abandoned the view that the proletariat had a unique role to play in the establishment of socialism. The working class, instead of leading, would have to be led by "the revolting

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54 Shaw, Bernard Shaw and Karl Marx, pp. 170-171.
sons of the bourgeoisie...” 56 It was this group, he declared, led by “Lassalle, Marx, Liebknecht, Morris, Hyndman... all like myself, bourgeois, who painted the flag red.” 57

The reason for this bourgeois ascendancy in the field of socialism was quite clear: the middle class was the only one which had produced men with enough education to see not only the moral and social consequences of capitalism but also the future course of society. A large segment of the proletariat would never revolt, Shaw believed, because it was inherently conservative, looking to capitalists with respect and desiring itself to be bourgeois. To the Fabians, the idea of revolution and class war was abhorrent; they firmly believed that democratic, peaceful change not only was possible, but also necessary. 58

Webb's contribution to Fabian Essays on the subject of political philosophy has received more critical acclaim than Shaw's essay on social transition, despite their similarity

56 Shaw, Sketches, p. 83.
57 Ibid., pp. 83-84.
of views and illustrations, because Webb was the teacher and Shaw, the student. The similarity of the two essays only indicates how well the latter assimilated the former's ideas. They shared the view that democracy, and not the class struggle, was the vehicle of social progress. Convinced that democracy was the political side of socialism, Webb declared that "the inevitable outcome of Democracy is the control by the people themselves, not only of their own political organization, but, through that, also of the main instruments of wealth production...." By true socialism, Webb and Shaw meant democratic state socialism, the maintenance of which required reliance on constitutional procedures and the renunciation of violence. Marx had, of course, theorized that socialism could be established in Britain without violence if its advent were not too long delayed. The Fabians, however, were now advocating evolutionary changes which could require decades to accomplish. True socialism also required an educational program to convince the people of the morality of the socialist cause. Marx would have rejected the use of the word "morality" and all that it implied, but he did believe

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60 Webb devoted the first pages of his essay in Fabian Essays and one entire tract ("Socialism: True and False," No. 51), to an explanation of why democratic state socialism is the true brand and why utopian, anarchistic, or revolutionary socialism is unrealistic.
that the masses would have to understand the "rightness" of socialism before they could accept it. Like Marx, Shaw and Webb held that the establishment of socialism was inevitable, but unlike Marx, they argued that socialism had advanced immensely during the last fifty years.61

The progress toward political democracy in England during the first half of the nineteenth century had been accompanied by numerous social and economic reforms. The Reform Bill of 1832 led to the Factory Acts, the abolition of slavery, the Income Tax of 1842, and the repeal of the Corn Laws. As Parliament abandoned laissez-faire doctrines, it assumed supervision of enterprises previously subject only to unregulated private control. The British government now became involved in such new activities as operating the telegraph, constructing libraries, museums, hospitals, gasworks, waterworks, and artisans' dwellings, and "stockbroking, banking, farming, and money-lending."62 The state also increased its assistance to many poor and underprivileged persons. As Webb frankly admitted, "It provides for many thousands of us from birth to burial--midwifery, nursery, education, board and lodging, vaccination, medical attendance,

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medicine, public worship, amusements, and interment." All of these services "were at one time left to private enterprise. . . . Step by step the community has absorbed them, wholly or partially; and the area of private exploitation has been lessened." The conclusion was obvious, once Shaw and Webb coupled this line of thought with their favorite example of state collectivism, the post office. Instead of being expensive and inefficient as had been expected by the laissez-faire school of economics, the post office was competently and economically operated by the state. Shaw and Webb concluded, therefore, that state socialism not only would eliminate exploitation, but also would institute an efficient and economical government.

Total economic socialism could not evolve, however, until complete political democracy had been established. To facilitate the creation of a truly democratic society, Shaw and Webb proposed a seven point program: (1) the establishment of universal suffrage, (2) abolition of residence requirements, (3) abolition of all property qualifications, (4) annual parliaments, (5) payment of all elected officials on all governmental levels, (6) payment of candidates'
election expenses, and (7) abolition of the House of Lords. 66

But the socialist state they envisioned was not highly centralized. Socialism, they thought, could not exist without increasing the powers and responsibilities of local governments. The political machinery of national governments, Shaw reasoned, could not bear the growth of democracy. State socialism, therefore, was contingent upon municipal socialism. Focusing its attention on London, the Fabian Society in 1889 issued Webb's tract entitled "Facts for Londoners," which urged the metropolis to give more power to democratically elected officials and to convert gasworks, trams, the water supply, docks, and housing into public utilities. Without neglecting national issues, the Society emphasized municipal reorganization until after the turn of the century. 67

By contrast, Marx, in his earlier writings, concentrated on national policy and action to the neglect of governmental organization. But after the fall of the Paris Commune (1871), he showed a preference for local policies and organization.


While Fabian leaders no longer looked to Marxism for inspiration, their policies, whether national or local, could still fall within the scope of some Marxian directive. After the publication of the Essays in 1889, the major problem facing the Society was the adoption of a political tactic, but owing to Webb's influence, when the decision had been reached, it was quite anti-Marxian.

"Permeation," the name given to the political activity adopted by the Society, meant the infiltration of established organizations and parties in order to bring their attitudes and policies closer to Fabian philosophy. Although Fabians already were engaged in educational propaganda, they were also eager for action. The indoctrination of the proletariat would take years; meanwhile, it could do nothing to improve its lot. Permeation seemed the only practical solution since the Society could continue its educational program, and, at the same time, carry on political agitation and wirepulling on behalf of the laborers. If their efforts were successful in bringing about social democracy, the Fabians argued, there would be no need for a class war. But the orthodox Marxists believed that permeation was deep heresy which tended to divorce socialist leaders from the working class, the chosen

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people of the Marxist religion. Although the Fabian Society has remained an independent organization, its members who, in the interest of permeation, joined other political bodies lost their separate identities. As Shaw observed in 1892, "the true Fabian is not, and never can be, a party man or woman. My Party, right or wrong, is not our slogan. All Fabians have their price, which is always the adoption of Fabian measures, no matter by what party." 69 The policy of permeation, in sum, was one of compromise and opportunism which directly contradicted Marx's admonitions on party purity and no cooperation with the bourgeoisie. 70

During the last twelve years of the nineteenth century, Fabian permeation achieved limited success on the local level, especially in London, where in 1888 Headlam and Annie Besant were elected to the school board of the newly created London County Council. In accordance with the Fabian strategy to attract Liberal and Radical votes, they ran as Progressives. In 1892 Webb and five other Fabians were elected to the same Council, and a few years later Shaw became a vestryman for

69 Quoted in Fremantle, British Fabians, p. 93.

the borough of St. Pancras. Since these first victories, Fabian influence has continued to be an important factor in London politics.\textsuperscript{71}

But on the national level, Fabian tactics were not as successful. At Webb's suggestion, the Society concentrated on the Liberal Party and Radical Clubs and succeeded in gaining control of two important Liberal-Radical newspapers, the Star and the Daily Chronicle, and a number of local Radical organizations. In 1891, Fabian propaganda and infiltration paid dividends when some of the Radical Clubs adopted the "Newcastle Program." A result of Fabian thought,\textsuperscript{72} this

\textsuperscript{71}Pease, Fabian Society, pp. 80, 142; Ensor, "Permeation," Webbs and Their Work, p. 59; Fremantle, British Fabians, pp. 94-97; Hamilton, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, pp. 36-37, 118-119; Henderson, Playboy, p. 177; Irvine, Universe, pp. 86-90.

\textsuperscript{72}In 1948 Shaw described how the "Newcastle Program" came into being and, at the same time, gave an insight into the technique of permeation: "Webb gave me the Program in his own handwriting as a string of resolutions. I, being then a permissive Fabian of the Executive of the South St. Pancras Liberal and Radical Association . . ., took them down to a meeting in Percy Hall . . . where the late Mr. Beale, then Liberal candidate and subscription milch cow of the constituency (without a ghost of a chance) was to address as many of the ten as might turn up, under the impression that he was addressing a public meeting . . . I asked him to move the resolutions. He said they looked complicated, and if I would move them he would second them. I moved them, turning over Webb's pages by batches, and not reading most of them. Mr. Beale seconded. Passed unanimously. That night they went down to The Star with the report of an admirable speech which Mr. Beale was supposed to have delivered. Next day he found the National Liberal Club in an uproar at his revolutionary break-away." Quoted in Fremantle, British Fabians, pp. 97-98.
"Program" called for social and economic reforms. The next objective in the Fabian plan was to force it upon the entire Liberal Party, and this step was accomplished when the National Liberal Federation adopted it (1891). The Liberal Party, faced with a general election in June, 1892, coupled the "Program" with the Home Rule issue and emphasized both during the campaign. But Shaw, observing that many of the Party's leaders were not enthusiastic about any sort of reform, attempted to force their hand by issuing an "Election Manifesto" just prior to the election. He urged the workers to vote for the best man or, at least, against the worst and to think seriously about the formation of a workers' political party. The Liberals won, bringing Gladstone into office for the fourth and last time, but as Shaw had feared, the new government did nothing to further social and economic reform. He and Webb soon realized that the Liberal leadership had no intention of implementing the "Newcastle Program." Determined to reveal this betrayal, even at the cost of sacrificing permeation on the national level, they published a scathing critique in the November, 1893, issue of the Fortnightly Review which exposed the vast gulf between Liberal campaign promises and performance in office during the last year and a half. Following the format of the Society's tracts, Shaw and Webb supported the Fabian case with a mass of facts. Although the indictment spelled a temporary end for Fabian
influence on the Liberal Party, its authors remained friendly with many of the Party's leaders. Permeation at the national level was not successful again until after the turn of the century. 73

One important result of the publication of Fabian Essays was the increase in the Society's membership and number of provincial branches during the early 1890's. The Annual Report issued in April, 1891, showed a membership of 361, which represented an increase of 188 over that of the previous year. The Report also revealed that local branches of the Society now operated in such cities as Belfast, Birmingham, Manchester, and Plymouth. But the last decade of the century was actually a period of decline for the Society. Not only did the rate of growth in members and branches decline but also the Society's influence. 74

A major reason for this trend was competition from the Independent Labor Party (I. L. P.), a new organization founded in 1893 by Keir Hardie, Tom Mann, and Ramsay MacDonald, all former Fabians who had become dissatisfied with certain aspects


of its philosophy. They contended that Fabianism had overlooked the importance of religion and class consciousness, that permeation had failed and the working class was more attuned to political activity than it previously had been. The time had come, therefore, to create a workers' party. Although the Fabian leadership disagreed with this view, it nonetheless sent delegates to the inaugural conference of the I. L. P., January 12, 1893. Shaw, one of the Fabian representatives, avowed that his intention was

\[\text{to go uncompromisingly for Permeation, for non-centralized local organization of the Labor Party, and for the bringing up of the country to the London mark by the supplanting of Liberalism by Progressivism . . . the Fabian is the lead for them to follow. . . .}^{75}\]

Shaw, in sum, still favored permeation over independent working class action and believed that Fabian philosophy was the best in the socialist field. Webb, who was thinking along similar lines, also feared that a Fabian alliance with the I. L. P. would hurt any chance that existed of reviving permeation in the Liberal Party.

The Fabians, with their emphasis on a judicious, statistical approach to all socio-economic problems, did not understand the I. L. P.'s emotional appeal to the working class. The Society, moreover, had completely neglected the importance of evangelical religion in its socialist program.

\[^{75}\text{Shaw to Edward Pease, Jan. 11, 1893, London, Shaw, Letters, pp. 376-377.}\]
Even as late as 1904, after the trade unions and almost all of the Fabian branches had accepted the leadership of the I. L. P., Webb still predicted that the Labor Party would never amount to anything. Shaw's later claim that he made significant contributions to the I. L. P.'s success does not bear careful scrutiny. As the Labor Party opposed several legislative measures proposed by the Society and openly criticized Fabian support of British intervention in South Africa against the Boers, the breach between the two organizations widened. The beneficiaries of this split were the friends of a Fabian-Liberal rapprochement. The Liberal Party, moreover, now recognized the need for many of the socio-economic reforms long advocated by the Fabians. The landslide Liberal victory in the election of 1906 meant, therefore, a resurgence of Fabian influence on the national level. 76

Another reason for the Fabian decline in the 1890's was the tendency of certain members of the Society's hierarchy to develop new interests and to resign in order to pursue them. The first to leave was Annie Besant, one of the seven

Fabian essayists, who became a convert to the religion of Theosophy. Graham Wallas, another essayist and longtime member of the Fabian Executive, devoted more and more time to teaching and writing and finally resigned from the Society because of its support of the Education Act of 1902. Headlam discontinued some of his Fabian activities to devote more time to the London school board. Webb's marriage to Beatrice Potter on July 23, 1892, resulted in a reorientation of his intellectual interests. He continued his work on the London County Council, but his wife persuaded him to join her in studying the trade union movement. As a team, they produced during the 1890's numerous articles and several books, the most important of which was The History of Trade Unionism. They also founded the London School of Economics in 1895. Although Beatrice was a dynamic person, an intellectual, and a master of the Fabian statistical approach to socio-economic problems, she did not become interested in her husband's Society until after the turn of the century. Thus in the 1890's, Webb, too, was forced to curtail his Fabian activities.

77 Wallas opposed the Act because it provided public funds for denominational schools, and, in many areas, forced Nonconformist children to attend such schools. Fremantle, British Fabians, pp. 141-142.

The Society even lost some of Shaw's valuable labor. In 1898 he contracted a nearly fatal leg infection, necrosis of the bone, which took him away from Fabian work for almost two years. But it was his interest in playwriting which absorbed most of his attention in the 1890's. Completing his first play, *Widowers' House*, in 1892, he averaged one play a year until his illness. And once he finished a script, he would immerse himself in the details of its production. Like all his tracts, essays, and criticisms, his plays, too, were vehicles for his social and economic theories. *Widowers' House*, for example, exposes the debilitating effect of slums on those condemned to live in them by a reactionary society. By the end of the century, however, Shaw had broadened the scope of his interests to include subjects he merely had alluded to, or had ignored, in the past. One of these issues was religion.79

In contrast to Marx, Shaw did not wish to abolish religion but to improve it. Despite his dislike of evangelical Christianity, he agreed that it had exercised a civilizing force in British history:

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I do not forget, [he wrote], the warning of Jesus that if we try to clear established religions of their weeds we may pull up the wheat as well and leave the husbandmen without any religion. I detest the doctrine of the Atonement. . . . But I know as a hard fact that Methodism, which is saturated with this superstition, changed our colliers and their wives and mothers from savages into comparatively civilized beings.80

Rejecting orthodox Christian metaphysics, Shaw conceived God or the Supreme Spirit to be a "Life Force" in the universe. But as this élan vital is itself perpetually evolving, it cannot be either perfect or infallible. Without human hands and brains, moreover, the Life Force cannot accomplish anything on Earth. It can achieve perfection only by acting in a trial-and-error fashion, using Its followers (the believers) as tools. This experimental process, Shaw declared, accounts for the evil that exists in the world. The Life Force, in short, has not perfected itself, and Its mistakes result in evil. As man came to understand the true nature of the Supreme Spirit, he would embrace Its purpose which is the brotherhood of man. This concept of God, Shaw contended, had two advantages over orthodox Christianity: it eliminated "pie-in-the-sky" (opiate) otherworldliness and made religion an active part of the individual's life. Human destiny was, therefore, to help the Life Force in Its quest for perfection.81

80 Shaw, Sketches, pp. 127-128.
Imperialism was another subject which received Shaw's attention at the end of the century. The South African Republic's declaration of war on Great Britain forced this issue upon the Fabian Society, which hitherto had emphasized domestic problems to the neglect of foreign affairs. Disagreement over the closely related questions of the war and imperialism soon created a deep schism in the Society's Executive Council. Ramsay MacDonald, a member of the Executive since 1894 and the number two man in the British labor movement, urged the Society to condemn British capitalistic aggression in South Africa. Notwithstanding that a large minority of the Fabian membership supported this demand, the 'Old Guard' led by Shaw, Webb, Pease, and Bland opposed making an official pronouncement, fearing that it would split the Society forever. But the pro-Boer Fabians did not listen to this counsel of moderation. Early in December, they demanded a postal referendum of all members on the question: should the Society issue an official statement against the war. In February, 1900, the Executive submitted the issue to the membership which then totaled about 800 people. Of the 476 Fabians who voted, 217 supported an official statement, and 259 opposed it. Defeated, MacDonald led about 15 members out of the Society, including Walter Crane, S. G. Hobson, G. K. Chesterton, and Bertrand Russell.\footnote{Pease, Fabian Society, pp. 128-131; Fremantle, British Fabians, pp. 144-146; Poitier, Advent of British Labour, pp. 103-107.}
Despite the Old Guard's desire not to become involved in the emotional debate over the war, it realized that the time had come for a study of the Empire. In May, 1900, the Executive appointed Shaw, who then drafted all of the Society's official pronouncements, to write a tract on imperialism. In September the final draft of the tract was submitted to the membership for corrections and comment. That the subject was timely and provocative is indicated by the fact that 134 Fabians responded with "amended proofs or wrote letters of criticism." Although Shaw studied them all before revising the manuscript, Webb once again exercised the greatest influence on his views. Published as a book late in 1900, Fabianism and the Empire supported the British war effort against the Boers with arguments based upon Webb's concept of efficiency. According to this line of reasoning, governments and nations must be operated efficiently, and only those which are large and wealthy can function properly under this criterion. In Fabianism and the Empire, Shaw declared that

\[\ldots\] the notion that a nation [in this case the South African Republic], has the right to do what it pleases with its own territory, without reference

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83 Fremantle, British Fabians, p. 146.

to the rest of the world, is no more tenable than the notion that a landlord has a right to do what he likes with his estate without reference to the interests of his neighbors. . . . The value of a State to the world lies in the quality of its civilization. . . . There is therefore no question of the steam-rollering of little States because they are little, any more than of their maintenance in deference to romantic nationalism. The State which obstructs international civilization will have to go, be it big or little.85

But that Shaw had been moving toward this conclusion independently of Webb is indicated by a speech he made in February, 1900. At that time he had declared: "The world is to the big and powerful states by necessity; and the little ones must come within their borders or be crushed out of existence."86 Returning to the same idea in Fabianism and the Empire, Shaw proposed that the great powers should divide the world among themselves just as they had partitioned China. This policy, he thought, would eventually lead to the creation of some sort of world federation. By contrast Marx had not considered the function of foreign policy under communism because he thought there would be no states left to carry on such relations. Shaw foresaw the continued existence of the major states and their control of a divided world, a political arrangement which, he believed, would bring world peace. Had Marx lived to read Shaw's pronouncements on

85 Quoted in Rattray, Chronicle, p. 141.

86 Quoted in Fremantle, British Fabians, p. 146.
imperialism, he undoubtedly would have regarded them as bourgeois sophistry. 87

During its first seventeen years, the Fabian Society debated all of the leading problems which vexed the late Victorian world and offered non-Marxist solutions for them. Shaw not only led the Society to an acceptance of state socialism, which denied the withering away of the state, but also advocated an economic theory which contradicted Marx's labor theory of value and modified his concept of surplus value. Substituting democracy for the class war, Webb made individual liberty the tool of socialist growth. The Fabian emphasis on gradual and peaceful change was as anti-Marxian as the policy of permeation, which required cooperation and compromise with bourgeois political parties. The Fabians, in sum, completely rejected all of Marx's major tenets, agreeing with him only on the inevitability of socialism. Their great contribution was making socialism "as respectable, as cautiously legal, and as traditionally British as the Tory Party or the Church of England." 88


88 Irvine, Universe, p. 102.
CHAPTER V

ROBERT BLATCHFORD: THE SOCIALIST MAVERICK

Historians of the socialist movement have credited Robert Blatchford with the conversion of millions of British workers to socialism. Most of these authorities agree that Blatchford, during the 1890's, was the "most effective propagandist of socialism that England had produced."¹ His popularity with the masses far surpassed that of men like Morris and Shaw. Merrie England, his best selling book published in 1893, outsold all other works on the same subject, including George's Progress and Poverty. More than any other socialist leader in late Victorian England, he helped to create a self-consciousness within the working class, but his mission was not Marxian. Blatchford, whose philosophy was the result of his own experience and thought, knew little, and cared less, about Karl Marx; nonetheless, he contributed little to socialist ideology that was original. Despite his success as a journalist and popularizer, Blatchford is usually "omitted from, or lightly passed over, in histories of the Labour [socialist] movement, for the simple reason that he

¹ Poirier, Advent of British Labour, p. 57.
fits into no organizational niche."² He was the maverick of the socialist movement: "he stands by himself and ends, so far as his Socialism is concerned, alone."³

Blatchford was born on March 7, 1851, at Maidstone, England. His parents made a meager living on the stage, but when his father died in 1853, his mother was forced to take various jobs in order to feed her two sons. Blatchford had little formal education, and when he was thirteen, his mother sent him to work in a Halifax brushshop. "Here I was," he remarked in retrospect, "apprenticed to learn the art and mystery of brush making."⁴ He respected his mother's wish that he learn a trade, but, disliking the brush business, he resolved to escape as soon as possible. One morning in May, 1871, when he had just turned twenty, Blatchford arrived late for work and found himself locked out of the factory. Deciding this was the long awaited opportunity to leave Halifax, he walked a distance of some 170 miles to London, but the


metropolis was not the paradise he had expected. Vainly he searched for employment. Hungry and shocked by the wretchedness of the unemployed masses idly walking the city's dirty streets, Blatchford decided to join the Queen's military service and served in the army for seven years. 5

Army life, with its collective communal life and the feeling of comradeship, made a profound impression on Blatchford's thinking, laying the foundation for the socialist thought which evolved later. After becoming a socialist, he often compared socialism with the ésprit de corps and collective action of the army. He left the army in 1878 but volunteered for a short tour of duty the next year when there was talk of war with Russia. 6

After the Congress of Berlin had removed the threat of war, Blatchford returned to civilian life and took a job as timekeeper with a navigation company in Cheshire. In 1880 he married Sarah Crossley, and as his family soon grew, he found

5 Ibid., pp. 43-45, 62, 70, 76; M. Cole, Labour Movement, pp. 185-188; Lyons, Blatchford, pp. 8, 11-12, 20-22, 25, 30, 37; Thompson, Blatchford, pp. 1-2, 4-5, 7-8.

6 Blatchford, Eighty Years, pp. 37, 76, 153; Cole, Socialist Thought, III, Pt. II, p. 164; M. Cole, Labour Movement, pp. 189-190; Lyons, Blatchford, p. 55. Just how important army life was to Blatchford is revealed in his autobiography, My Eighty Years. He devotes only sixteen pages to his role in the British socialist movement and does not discuss his socialist philosophy in any detail, but he takes seventy-six pages to recount the adventures and influence of his army career. Thompson, Blatchford, pp. 9, 10, 21-22.
that it was impossible to live on his small salary. In 1884 he joined the staff of a small Yorkshire newspaper, writing a four thousand word weekly column. In an attempt to improve his literary style, Blatchford spent many nights copying verses from the Bible and rewriting them in his own words. He not only increased his vocabulary but also developed a clear and forceful style. In March, 1885, Edward Hulton offered Blatchford four pounds a week to write a daily column for his Bell's Life, published in London. Blatchford accepted the position and moved to the capital, but within two years, financial difficulties forced the paper to cease publication. Hulton, meanwhile, had purchased a paper in Manchester, and when he asked Blatchford to write the leader for the weekly Sunday Chronicle, the journalist moved again.  

Blatchford's column was signed "Numquam Dormio": I never sleep. His simple directness in dealing with socio-economic problems appealed to "the tough heads of the north," and he became so popular that by 1891 he was commanding a thousand pounds a year. But Blatchford's success was not what Hulton had intended. The publisher's objective was to supply a newspaper which would appeal to sportsmen without upsetting

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them. Blatchford, however, having become interested in Manchester's leading social questions, was determined to expose and comment on them in his column. His political conclusions and independent posture were anathema to Hulton, who dismissed him in October, 1891.9

After the unemployment riots of February, 1886, Blatchford had attacked socialism in Bell's Life, declaring that socialism was nothing more than insurrection which could never solve the problems of modern civilization. His articles for the Chronicle called upon the workingmen to devote themselves to self-improvement: "You are revolting," he once wrote. "What you want is soap. Wake up and get busy."10 He received many letters both praising and condemning his articles. When one writer suggested that socialism could cure the evils created by capitalism, "I replied by condemning Socialism. Then a Liverpool workman wrote to say that I evidently did not know what Socialism was, and that I was an ass for writing about things which I did not understand."11 About the same time, another reader sent him a copy of Hyndman and Morris, A Summary of the Principles of Socialism, which has been described as "Marx prepared for human consumption

10Quoted in Thompson, Blatchford, p. 54.
11Quoted in Lyons, Blatchford, p. 88.
by Hyndman, with twiddly-bits by Morris." It contained a general statement of Hyndman's philosophy, which meant that the only Marxian elements in it were the labor theory of value and the concept of surplus value. The pamphlet's appeal for peaceful state socialism made some impression on Blatchford, but he still was not convinced.

The experience which converted Blatchford to socialism was his study of the Manchester slums. He had received several letters inviting him to visit the area to see for himself how difficult it would be for most of its inhabitants to improve their condition without outside help. He was shocked to find these ghettos "housing from 20,000 to 60,000 of the poorer workers, in which there was not a single decent habitation." He found enough poverty and wretchedness "to make the heart ache. ..." He "saw the filth and the disease and the children crying from hunger and the rest of the haunting memorial to self-interest without enlightenment." Concluding that the vast majority could not overcome their poverty as he had, he wrote a series of articles for the Chronicle in May, 1889, which exposed the true condition of

12 Thompson, Blatchford, p. 57.
13 Blatchford, Eighty Years, pp. 186-191; Lyons, Blatchford, pp. 87-89; Thompson, Blatchford, pp. 50-60.
14 Blatchford, Eighty Years, p. 186.
15 Ibid.
16 Thompson, Blatchford, p. 57.
slum life and condemned *laissez-faire* capitalism for creating the monstrous slums. In a second series, which appeared in August in the form of open letters to workers, Blatchford suggested socialism as the only solution. These articles constituted the nucleus of *Merrie England*. In the March 23, 1890, issue of the *Chronicle*, Blatchford confessed his conversion to Fabian socialism. Finally, when he announced in October, 1891, that he would be the socialist candidate for Parliament in the East Bradford by-election, Hulton, already disgusted because Blatchford's articles now dealt almost exclusively with socialism, fired him.\(^{17}\)

During the next two months, several of Blatchford's friends on the *Chronicle* who shared his socio-economic views resigned from the paper. Together they founded the *Clarion*, a socialist newspaper, whose first number appeared on December 12, 1891. The first issue sold almost forty thousand copies. The *Clarion*, a weekly published every Friday, soon settled down to a circulation of thirty-five thousand copies. That Blatchford was primarily responsible for this success was demonstrated when he began the serialization of *Merrie England*. Sales soared as soon as the series began, and "at its peak

they reached just under a hundred thousand—far more than any Socialist weekly had dreamed of." 18

The success of the Clarion during the serialization of Merrie England encouraged Blatchford to bring the articles out in book form. This venture, too, was successful. The book, published in 1894, immediately sold twenty thousand copies at a shilling each. By the end of 1894, two hundred thousand more copies had been sold or ordered. These initial figures do not include the pirated editions sold in the United States, nor those sold in foreign languages. "Never had any book on Socialism had so instant and so wide an appeal." 19

Since Blatchford concentrated on subjects other than socialism after the turn of the century, most of his socialist thought is contained in two books, Merrie England and Britain for the British, which appeared in 1902. The characteristics which made these works so popular were their simplicity of style and enthusiasm for the simple pleasures of life. Blatchford did not, like Marx or the Fabians, develop a grand economic theory to be accepted as dogma by the true believers and declaimed at every opportunity. It does not appear,


19 Ibid., pp. 98-99; Blatchford, Eighty Years, pp. 196-197; M. Cole, Labour Movement, p. 197.
indeed, that he ever worked out a complete economic theory. Elements of Marxian and Fabian economics can be found in his works, but they do not indicate his acceptance of them as such, nor does he develop these fragments in either a Marxian or a Fabian direction. To Blatchford, the major task was to show workers that capitalistic competition was evil and that it should be replaced by socialistic cooperation. He used few facts to demonstrate that competition was degrading, harmful, and wasteful, relying instead on moralistic argumentation. He declared that under capitalistic competition an individual might, in a given transaction, pay five cents for 800 matches, but the possibility existed that there was more to the true cost of the matches. Included in the cost might be 100 "women done to death by labor before their time . . . Two hundred children killed by preventible disease. . . . Ten boys driven into a career of crime by hunger and neglect." "Six girls driven into a life of shame by similar causes." 20 After listing several more possibilities, Blatchford concluded: "Add all these items on to the match bill, Mr. Smith, and tell me if you call those matches cheap." 21 Thus he refuted the contention that cheapness was one of the advantages of capitalism. As for competition, it was nothing

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21 Ibid., p. 66.
more than war between individuals which lowered wages, increased prices, and caused unemployment.\textsuperscript{22}

Blatchford, who was president of the Manchester branch of the Fabian Society for several years, strongly endorsed that organization's appeal for a peaceful political transition to socialism. The new socialist era, he thought, would be established gradually as the workers learned more about socialism. He was optimistic that once people understood socialism, they would accept it. As a means of change, he adamantly rejected revolution, fearing that it would destroy more than it created. "I have never made the blunder," Blatchford affirmed, "of preaching or thinking revolution."\textsuperscript{23}

Revolution, moreover, was impossible in Britain "because the people have too much sense; secondly, because the people are by nature patient and kindly; thirdly, because the people are too free to make force needful."\textsuperscript{24} It was precisely this freedom to influence institutions that he wished to use. But Blatchford, while agreeing with the Fabian Society's basic


\textsuperscript{23}Blatchford, Eighty Years, p. 219.

\textsuperscript{24}Blatchford, Britain for the British, p. 75.
objectives, rejected some of its methods. For example, he
did not accept the Fabian policy of permeation. Believing
that socialism could not be established without socialists,
he favored the creation of a socialist party. On this point,
Blatchford was closer to Marx's position than were other
British socialist leaders, with the exception of Hyndman.
Blatchford advocated party purity because he thought a
socialist party had the right to insist that its members not
vote for candidates unless they were socialists. He even-
tually broke with the Independent Labor Party and the Fabian
Society on this very issue. Once "the Party" was established,
he believed that it could eventually gain control of Parlia-
ment and achieve the nationalization of land, industry, and
agriculture by taxation, a program which resembles that out-
lined by Henry George.25

Blatchford believed that state socialism was the only
practical form of socialism. If he ever gave it any thought,
he probably would have considered the Marxian concept of the
"withering away of the state" pure fantasy. But he was no
advocate of centralization. Like the Fabians, he urged the
development of strong, democratic, local governments. Communal

164-166; Blatchford, Eighty Years, pp. 199-202, 219-220;
Blatchford, Merrie England, pp. 67-69, 72-73; Cole, Socialist
Thought, III, Pt. I, pp. 141-142, 155-156, 168-169; Pelling,
Origins of the Labour Party, pp. 122, 128; Poirier, Advent
of British Labour, p. 58; Thompson, Blatchford, pp. 90-96,
101, 133-134.
life at the local level should be similar to that found in
the army, but as socialism would be freely accepted, there
was no need for discipline. Like all other socialist leaders,
Blatchford argued that socialism, instead of regimenting and
controlling people's lives, would liberate the individual.
It would give the people more leisure, more education, and
more opportunities to develop special interests and abilities. 26

The chief characteristic of Blatchford's socialism was
its anti-internationalism. He doubted that international co-
operation ever would be successful. Wars would become
obsolete, but because of national differences in customs,
institutions, and languages, nation states must remain
separate and indivisible. Patriotic nationalist that he was,
Blatchford placed the salvation of the state before the
establishment of socialism. He was a Briton first and a
socialist second, but he was not an imperialist, despite his
support of Britain in the Boer War, because he did not approve
the taking of territory. He was more nearly a 'Little
Englander' who believed that Britain should know her enemies
and be prepared for possible conflict in the future. 27

26 Blatchford, Britain for the British, pp. 82-89;
Blatchford, Merrie England, pp. 26-27, 46, 64, 68-70, 123-

27 Blatchford, Eighty Years, pp. 199, 202; Cole, Socialist
Thought, III, Pt. I, pp. 170-171; Pelling, Origins of the
Labour Party, pp. 200-201; Poirier, Advent of British Labour,
p. 57; Thompson, Blatchford, pp. 106, 110-111, 142, 154-155.
One of the precautionary measures Blatchford suggested to insure national security was also a corollary to his socialist economic theories: the nationalization of land, but with the reservation that ownership would be retained by the municipal or national administrative unit. Militarily Britain's insular position was vulnerable because she was so dependent on imported food products. The state, he insisted, should encourage farmers to increase production in order to make Britain agriculturally self-sufficient. International trade, moreover, stimulated competitive rivalries and led to the exploitation of backward countries. Convinced that Britain could feed herself, Blatchford frequently quoted Kropotkin in support of this view. G. D. H. Cole has succinctly summarized this contention:

When . . . [Blatchford] was confronted with the argument that it was cheaper to import food than to grow more of it at home, he replied that the price of the food was not the final criterion, and that against its cheapness had to be put the bad conditions and ill-health of the industrial workers who had to toil at producing exports to pay for it. He railed, too, against the effect of competitive export trade in setting the industrial workers in each advanced country to beat down the wages of their fellow-workers in other countries, and against the tendency of capitalistic export trade to breed imperialism at the expense of the peoples of the less developed countries. Finally, he usually clinched the argument in favour of Britain feeding herself by pointing to the danger of starvation in the event of war . . .


29 Ibid., p. 170.
This policy, in short, would create more employment, return the people to the more healthful environment of the countryside, and allow Britain to operate in times of war without fear of a blockade. The problem of national self-sufficiency continued to be a central theme of his thought until after World War I.  

At the turn of the century, Blatchford, an agnostic, began writing on the subject of religion. Like Headlam, he believed that the teachings of Christianity were essentially socialistic, but the problem was that few of its adherents practiced them. His religious writings were very philosophical, and he did not attempt to answer such metaphysical questions as the nature of God, because he did not think man, finite creature that he was, could know or understand God's nature. The result was that he alienated many of his working class readers who, being staunch evangelical Nonconformists, concluded that he was an atheist.

Blatchford also offended the pacifist element of the labor and socialist movement by his support of Britain during the Boer War. After 1902, his former popularity among the

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workers declined further as he began attacking Germany as England's enemy. Despite the Clarion's dwindling circulation, he continued to demand in its editorials an increase in the size of the navy and the enactment of a self-sufficient agricultural program. The articles written in the years prior to World War I, reflect his new interest in foreign relations and deep concern for military preparedness. Although he recovered during the war much of his lost popularity by his astute analysis of the military situation which appeared regularly in The Weekly Dispatch, the Clarion never regained the wide circulation and influence it had enjoyed prior to 1902. Blatchford, however, managed to publish his paper until 1935, when he sold it.  

Several years after the War, Blatchford ruefully concluded that the establishment of a socialist society was impossible because of man's self-centeredness. Writing in 1923, he observed in retrospect:

I have never been converted from Socialism. But careful observation of the facts for the last twelve years or so has convinced me that Socialism will not work, and a study of Mr. [Henry] Ford's methods has provided what seems to me as good a substitute as we may hope for in this imperfect world. Socialism as I knew it in past years was an excellent, almost perfect theory. . . . But I have had to take towards socialism the same regretful attitude which so many earnest Christians have had to adopt towards

Christianity. The golden rule will not work . . . because the nations are not good enough to live up to it. Real Socialism strongly resembles real Christianity. It is a counsel of perfection and cannot be adopted and adhered to by our imperfect humanity.33

The many people converted to socialism by Blatchford received little systematized philosophy and certainly no Marxism. Although his concept of party purity was similar to that held by Marx, their goals were quite different. Where Marx desired purity to accentuate the class war, Blatchford's object was to convert men to socialism. Blatchford, moreover, detested the idea of the class war, believing that it would lead only to the creation of another ruling class and the continuation of exploitation, not a classless society. Even if Blatchford had completely familiarized himself with Marxian thought, he would have rejected it because his socialism was secondary to his patriotism. Revolution would be harmful to Britain; therefore, it must be avoided. Peaceful political change was the only form of transition acceptable. International political movements were doomed to failure because of national differences. Blatchford did not develop or adopt a comprehensive economic theory because he believed people could be educated only by generalities. Marx, Hyndman, and the Fabians, all had amassed mountains of facts but had converted few of the workers to

33 Quoted in Thompson, Blatchford, p. 229.
socialism. Blatchford, with a simple, direct, moral approach, won thousands, perhaps millions, to the cause. 34

34Blatchford, Britain for the British, p. 20; Blatchford, Eighty Years, p. 219; Thompson, Blatchford, p. 109.
CHAPTER VI

A RETROSPECT

When Karl Marx died in 1883, the revival of British socialism had just begun, and Engels, his alter ego, who survived him by twelve years, never assumed a position of leadership in the English movement. He spent his last years finishing, editing, and publishing many of Marx's works as well as some of his own. Thus during the formulative period of British socialism (1881-1901), its intellectual direction was left to others. The most important leaders were Henry M. Hyndman, William Morris, Stewart Headlam, George Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, and Robert Blatchford. Their individual reactions to Marxism were varied, but collectively they played a decisive role in the development of English social democracy.

Most of the British leaders were familiar with Marx's writings. Hyndman continued his reading in Marxist literature, and in The Historical Basis of Socialism in England, written only two years after his conversion to Marxism, he quoted extensively from Kapital, The Communist Manifesto, and The Poverty of Philosophy. Morris probably read only Kapital and the Manifesto, but he acquired an extensive knowledge of Marxist thought from his close friend, Ernest Balfort Bax, who not only was familiar with most of Marx's published works,
but also was the only British socialist who had continual
access to Engels' home. Shaw, too, was well versed in Marxist
literature, and in meetings of the Hampstead Historic Society,
he encouraged other Fabians to read Marx. Although Headlam
and Blatchford were indifferent to Marxism and probably never
read any of the German socialist's works, they certainly had
a second hand knowledge of his philosophy. Both referred to
Marx or his ideas in several of their works.

Marxist writings, indeed, converted Hyndman, Morris, and
Shaw to socialism, but these new disciples displayed an inde-
pendence of the master's dogmas, rejecting some of them and
modifying others. Hyndman and Morris were considered Marxists
by their contemporaries because they unconditionally accepted
Marxian economic theories, but they offered reservations to
other aspects of his philosophy. Hyndman's revisionism was
the more acute of the two because he modified some Marxian
tenets to fit his Anglo-socialism. He revised Marx's view
of revolutionary change and broke completely with Marx on
the future of the state, economic determinism, and imperialism.
Morris's revision consisted of indifference and additions.
Rather than making definite pronouncements on most of Marx's
ideas, he appended to them his own views on art and the
esthetic life under socialism. It was through his writings
on the latter subjects that Morris exercised the greatest
influence on his contemporaries, and his unique imagination
often led him to non-Marxist conclusions. While Hyndman and Morris claimed to be Marxists, they were more influenced by other reformers and experiences. Hyndman, the patriotic Briton, convinced that his countrymen would not accept the views of a foreigner, continually linked Marxian socialism with the Chartists and other British reformers of the early and mid-nineteenth century. Morris, because of his despair over the decline of art and the esthetic life under capitalism, accepted revolutionary change before he ever heard of Marx. If the poet alluded to any authority when discussing major socio-economic problems, he usually quoted Ruskin and only infrequently cited Marx. Jevonian economics superseded the Marxian system in Shaw's thinking and through him became the dominant economic creed of the Fabian Society until the 1930's.

Marx's influence on Headlam, Webb, and Blatchford was insignificant. Headlam became interested in socio-economic problems through his religious training and reading the works of Maurice and Kingsley. He adopted socialism as the panacea for the evils created by capitalism after hearing and studying Henry George. Notwithstanding that he eventually went beyond George's program for economic reform, he continued to teach that the anti-Marxian Single Tax was the most important part of any socialist solution. Webb, a disciple of John Stuart Mill, embraced a democratic political philosophy which
was totally different from Marx's. Blatchford, who became a socialist as a result of his own experiences, was influenced by George's land nationalization plan and Kropotkin's theories of national self-sufficiency.

With the exception of Morris, all the British socialist leaders were convinced that the transition to socialism in England could be peaceful. In retrospect, they regarded certain legislative acts of the past half century, such as the Factory Acts, as the meager beginnings of socialism in England. The existence of such civil liberties as freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly and parliamentary procedures, through which the people could redress their grievances, strengthened this conviction. Hyndman by-passed Marx's strictures on revolution by citing his little known affirmation that Britain might become a socialist society through peaceful means. Hyndman used this statement the rest of his life but not in the sense Marx had intended. Marx had qualified this opinion by saying that the establishment of socialism in Britain must come soon if violence were to be avoided, for history certainly did not indicate that the transition to socialism could be peaceful in any country. Hyndman conveniently dropped these qualification. Headlam, because of his support of the Church of England, was a strong institutionalist and supported peaceful political methods. Convinced that Christianity was socialistic, he contended
that the doctrine of Atonement taught that Jesus already had shed the required measure of blood. Once mankind accepted Christian socialism, peaceful transition would be ensured. Although Shaw was initially a Marxist revolutionary, Webb proved to him that peaceful change not only was possible, but desirable, and that permeation was the best method of establishing socialism. Blatchford's patriotism led him to the conclusion that revolution would destroy all of his beloved country's assets; it, therefore, must be avoided. Morris, indeed, changed his mind about revolution, but this shift came too late to have much influence on the socialist movement in England.

Some of the British socialist leaders were openly critical of several Marxian tenets. Shaw criticized Marxist economics; Headlam attacked Marx's religious philosophy; Blatchford, Shaw, and Webb rejected the concept of the class war. But these leaders refrained from a general indictment of Marxism, being content to set out their own theories and programs. Most of the British socialists, for example, favored state action to aid the working class. They rejected the Marxian dogma of the withering away of the state because they considered the state necessary to redress grievances. The destruction of the state would only lead to anarchy and chaos and make the achievement of a reformed, socialist
society extremely difficult. Ignoring Marx meant that he did not receive a good press through the British socialists.

Internationalism was another issue over which the British socialists disagreed with Marx. Morris was the only true internationalist of the group. But though he envisioned a worldwide worker's movement, his internationalism was not completely Marxian. Marx looked to a future era that would be altogether different from past civilizations. By contrast, Morris looked to the Middle Ages for his inspiration. He desired a world order similar to that of the medieval period, but without its class rule. The other British socialist leaders were skeptical of internationalism. Hyndman, who did not trust the Germans, believed that any international movement or class could be led by one nation, preferably Britain. Shaw, Webb, and Blatchford had little confidence in, or use for, internationalism. When the Boer War provided the opportunity for socialist internationalism, Hyndman, Shaw, Webb, and Blatchford assumed a nationalist posture and supported Britain. The first three also defended British imperialism, though they condemned the causes of the War. Blatchford, it will be recalled, was a "Little Englander."

Rejecting Marx's call to the proletariat to revolt against their capitalist masters, all of the British socialist leaders, bourgeois by heritage and education, taught class cooperation. The Fabian policy of permeation was directed at upper and
middle class political leaders. Headlam and Blatchford believed the landlord, not the capitalist, to be the chief enemy, but violence was not required to bring about his downfall. Hyndman believed that the class war could be carried on through political methods and that violence could be avoided. Morris was no protagonist of class war but it was implicit in his call for revolution. These thoughts, like many of his others, were usually subordinated to his favorite subjects, the future of art and the esthetic life.

In resume, this study concludes that (1) most of the leaders of the British socialist movement were familiar with Marx's major writings, and those who were not probably had a second hand knowledge of his philosophy, (2) some of these leaders were converted to socialism by reading Marx, (3) their reaction to Marxian socialism was not favorable; some criticized it severely, while others ignored his philosophy or revised it, (4) in many instances, British socialists were not as influenced by Marx as by other social and political reformers or their own experiences, (5) prior to 1900, they rarely mentioned Marx by name in their most important works, (6) most of these leaders, observing that local and national legislation had already redressed many grievances, believed that a peaceful transition to socialism could be accomplished through such institutions as the Church, Parliament, and the party system, (7) as a result of the acceptance of peaceful
change, they either rejected or modified the concept of the class war, (8) generally nationalistic, they developed socialist theories and programs which were more acceptable than Marxism to British subjects, and (9) almost to a man, they favored state action to aid the working class and to promote the establishment of a socialist state; Marx's doctrine of the withering away of the state was anathema to them.
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