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FOR the time being, organized labor and organized capital in the United States appear to be at a deadlock on matters vital, at least to organized labor, in its struggle for better conditions of work and higher wages. The labor

BOLTING LABOR

group in the Industrial Conference in Washington, D. C., bolts, in defiant mood, from the conference. The United Mine Workers have formally rejected the terms of the proposal of Secretary of Labor Wilson, to call off the coal strike, announced for November 1. The Steel Workers' strike in Pennsylvania, so far, has brought no settlement. The executive of the American Federation of Labor has at last, by some means, been forced into announcing that the organization will guarantee its moral and financial support to aid the Steel Strikers in enforcing their demands for collective bargaining. In addition, the Railroad Brotherhoods have announced radical demands on the regulation and control of their department of industry, demands which are anathema to the individualistic soul of the American capitalist. And on all hands, whether around the conference table in the national capital, or in convention, or local meetings, there is displayed an antagonism of labor to capital which bodes ill for the get-together movement.

To the Socialist, there is satisfaction in watching many repudiators of the essential conflict of interest between capital and labor exemplifying its truth by their actions. Of them we may justifiably say: "It is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of the mercy of superior economic powers."

For example, examine the personal of the labor group to the National Industrial Conference. The "sane-ness" of its most prominent members is, in "well informed" circles, considered beyond dispute. The capitalist press, itself, has for years exalted them in our eyes, crowned them, as to other unmentionables in the labor movement, as polaric exemplars of moderation and of wise and statesman-like leadership. Their "sane-ness" and moderation we never doubted. God Wot! 'Twas tepid as the left over dregs in last night's cup to our new morning's thirst. As to their wisdom and statesmanship, we doubted it: we doubt it yet.

How come these master manipulators of political machinery, these professional standpatters, these easeful time servers and flabby compromisers, to be galvanized into taking on the rigorous, blustering aspect of war: and the remainder of the lesser known of this labor group also, hand-picked with anxious care from the conservative wing of the organized labor movement? To think of them as they were known before the conference,

PIECE-WAGES

WAGES themselves take many forms, but the two fundamental forms are time-wages and piece-wages. As all expenditure of energy or power can only be measured by a unit measure of time, it follows that the products themselves of an expenditure of energy can only reach a fundamental estimation on the same basis. Thus wages by the piece are only a converted form of wages by time. In industry, where both forms of wages prevail, the practice proves the truth of the theory.

In piece-wages it seems at first sight as if the labor-power bought from the laborer was, not the function of his labor-power, but labor already realized in the product.

Let us take the considerations of Marx on this matter. "The quality of the labor (of piece-wages) is here controlled by the work itself, which must be of average perfection if the piece price is to be paid in full.

the soulful harmonizing pacifists might well sigh happily, "now cometh our millennium dawn!" The sane statesmen of labor and sane statesmen of capital at last were sitting. Charley and his crew, Sammy and his mob, cheek by jowl, familiar elbows on the same table, what time the dove of peace broods o'er the friendly concourse like a benediction.

But alas, for human hopes and human frailties. Scarcely the opening address closed, when out the window flies the volatile symbolic fowl. And sane labor leaders and sane capitalists, day after day, glare, impotently raging, across the table at each other, grow purple in face, spit venom, draw further and further apart, harden flint-like their antagonisms—till finally, labor also flies the room, protesting, stridently vehement.

Some one was unreasonable! Alas, friends! What though human reason is our noblest faculty and worthy of all honor, it can not wear away or dissolve into nothingness the adamant fact: "Between the working class and the capitalist class there is an irrepressible and irreconcilable conflict of interests."

It is an order of being: it is a law of life, that there can be no peace where parasite and host, where exploiter and exploiter find lodgment together. Would you have Peace? Then abolish parasitism!

The material goods of social well-being are the products of useful social labor, mental and physical. All knowledge is a social product, and all capacities. There is no biological difference between the child of the laborer and the child of his exploiter. Labor, under economic pressure and the advance of general knowledge, is becoming more and more conscious of these facts, and is groping towards a new organization of society, whose method of distribution will be a recognition of them, based on them.

The broad, general movement of labor sweeps all along in its current, progressives and reactionaries, Reds and Whites. Sam Gompers, etc., are caught up in the tide, and, though they would like to stem it, primarily, they are more interested in saving themselves from being submerged. They will do anything to keep on top.

Piece-wages become, from this point of view, the most fruitful source of reduction of wages and capitalistic cheating.

"They furnish to the capitalist an exact measure for the intensity of labor. Only the working-time which is embodied in a mass of commodities determined before hand, and experimentally fixed, counts as socially necessary working time and is paid as such.

"Since the quality and intensity of the work are controlled by the form of wage itself, superintendence of labor becomes in great part superfluous. Piece-wages therefore lay the foundation . . . of a hierarchically organized system of exploitation and oppression. The latter has two fundamental forms. On the one hand, piece-wages facilitate the interposition of parasites between the capitalist and the wage laborer, the 'sub-letting of labor.' The gain of these middle-men comes entirely from the difference between the labor price which the capitalist pays, and the part of the price which they actually allow to reach the laborer.

On the other hand, piece-wages allows the capitalist to make a contract with the chief of some group . . . at a price for which the head laborer himself undertakes the enlisting and recruiting and payment of his assistant work people. The exploitation of the laborer by capital is here affected through the exploitation of the laborer by the laborer.

"Given piece-wage, it is naturally the personal interest of the laborer to strain his labor-power as intensely as possible; this enables the capitalist to raise more easily the normal degree of intensity of labor. It is, moreover, now the personal interest of the laborer to lengthen the working day. . . . This gradually brings on a reaction." (An expansion of working time always tends to bring a fall in the price of labor-power by the time unit.) If one man does the work of one and one-half or two men, the supply of labor increases, although the supply of labor-power on the market remains constant. The competition thus created between the laborers allows the capitalist to beat down the price of labor, whilst the falling price of labor allows him, on the other hand, to screw up still further the working time.

"In time-wages with few exceptions, the same wages holds for the same kind of work, whilst in piece-wages, though the working time is measured by a certain quantity of the product, the day's or week's wages will vary with the individual differences . . . of skill, strength, energy, staying power, etc., of the laborers. Of course this does not alter the general relations between capital and wage-labor. First the individual differences balance one another in the workshop as a whole, which thus supplies in a given working time, the average product, and the total wages paid in that particular branch of industry. Second, the proportion between wages and surplus value remains unaltered, since the mass of surplus labor supplied by each particular laborer corresponds with the wage received by him. But the wider scope that piece-wage gives to "individuality, and with it the sense of liberty, independence, and self-control of the

Questions and Answers

WHAT IS WEALTH?

WEALTH, in the broad, general sense may be said to be all those things which are useful to man. These would include the soil, air and sunlight.

However, the science of political economy concerns itself with the laws governing the production and distribution of wealth, and so wealth in this sense means only those use-values which also have exchange value, the amount of which we express in monetary terms. Exchange values are products of labor. Marx, in his opening sentence of the first volume of Capital, states: "The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities."

WHAT IS MONEY?

Gold is the only real money, all other money is token money or else promises to pay.

It is the universal measure of value.

The standard of price.

The universal equivalent.

A medium of circulation.

A means of deferred payment.

In countries where the gold standard prevails (the exceptions are few) gold is the only real money, and is universal equivalent. All other mediums of circulation are tokens, promises to pay, etc.

The first chief function of money is to act as a measure of value. This it does by virtue of being itself a store of value, that is, it is a product of labor.

It also acts as a medium of circulation. For this purpose token money and bank notes may, and do take the place of gold of which they are the symbols. As a medium of circulation, money helps the transfer of commodities from hand to hand and so did away with the primitive method of barter.

Gold is a Standard of price. That is, the values of all commodities are expressed in gold prices. Price is the monetary expression of value.

"As measure of value and standard of price, money has two entirely distinct functions to perform. It is the measure of value inasmuch as it is the socially recognized incarnation of human labor; it is the standard of price inasmuch as it is a fixed weight of metal. As a measure of value, it serves to convert the values of all the manifold commodities into prices, into imaginary quantities of gold; as the standard of price it measures those quantities of gold. (Marx, p. 110, vol. 1.)

A dollar is a fixed weight of metal of a certain fineness. The Government stamp on the dollar guarantees these qualities in the coin.

Money serves as a means of deferred payment. The sale of a commodity may take place and consumption totally or in part take place before payment is made, as in the renting of a house and other credit transactions.

laborers, on the other hand it develops their competition with one another. Piece-work has therefore, a tendency, while raising individual wages above the average to lower this average itself."