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362

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FIVE CENTS

The Social System

Socialism, it is needless to say is not regarded with the eye of favor, and this is so, as far as the people are concerned, because it is not understood. The natural indolence, both physical and mental, of the average human being, induces him to take things on trust and without scrutinising to any extent the source of communication—a peculiarity for which society has paid in blood and agony. Nevertheless socialism, its aims, and methods of attaining those aims, are not only vital questions of today, but they are the most vital questions in the forefront of social activity, and on the answer given to them depends the future of social welfare.

What is socialism? Briefly, socialism, like capital, is a social relation, a social system wherein social relationships are determined by the economic foundation on which that system rests. Societies are organized around the material and machinery of production, and the state of complexity of that organization is according to the stage of development reached by the society. Also, by far the greater part of social activities are centred on the manner and method by which it gains its livelihood. It is apparent that according to the nature and character of the prime base the nature and character of the prime vertical will be, or, to put it better, the superstructure evolved from the method by which society obtains its necessities will harmonise with the base from which it springs.

In our own day, the economic foundation of society is capitalist property right, i.e., the right of one class, the capitalist class, to own as private property the material and machinery of wealth production and distribution necessary for the continued life of the total society. The method of capitalist production is commodity production, or production for sale, at a profit. This condition gives rise to its relentless competitive struggle for a "place in the sun," since the more production and sales under those terms, the more profit accrues to the owner. The individualist philosophy of capitalism, founded on its idealistic conceptions of social progress, determines that this competition shall be "free" in order that the incentive, the enterprise, the ability and idealism of the individual shall have free play and scope, unhampered by any class restrictions, the resultant necessity of which is efficient and cheap production.

But of necessity, one class in society, owning the means of life, must expropriate the non-possessing portion of society. What then? Simply this, that since that other portion must have access to those means of life or die of starvation, access to those means can only be had on the terms imposed by the owning class and the terms are, that, unless that class can find a market for its commodities in order to realise the profit contained in them, industry shall not operate. The expropriated class, therefore, since its life condition is controlled by another class, is in subjugation to that class. The workers of this society therefore, being subject to the capitalist owners, are wage slaves.

To sell a commodity is to exchange it for another commodity of equal value. Exchange under capitalism is on a currency basis, and commodities, we may assume for purposes of illustration, exchange at value expressed in terms of money. But manifestly, there can be no exchange without production, and it is equally clear that there can be no production without the application of human labor. But that labor, as pointed out, is slave labor, being deprived of freedom of that which is required

traffickers in commodities buy and sell in the most advantageous market. The incentive of capitalist competition, therefore, acts along the line of economy in production, thereby once more compelling the incentive of the workers in the same direction—economy in the production of their labor-power—which simply means the reduction of the standard of life to the lowest possible level of subsistence, consistent with efficiency.

But that is not all. The application of machinery not only displaces social labor, but it increases its productive capacity enormously, and the capitalist ownership of the machinery of production involves the same class ownership of what is produced. Hence, while labor power receives its market value, wages, it does not receive its productive value—surplus. The conclusion of which state of affairs is, that efficiency and invention in production not only displaces social labor but at the same time enhances productive power, creating a surplus of labor power on the one side, to a surplus of commodities on the other. This oversupply of commodities lowers the market price of the necessities of life, thereby lowering the price of the commodity labor power, and as the value of a commodity is the value of the socially necessary labor in it, the social community cannot buy back what it has produced in value, with the price—wages—which it received for its commodity labor power. Simply that what the worker receives in wages is not equal in value to what he produced in the same period. Further, as the capitalist cannot produce unless he receives a profit, and as the community, society, cannot buy back this surplus, industry comes to a stand and the producers who create this surplus starve because of their own industry.

Socialism proposes the abolition of this anarchic state of society, by the transference of capitalist property right in the means of life to collective society. So that the social commonwealth shall own and control, direct and administer all the social affairs, activities and necessities, that in the fullest sense the supreme control of its own life conditions shall be vested in the hands of the people, for use and benefit, in its own interest for its own highest good, happiness and well being. That is socialism and those are its aims.

And the method of attainment? It must of necessity be in accordance with and proceed from the historic condition. The interest of a slave class must be opposed to the interest of a master class. Obviously this conflict of interest must increase in intensity with social expansion until a climax is reached, and a climax will be reached when the ever developing forces of production, creating new conditions of friction, ever widening potentials of struggle, ever deepening intensities of interests, shall have generated a condition, as it must do, where the old regime and its obsolete methods, unable to expand, renders the further existence of society impossible, and gathering together the foul forces of its tottering and decadent civilisation, in a frantic panic of desperation may hurl itself, only to be broken and forever ruined against the irresistible oncoming of the social revolution.

R.

Socialist Party of Canada Propaganda Meetings

**BRING YOUR FRIENDS—ESPECIALLY IF
THEY DON'T AGREE WITH US.**

STAR THEATRE, 300 Block, Main Street

Feb. 26th.—Speaker, W. A. Pritchard.
Subject: "The Lesson of Marxism."

March 5th.—Speaker, J. D. Harrington.
Subject: "Darwinism and its Present Day
Critics."

March 12th.—Speaker: Robert Kirk.
Subject: "The Class Struggle."

March 19th.—Speaker, W. A. Pritchard.
Subject: "The Paris Commune."

March 26th.—Speaker: T. O'Connor.
Subject: Working Class Politics.

AT NORTH VANCOUVER.
126—2nd Street West.

Feb. 26th. Speaker, R. Kirk.
Subject: "Sidelights on the Genoa Conference."

March 5th.—T. O'Connor.
Subject: "The Working Class."

March 12th.—Speaker: W. McQuoid.
Subject: "Unemployment: Its Causes and
Effects."

March 19th.—Speaker: Sidney Earp.
Subject: "The Paris Commune."

March 26th.—Speaker: Robert Kirk.
Subject: "Social Revolutions."

All meetings at 8 p.m.
Questions. Discussion.

to sustain life, and since capitalism buys and sells as well as produces in terms of money, it follows that the social capacity of the community to labor is involved in the same terms, or in other words, the workers sell their power to labor, receiving in return its market value, expressed in money.

But the aforementioned necessity of cheap production cheapens labor power, by cheapening the necessities of life which reproduce labor power, and as commodities exchange at value, the value of labor power becomes—equals—the value of the necessities of life, food, clothes, shelter. But efficiency in production and the introduction of machinery displaces the social labor, thus compelling the workers to compete for jobs, as it compels the masters to compete for markets. As this competition is "free."