

Wage-Earner AND Farmer

Leaflet Number Eleven.

We are living under a form of society termed capitalism. All of the agencies of wealth production are owned or controlled by a small minority of the total population—termed capitalists—who take no part in the matter of producing wealth. Their sole function is that of appropriating the wealth produced by the labor, of the workers, both of city and country.

In order to obtain access to the means of production—the resources of the earth and the tools of industry—the workers must make terms with the owners—the capitalists. In case of the workers in the mills shops, mines, and upon the railways, etc., the terms of access take shape in the form of what is termed wages. The workers are given employment upon condition that they accept in return for their labor a sum of money mutually agreed upon. Upon careful inquiry it has been ascertained that this wage—or money payment—bears, upon the average, a certain definite relation to the cost of the requisite necessities of life to sustain the worker and his immediate dependents—his family.

The result of close search into the mysteries of capitalist production lays bare the fact that the circumstances which compel the worker to apply to the owners of property for permission to convert his energy into the things necessary to sustain his existence, reduce him to the level of a slave and his labor-power to that of a commodity that must be sold in order that he may live. His labor-power exchanges in the market, upon the average, for enough of the necessities of life to reproduce that labor-power. In case of a plentifully stocked labor market the wage will be forced down to the actual life line. At all times subject to the inexorable laws of the market the wage-slave leads, even at the best, an uncertain, and often uncomfortable, existence.

The farmer owning his farm and implements of labor, whether free of mortgage and other incumbrance or otherwise, is more than apt to consider his case as different to that of the worker of the industrial centres. Reference is here made to the working farmer, he who by his labor operates, or assists in operating, his own farm property. He fancies himself not as a wage-earner, but as an independent property owner and oftentimes as a master, inasmuch as he frequently employs wage-workers to assist in his operations. A careful scrutiny of his case will, however, disclose the fact that in essence his status in capitalist society differs from that of the outright wage-slave in appearance only. Because of his apparent ownership of land and tools the exploitation practiced upon him by the capitalist combinations that control the industrial field as a whole remains hidden from him. Though he feels the exploita-