

THINGS THAT MATTER

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merely the individuals who do not. Consequently we have in society the two classes.

Now this is so simple, so obviously true, and yet it is so unpopular. That is a contradiction I cannot make out at all. Time and time again do we see the owner of a factory put up a notice to the effect that the factory will close on such and such a date and will be closed until further orders. The men do not like it yet they have to stay out and their meal ticket is cut off. On the other hand when the workers take it into their head to cease work we find that the owners of the means of wealth production cannot carry on the work. The idea of production being carried on by brains is quite obviously incorrect. The works may be filled with machinery and raw material, owned by men with brains, in charge of foremen with brains, yet without the "hands" there is no production carried on. It is quite evident that the individuals who own these things get the benefit of these things. When you go into a store and buy a pair of boots you do not let the storekeeper wear them; you put them on and wear them out. The ownership of the mines, mills and factories by a small group implies that the benefits of machinery, science, and all technical developments go to the individuals who own these things. Now here is a thing that matters, a condition of affairs that must be recognized by the working class if they are going to solve any of their problems. Because, notice this, where you have a small group in control of all the machinery of wealth production, the workers have no alternative but to accept the conditions imposed upon them or starve. Such questions as the benefits of protection inevitably arise. Who benefits from production? The small group in control. They are the people who own the commodities and to whom accrue the benefits of the industrial process. The working class, throughout the whole piece, whether with protection or free trade, with high taxes or low taxes, whether with a measure of republican liberty or under an imperial government of some form, are essentially in the same position. This is the fact that matters. True, prohibition may affect the customs of certain individuals, so may protection or taxation.

But the ownership of the means of wealth production by small groups and the consequent taking away from the working class of the wealth which it produces is the pivot upon which the problem of the workers depends. That leads inevitably to the question of methods. When once the workers appreciate the importance of ownership the next consideration is the method of solving the problem, of wresting the means of wealth production from the owners thereof. As a result of this condition of affairs and a growing knowledge we have a conscious organization throughout the civilized world with the object of changing human society fundamentally, that is to say, in a revolutionary way, altering the organization of human society from this method of production to a different one. We must recognize this, that class society, that is to say, society in which there are antagonistic groups has existed for a long time. It is true that the feudal method of production differed from the present method under which individuals are free before the law, their differences being merely ones of property rights; a few the owners of the means of wealth production, the others propertyless wage-workers. We distinguish between this free method of exploitation and the earlier method during which the serf worked for the lord. Nevertheless we can trace throughout the development of the various stages a general tendency for the two classes to become more clearly separated. The interests of the working class under the present system are quite distinct from the interests of the owning class. In feudal society the serf had certain rights and certain duties but his welfare appears to have been bound up in the welfare of his lord. Even in the slave days it was the custom generally for the master to look after his

slaves. They were indispensable to the property and consequently were fairly well looked after. Under capitalism we find uncertainty and worry to be the characteristics of the age and as a consequence we see that the working class is becoming more and more conscious of the effort required to emancipate itself—it is developing a class-consciousness. We also see the class that dominates the workers organizing means whereby its position of privilege and its point of view may be maintained.

In this condition of affairs the state must be reckoned with as one of the things that matter to the working class. It does not require very many illustrations to show you that the State exists to maintain the property rights in the means of wealth production to the ruling class. In 1919 there was a strike called a revolutionary strike in Winnipeg, but as a matter of fact it was nothing of the sort, but merely a question of collective bargaining. But immediately any section of the working class get together on a common platform as in that instance, with a definite aim in view, there you see the powers of the State lined up on the side of the owning class; you see the leaders of the workers arrested, the forces of the state lining the streets, the strike being suppressed by those methods as well as by the starvation of the workers due to the fact that the workers have no means of production of their own. In Germany, even after the expulsion of the Kaiser you find the same, the forces of the state at the beck and call of the industrial magnates of Germany to hold in check all those elements amongst the German working class getting hold of Germany for the German workers. It is the same in France and the United States. There are all sorts of repressive measures upon the propaganda activities of those who seek to expose the nature of capitalism and attempt to make their fellow workers understand that their troubles arise out of these property rights of the ruling class. These conditions inevitably leave the workers stripped of all power to control their own destiny.

These are the important matters that the workers must recognize before their problem can be solved. Throughout their daily life, in their talks with their fellowman, in their criticisms of the press, the parsons, the politicians, it is absolutely necessary

that they understand clearly their position. This point of view must be, "Is our interest going to be affected by such and such a policy? will it alter our status? is this measure or that going to lead to the point where we shall be emancipated through the control of the ownership of the means of production or will it leave us still with a mere scrap of paper entitling us to a living wage?"

The capitalists have their problems too. How are they to dispose of the millions of tons of flour, bushels of wheat and potatoes, the piles of blankets? The politicians institute a foreign policy hoping to interest the workers because the policy will enable the British manufacturers to dispose of their goods and thus provide work for the British wage workers. These are not matters for us. The one thing that matters is to solve the problem once and for all, to eliminate the basis of the trouble. The politicians will offer you protection, prohibition—always the worker having his attention diverted from the things that matter. It is unpopular, nasty, not respectable, to point out to the working class that the troubles in human society result from private ownership. It is disagreeable to the master class. Not to us. It is the one vital thing, the one virile doctrine in civilization at the present time and it is slowly but surely permeating working class organizations. The cobwebs are being swept away and the workers are learning that the trouble with civilization is a matter of the economic structure of society, not prohibition, foreign policies, women's suffrage, republicanism, but the solution of the great economic problem, the distribution of the wealth which the working-class produces.

THE DAWES PLAN

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And the French are saying: "Voluntary contribution, special taxation, and even a capital levy would certainly be preferred to a Dawes Plan which would operate with regard to the French railroads in the same way as has been done with the German railroads."

"Business men rather than diplomats," it is stated, are arranging an international conference for the purpose of establishing the Dawes Plan in China and the Far East.

Hardly a day passes without additional appropriations for naval, military, and airplane equipment; and the whole world is busily engaged in developing poison gases—even "mad" gas, the breathing of which produces permanent and incurable insanity.

Yet Mr. Seymour L. Cromwell, formerly president of the New York Stock Exchange, has said that "The recent export of American funds to all quarters of the world constitutes a fundamental step toward the elimination of warfare"; on the strength of which Messrs. Dominick & Dominick, a well-known bond house, have issued a leaflet entitled, "Wall Street a factor in Securing World Peace." —The Nation (N. Y.)

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AGARTA NOTES

Calgary. Business meeting of Local Calgary, S. P. of C. 14 held every second Tuesday at 8 p.m. Economics Class every Thursday at 8 p.m. Address: 134, 5th Ave. West, Calgary, Alberta. Everybody Welcome.

Literature Price List

Table with columns: Cloth Bound, Paper Covers, Per Copy. Lists various books and their prices, including 'Revolution and Counter Revolution (Marx)', 'Capitalist Production (First Nine and 22 Chapters)', 'Evolution of Man (Prof. Bolsche)', etc.