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“A MODERN TITAN”

Mr. President, and members of the State Bar Association of Washington. I am greatly honored by the invitation to address you. I have been brought up in the tradition of reverence for the law and for lawyers. The son of a lawyer, the grandson of a lawyer, the great-grandson of a lawyer, I learned in my native habitat of Philadelphia to consider lawyers as the defenders of the Constitution and the Commonwealth, without whose aid the process of civilization must go awry. I was never more surprised in my life than forty years ago, when coming to the young state of Washington, I fell into conversation with a carpenter, who was building a shed for me, and I found that he was a Knight of Labor. He wanted me to join the order, and I expressed surprise at the invitation. He said there were only two classes of people who could not be admitted to the Knights of Labor. I said, “What are they?” he said. “Saloon-keepers and lawyers.” I have never fully recovered from the shock.

I heard someone say yesterday that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ought to be invoked to prevent me from making a speech to you today. I don't know whether the sentiment was expressed on my behalf or on yours.

Naturally, speaking to lawyers, for whom I have so high a regard, I will not speak to you upon a subject connected with the law. I do not believe in carrying coals to Newcastle. I do not believe it is wise for fools to rush in where angels fear to tread, but since I have learned within the last few minutes that you yourselves are somewhat in doubt as to what a lawyer is and what his legal practice consists of, I feel that I was divinely guided in my choice of a subject, which I deliberately averted from the law. I think those who asked me to take part in the program had the idea I was going to dwell in local history, or something of that kind, I confess that I have been telling the story of Marcus Whitman, of the history

of the Walla Walla Valley, and so on, for so long a time that I could not take up what is to me so threadbare a subject.

I have purposely chosen a subject quite foreign to your ordinary thought in all probability—foreign to mine, but expressive of a great interest on my part within the last few months.

I find it a very fascinating occupation to try to estimate the length of the shadow which great men of the various centuries cast upon the centuries that succeed them. Every century has some two or three outstanding men who tower so high above their fellows that their influence, like a shadow, falls down the years for decades, centuries, perhaps, after they have fallen to dust.

In the seventeenth century, for example, it seems to me that it is an interesting question as to whether the length of the shadow cast by Cardinal Richelieu, with his doctrine of the balance of power in Europe, of Sir Isaac Newton, with his far-reaching mathematical insight, of John Locke, English philosopher, whose thoughts still ferment in the English mind and have until the last two generations formed the psychological field of English-speaking peoples. Of course, Sir Isaac Newton and John Locke lasted over into the eighteenth century, that century where I hesitate to pronounce judgment upon the rival names of Rousseau, or Voltaire, or Goethe, whose influence lasted into the nineteenth century.

But when I come to examine the master of the nineteenth century, and to ask which one of them towers so high above his fellows his shadow is projected down upon our times, most clearly recognizable, I have no hesitation in saying that it is that modern Titan, Karl Marx. I am not an admirer of the teachings of Karl Marx. I differ in toto from his philosophy of life and of human relations, but I think we people of the twentieth century ought to examine ourselves to discover and to appreciate discriminately the influences which carry over from the century behind us and which dominate the thoughts and lives of people in the world around us.

I seriously propose for your consideration that not Charles Darwin, not Abraham Lincoln, not Bismarck, have so profoundly influenced the life of the world today as has the German writer and Socialist organizer, Karl Marx. The god of Soviet Russia is Karl Marx. And Vladimir Ilyitch Ulianoff—Lenin—is his Messiah. The Bible of the working classes of Europe—yes, of Socialist working men around the world, is the book which Karl Marx first published in 1867—"Das Capital," in which his economic social

theories are advanced with tremendous power, although with an opacity of expression that obstructed their meaning from him who reads them casually.

I want to say something to you about this man whose thinking is so alien to our own, and yet who is so deeply affecting the life of a large number of the human race today. Consider that a portrait of Karl Marx hangs on the wall of every village assembly room in Russia. Lenin devoted himself not only to expounding the doctrine of Karl Marx, or forcing it upon Russia, but of endeavoring to bring all the Russian peoples to regard Karl Marx as their genius, as their guide, philosopher and friend. Soviet Russia is the expression, as Lenin conceived it, of the teachings of Karl Marx. When one hundred sixty millions of people are committed by their legal heads, the Communist Party of Russia, to set a program, it is well for us to try to understand it, and when you understand that a part and parcel of that teaching is of necessity of a continuous and unremitting propaganda to express that doctrine around the world, you are given cause for thought.

The morning paper told of a revolution in Bolivia. Last night's paper told of revolution in Northern China, where certain forces of the Chinese province had defeated the Nationalist forces and that China was in convulsion. In India the papers for the last month have been filled with stories of insurrection, of dissatisfaction and protest against British rule. I might run on around the world, down into the East Indies, to various corners of the globe where the seething spirit of unrest and agitation is being fostered. The explanation is not far to seek. It is the propagandists of Karl Marxism. It is the agent of Soviet Russia, who I think can be discovered working out of sight underground, fomenting such disturbances. For a part of the creed of Bolshevik Russia, and a part of the creed of Marxism is the necessity of overturning the capitalistic state in which we live, in order that here may come as swiftly as possible the triumph of the proletariat," the dictatorship of the proletariat."

I can imagine that you as complacent Americans, satisfied with the prosperity which now crowns our country, may smile with contempt at the world movements which are not affecting us, and yet it is time that we Americans should become students of world affairs and recognize the forces that are at work under the surface of the body politic, should try to discover not only the things favorable to civilization, but the things that are inimical to civilization.

Are we so confident of the stability of the social order in which we find ourselves that we shall fear no folk, and inquire no further than the reach of our natural convictions ?

I shall speak briefly upon the man whom I have called a modern Titan, who I think is today so strangely—and I think erroneously—affecting the lives, the minds, the impassioned undertakings of millions, or perhaps hundreds of millions of human beings. You are apt to dismiss him with a shrug of your shoulder as an ignorant and uneducated man, whose doctrines appeal only to the working classes, who are themselves ignorant and uneducated.

Karl Marx was born in Germany in 1818, and studied at the University of Bon and received his Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Berlin in 1841. He carried into his subsequent life all the learning which he had acquired by constant study in those great German universities. Now, when you review the life of Karl Marx, you are struck by its apparent lack of event. It was not a life that did great things, apparently. He led no armies. His work was of a quiet sort. He was a revolutionary, to be sure. He was exiled from Germany and France, and took refuge in Brussels, and in 1849 went to England and lived in England until his death. He was thirty-one years old when he went to England. He was sixty-five years old when he died in 1883. Thirty-four years of his life were spent in England, and they were spent in what to you and me would seem a placid and uneventful existence. He was writing. He was a student in the British Museum. From 1849 to 1867, when his great book, "Das Capital," appeared, you would have found him most of the time lost in the British Museum, studying and writing. That was his life. It is true that he did take a part in the gatherings of the working men. In 1864 he helped to organize the International Working Men's Association of Europe, and became a member of its steering committee, and was its animating head, though not its president, for five or six years. He spoke in the councils of the working men. He went to Brussels and attended the conventions of the working men of Europe. He was an organizer, he was a propagandist, but that was not all. He was a writer. He was a talker.

Is it not singular that an educated youth with very poor health, with many physical handicaps, oppressed by poverty which almost ground him to extinction, should nevertheless have succeeded in some miraculous fashion in having so impressed himself on not only his contemporaries, but upon successive generations, that today his

influence is felt like a living fire in the brains and in the hearts of millions of men around this globe of ours? Much as I dislike to say so, I can find no man of the nineteenth century who seems to exert in the twentieth century so far-reaching and so profound an influence.

Please do not misunderstand me as endeavoring to exult the philosophy or teaching of Karl Marx. It is because I reprehend it that I expound it. It is because I have such a sense of awe before the phenomenon of his present influence that I am suggesting to you that as intelligent men you should analyze its doctrine and be prepared to refute it if you cannot with denunciation. Surely, we children of the twentieth century have got beyond the notion that denunciation ends movements. Neither denunciation nor persecution will end a gathering movement. If you believe in the ultimate victory of the rational over the irrational, then you will meet gathering movements that seem to be destructive, by neither persecution nor denunciation but by argument, by illumination, by quiet and friendly expositions of a saner philosophy, and wiser economics, a more trustworthy conception of life.

I think if you want to get the spirit of Karl Marx and his associate Engels at its liveliest, in its most electrical form, you will read the First Communist Manifesto, which they published in the latter part of 1847. 1847 is a long time back. They lived in another world, but down the centuries those burning words of the First Communist Manifesto come ringing—the battle cry of the unliberated, of the downtrodden, and those who felt themselves oppressed under the leaden heel of their contemporary civilization. When you read the First Communist Manifesto of 1847 you are startled by its vigor, by its radicalism, by its repudiation of all the things that we hold dear. There is a phrase, I remember, to the effect that law and order and religion are just part of the superstitions with which men deceive themselves. Those are not his exact words. I cannot quote them. You will find the First Communist Manifesto still being circulated everywhere among the working men. You will find it in every book store in Europe. I do not know whether you will find it in Seattle or Spokane, but I do not doubt that in every one of our cities there is some group, smaller or larger, that reads that First Communist Manifesto as the battle cry of new-found freedom, and who turn to Marx's *Capital* as the sacred revelation in which the principles of the new order are expounded.

Now, *Capital* is not easy reading. Marx's style was tergit, his

thought was oftentimes obscure, but in all his writings there was a vehement passion that was like powder behind a ball, which drove his words into the hearts of his followers. He was a dictatorial soul. He had to direct the thoughts of men in the councils of the Communist Party. He had brains, he had ideas, and he had the driving power of a great passion to make those ideas effective. "Modern Titan," I think, is a good title for him. The Titan, you will remember in Greek mythology, battled against the gods and was at last overthrown. Perhaps that will be the case with this modern Titan, who seems to me to be battling against the God of Reason, the God of Right, the God of Justice, the God to whom all men and women are in common equality. But my modern Titan has not been overthrown. He has been gathering strength in the fifty years since he died. He is more powerful today than he was when he was buried in the little cemetery in Highgate, in Soho, London, in 1883.

May I speak to you of the salient doctrines which Karl Marx expounded? At Berlin he had been an Hegelian, and had come to interpret the universe as Hegel interpreted it, through the combination of opposing principles—thesis and antithesis, which in their conflict issued at last in a reconciliation, and that reconciliation was the beginning of a new movement, it being the basis that organized some appearing antithesis, and two combining and then at last being reconciled, and Hegel found a formula of universal history, a conflict of ideas, bringing on through their antagonism a new era still. In place of the ideas of the philosopher Hegel, Karl Marx, radical, discovered economic forces. He ceased to be a Hegelian in believing that history could be interpreted as the reconciliation of opposites, but came to believe in another formula of history. History is a process in which conflicting economic forces battle against one another and overthrow each other and prepare the way for a new epic, in which new economic forces will again conflict.

He was a materialist. He had no God. He had been born a Jew. When he was six years old his father, a Jewish lawyer, in Treves, was converted to Christianity with all his family. It never reached the boy, Karl. He lost all religion and all sense of God. He lived in a universe which might perhaps be understood, and at first his young heart exulted in the interpretation of the universe which Hegel gave in his doctrine of the reconciliation of opposites.

And then in his radicalism he dropped the idealism of Hegel and turned to an economic interpretation of history

Economic determinism is one of the characteristics of Marxism philosophy. And by that he meant that in his day and ours two forces were in conflict. One of them had been victorious. The other was beginning to gather strength in the background. The economic force which had been victorious was capitalism.

Marx recognized himself as born into an industrialist civilization where capitalism was supreme. The Bourgeoisie, the representatives of the capitalistic order, were the exponents of this economic force, against which there was no use in praying; the only thing to do was to watch and wait, and to see gathering behind the stage the great army of the proletariat, which by and by would come and destroy the Bourgeoisie, for Marx interpreted the history of our age as the inevitable conflict between capital and labor, between the Bourgeoisie and the proletariat, it was the way in which he animated the proletariat and blew the bugle blast that brought hope to every heart, to every workingman who felt himself among the downtrodden and the oppressed that indicated Marx's genius, for it was an almost super-human genius that enabled him to be the animating spirit of the discouraged and disrupted forces that had not yet begun to be organized.

It was the organization of the proletariat that was the second part of Marx's work—a genius. Atheism, materialism, the economic interpretation of history in terms of sheer determinism—those are the outstanding features of the Marx doctrine; but he got his passion from his sense of righteousness, of misery, of injustice under which laboring men around the world suffered.

I think it is hard for us in the United States, this land of peace and plenty, where capital and labor dwell at peace with one another for the most part, where lockouts and strikes are no longer, where an adjustment has been reached between the Bourgeoisie and the proletarians—it is hard for us to realize the haunting sense of oppression that followed the mind of Karl Marx, of Engels, of LaSalle, and a hundred other men, who in the middle of the nineteenth century, determined to overthrow the oppression of the class that wasn't in power. You will have to carry yourself back in imagination to live as it was in the first half of the nineteenth century—the industrial age, when factories had sprung up on every hand and when the once green sward of England had turned black under the smoke of belching chimneys, when villages had been

absorbed by factories, when peasants of the agricultural class had been engulfed by the monster industrialism. Was there ever such a time when English wealth blossomed? But while the rich grew richer, it was true that the poor grew poorer and Karl Marx thought he had his finger on the explanation. He said the reason why the rich were growing richer and the poor were growing poorer was because capitalism was exploiting the working man. He developed the theory of surplus value, which consists in saying that the value of all of the goods that are to be sold is derived essentially from the labor that you put in. There is raw material and there is the labor. The capitalist who gets interest, and rent and profits from his factories, gets them by stealing them from the workingman, for it was he who put value into the raw material, it was he who was entitled to the profits he is being robbed of the profits which are his. To the workingman he said, "Only when you have overthrown this oppressive system of capitalism will you come into your own, will you be able to live a comfortable, easy life of justice to which you are entitled." He didn't say, "to which you by the grace of God are entitled according to the dictates of precedent." He said, "No, as a wheel turns round, so inevitably the time has come when capitalism shall be carried down and the proletariat shall be exalted. That is inevitable, we cannot resist it, we can help bring it about." And to bring about that Utopia in which Karl Marx believed, was the question he vehemently debated in the last half of the nineteenth century. There was Bakounine the Russian, who said the way in which we shall seek deliverance is by bombs and anarchy and forceful revolution. There were those who said it must be brought about by political action—"The state is the exponent of the party in power, let us see that those who are in power are turned out, let us depend upon the political effort to purge the state." And others had formula for bringing about the ultimate victory and dictatorship of the proletariat.

Do you not recognize the significance of the 25th of October, 1917, when Lenin and his little group of Communist followers with a pack of only some two hundred and fifty thousand, seized the Russian government, drove out Kerensky, gripped with an emotional grip the reins of Russian life, to which they have clung with increased effectiveness from that time forward? It was the first visible demonstration of the potency of Marxism. For the first time those who believed in the dictatorship of the proletariat assumed the dictatorship. For thirteen years we have had in Russia

the practical exposition of the way in which the doctrine of Karl Marx ought to work—ruthless, hard-hearted, criminally desperate—Lenin and Trotsky and their associates laid out a way from which they have not deviated. The rights of everyone are set aside except the rights of the working class—the working class that has become communistic. That is the Utopia—the Marx program. There are only three million voters in Russia today. They are the members of the Communist party, all classes have been shorn of power except those who believe in the doctrine of Karl Marx, who believe in the absolute dictatorship of the proletariat. There are no rights of man, you understand. That is eighteenth century sentimentality. Property rights, personal rights, those are just the things with which the children of a previous age deluded themselves. The governing council of the Communist party declares what rights men shall have, orders what duties they shall obey, classifies society makes the laws that must be obeyed.

This is not some Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale which we read, and rub our eyes and awaken from astounded. It is the hard drama that is being enacted across the sea in Russia. Fortunate for us that we can see what Karl Marxism means. I do not say that Lenin is the faithful interpreter of Karl Marx. I say he tends to be. He claims that his revolution of October, 1917, was one putting into effect the doctrine of Karl Marx, and as I say, he has hung a portrait of Karl Marx in every peasant assembly room in Russia, and he has put monuments around Russia dedicated to the name of Karl Marx.

If you want to understand contemporary Russia, if you want to understand that strange man, Lenin, you must understand Karl Marx and his philosophy of life and of society.

Now, it is because I think that these things are tremendously interesting, but it is yet more because I think they are tremendously important for us that I am speaking to you upon this strange subject this afternoon. It is to get your minds away from law. It is to transport you into a different order of thought. I believe that not until the philosophy of Karl Marx has been fairly met and vanquished that we shall have a stable civilization, if indeed a stable civilization is ever to be possible on earth. I am not attempting to prophesy in the near future or the distant future a great conflict between Marxism and the saner economics is to come about. Perhaps by peaceful penetration we can overcome the forces of Marxism and of economic determinism. I do not believe in the dictator-

ship of the proletariat, because I do not believe in war between classes of human society, but, understand, the reason why Marx and all his associates felt that the salvation of the world depended upon the triumph of the proletariat was because they had come to hate with deadly hatred the cruelty and oppression of those English barons or lords of the factory life. Those of you who remember the Chartist Movement will understand the desperation and the agony of hearts which tortured the workingmen of England up to 1860 or thereabouts. It was because the workingmen of the past century had so intense a sense of the injustice with which they had been treated that they could see no solution for the problem of life except being out with all classes except their own, and exerting a permanent dictatorship of the proletariat, and then in the heavens of the future—not beyond the clouds, but here on earth—in the Utopia which Karl Marx pictured for mankind, they saw a world in which all class distinction had been done away with, that had become members of the proletariat, that had given up the thought of private property, or had renounced the things which the men of his day considered as human rights. He saw a world in which the spirit of the working man as he glimpsed it should be the spirit of all hearts where men would dwell in peace and friendship together, because a new spirit had taken possession of him—the spirit not of an oppressive capitalism, nor even of a spirit of climbing, ambitious proletarianism, but a new humanity in which class distinctions would be lost sight of and in which men and women could work together for new ideals, which were perhaps already beginning to glow beneath the horizon of the future.

In this country, unlike most civilized countries today, there has been no collision between labor and capital. Capital has been concessive, labor has been intelligent. There has been an adjustment here. There has been in Germany an adjustment among the Social Democrats who hold themselves to be followers of Karl Marx, and yet depend not upon revolution, but upon evolution for the meeting of their claims.

But unless we understand the workingmen of America, or of France, or Germany, or Russia—most of all, of Russia—we shall not be able to make our most effective contribution to the future peace and well being of the world. I have no chance to talk with workingmen. I have no chance to visit labor councils and discuss with them the doctrines of Karl Marx. I think that you can render a valuable service to your day and age if, instead of turning your

back upon the workingman you undertake to understand him, undertake to explain to him the principles of a sane economics, for you will, I am sure, agree with me, that no civilization can be permanent unless insofar as it rests upon foundations of rationality and justice.

It is in the hope of hastening the day of reason and justice in human affairs that I commend to your consideration this modern Titan of the nineteenth century, whose shadow reaches sharp and black across the decades—Karl Marx.

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