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CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH

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## ON CONTEMPT OF COURT

Jules Fournier, editor of *Le Nationaliste* of Montreal, has been sentenced to three months in prison for contempt of court. The sentence was pronounced by Chief Justice Langelier of Quebec. Jules Fournier had written an article entitled, "Prostitution of Justice." In this article he criticized certain judgments rendered at Quebec.

Mr. Jules Fournier has the sympathy of all radicals. We do not agree with the policy of *Le Nationaliste* altogether. Yet we admire Mr. Fournier for his imprisonment.

When Gompers was adjudged guilty of contempt of court because he refused to obey an injunction of the court issued against him in a trades union matter, the socialist papers immediately declared the court inflicting the sentence most contemptible. There were no prosecutions. The court was sick of its job.

Whenever laws become unjust the instruments appointed to give effect to those laws have to rely less and less on public sentiment and more and more on ferocious judgements. The court pronouncing the judgement at Quebec imposed a sentence of three months. This is rather severe even in the opinion of that staid old paper the *Montreal Gazette*.

In past time the justice was wrapped up in the Emperors and any contempt against them was punishable with death. The Kings of England also exercised great powers of tyranny along the same lines.

When conditions change and laws which formerly were beneficial become, owing to changed conditions, tyrannical and unjust all right minded men look upon those laws with disgust and contempt.

Judges and courts are human creations appointed to carry out the laws of the country. When those laws become unjust and contemptible, it necessarily follows that the courts, being the instruments for the fulfilment of contemptible laws, must share the odium attaching to the laws themselves.

This is what Jules Fournier evidently felt. However he made the mistake, unless he desired to suffer for his principles, of directly attacking certain judgements of certain courts.

He declared: "Never have we assisted at such a cynical prostitution of justice."

We do not know the cases he was referring to, but probably he was right in an abstract way. If he meant that the court had deliberately twisted the laws so as to prevent their meaning and to unjustly administer unjust laws, then he is bringing serious charges against the judges which are very difficult of proof.

But he declared in court that he had every faith in the integrity of the judges personally and had never questioned their good faith. In this case his evident meaning was that the laws are unjust and the courts as such were contemptible.

There are eight million socialists now voting for socialism. Every one of these consider that capitalistic laws administered by capitalistic courts produce the degeneration of humanity that is seen on every hand. Fournier, while a Nationalist, holds the same opinion of the courts. He evidently considers that the courts fulfilling Canadian laws do not give justice to the French Canadians.

The question therefore for Fournier as well as for the socialists, is a deeper one than the judges consider it is.

It is a question of the fundamental laws of the land. It is a question of the organization of society. The courts are merely the administrators of the present laws and if those laws are unjust the courts cannot rightly condemn any man who objects to those laws and their present administration.

As to punishments, all through the ages men have been condemned for doing things which the law of the land forbade. These men have been considered heroes of a future age. Fournier may one day be looked upon in that light. No doubt his French Canadian compatriots will give him a warm welcome when he gets out of jail. Karl Liebknecht, the German Socialist, has just been liberated from a

two years' imprisonment for having published a work entitled, "Militarism and Anti-Militarism." His welcome has been warm and enthusiastic. The sentence has but served to endear him to his fellow countrymen.

Judge Langelier evidently considers that the honor of the court of the province of Quebec has been entrusted to him and that he may punish severely all those who besmirch it in any way.

The position of Judge Langelier has been the position of nearly all judges administering a decadent set of laws.

There have always been men who have thought it their duty to oppose these courts and stand the penalty. Fournier may be one of these.

## THE CIVIL SERVICE

There has been numerous changes affecting the civil service at Ottawa. Just before the last elections the Liberals, to hold the service vote, promised an increase of pay to the service.

They have fulfilled their pledge after a fashion. The government has given a flat increase in remuneration and added two hours a day to the length of work required. This has caused considerable indignation among the civil servants. The civil servants are accustomed to having more or less of an easy time. They do not like to put in ordinary office hours. As the civil servants can be classed as workers, the lengthening of their hours merely go to show that the speeding process is at work even in government employ.

Even though the Ottawa civil employees may be ranked as workers, the manual laborers of the country will have little sympathy for their soft hardships. The civil service examinations have been remodeled and have been put on a basis that will exclude the workingman. A person who is hired to keep accounts has now got to pass an examination in Latin and zoology and in many other ologies. This means that it is only the graduates of the high schools who can compete and get a job. This makes the civil service a preserve for the middle class offspring. Formerly the head of a department could promote an employee under him. Now, he has to take whatever idiot a foolish examination may thrust upon him.

The stratification is proceeding apace. The worker is finding out he is the lowest stratum.

## A STORE TRUST

The process of trustification is proceeding rapidly in the United States. This is due to the momentum of capital. Vast incomes have rolled in on the Standard Oil crowd and this gang is seeking ever newer fields for exploitation and control. The latest field is that of the retail trade.

The retail merchant and the farmer have been the last two persons to feel in a direct manner the invasion and conquest of the plutocracy. The retail merchant of the States is now going to be put out of business. The Standard Oil people have formed a company of large capitalization and are acquiring a chain of stores across the American continent. At the same time on onslaught has begun in the American senate against the express companies.

The senators are telling the people what fearful robbery goes on under the guise of charges on express parcels. The American public has long objected to these charges. The senate did not give a hoot. But now the trust leaders want cheap express rates and the senators are obedient to the wish of their masters.

The same elimination of small oil producers and the formation of a gigantic trust in the oil business will be repeated in the retail trade business. The big stores will get Standard Oil goods over Standard Oil railroads. Under such conditions it will be only the Standard Oil stores that will stand the charges. With the Express Companies smashed, the small towns will be flooded with Standard Oil goods through Standard Oil goods mail-order houses. The small country merchants will be crushed.

Under capitalism it is impossible to be honest.

## SUFFRAGE AGITATION

In Great Britain the suffragettes are active. They are striving in every possible way to make their agitation lively and to the point. They are abused and maltreated. They are imprisoned and scorned. As the oppression put upon them becomes more severe, their agitation becomes fiercer. What the women lack in physical strength, they make up in endurance. They chain themselves to railings and shout "votes for women." Excluded from public meetings, they hide themselves in organ lofts. Recently a painting of Asquith on exhibition at London was spoilt by having pasted across it a placard bearing the motto, "Votes for women."

Our Canadian writers and newspapers like Goldwin Smith and the *Montreal Star* gravely speak of the grotesque and unseemingly agitation on the part of the suffragettes and draw from such agitation the conclusion that women are not fit for voting.

Goldwin Smith and writers like him cannot have read history. Smith is evidently an overrated thinker. The right to vote is not acquired by peaceful means. Even in this Canada of ours under the freedom of the British flag it needed the rebellion of Papineau to give us the right of self-government. The French acquired it by means of the red terror of the revolution. In India today, a reactionary British bureaucracy is exiling the editors of Indian papers because these editors advocate home rule for India. The right to vote in England had to be won by a rebellion.

Perhaps Smith et al have a mental picture of Laurier or Borden or Asquith or Balfour calling a delegation of women before them and graciously handing them the right to vote on a silver platter. If they have they are subject to pipe dreams.

When women remain quiescent the political leaders declare that the ladies do not want the franchise. When they agitate politically and socially and in every way possible the politicians and their henchmen writers declare that their conduct shows the ladies to be unfit for the franchise. The suffragettes are wise and are agitating. They know that no government under a capitalistic regime will grant any right or liberty unless compelled thereto by fear.

## THE RISEN DESPOTISM

Despotism has risen in the United States and the people are seeing it. When a dozen men can stop the wheels of commerce of eighty millions of people, when one group of capitalists control the jobs of hundreds of thousands of men and can sack them and can deprive them of the means of life, then there is despotism pure and simple.

Socialism means democracy. Socialism means the government of the people by the people for the people. At present all democracy means in actual government is for the people to say once in four years which set of professional politicians the most corrupt element of the country desires to have mismanage the country for the next four years.

As long as politics and government are limited to a very few questions, as they are at present, the vast mass of men will not be interested in politics. But when government becomes the free expression of the working people as to the conditions which will prevail in their work, then government will become dignified and honourable.

One group of capitalists now control the majority of industries across the line. They control oil and railways and steel mills and retail stores and city electric lines and gas companies and real estate. They are absolutely master of these industries and the workers must accept the conditions of labor imposed by these capitalists or starve.

These capitalists, in the management of their industries, have free hand. They have successfully fought laws against child and female labor. They have successfully fought laws limiting the hours of labor. They have successfully fought union legislation of all kinds.

The despotism has arisen. What are the Americans going to do about it.

## ABSENTEE SHAREHOLDERS

In the breakup of feudalism in France the nobles who formerly fought to protect their estates found they had nothing to do. The individual wars between barons had ceased and the barons had nothing to do save to follow their own sweet will. Thereupon the nobles left their estates for Versailles where they lived useless lives of extravagance. Their estates were left to the tender mercies of the rent gatherers. If the nobles did not get enough rent to satisfy them they sacked the rent collector and got another. As a result oppression grew apace over all France. The people cried for bread and got none.

In Ireland absentee landlordism has been the curse of the country. The landlords lived in England and the people were oppressed. The lords did not feel the oppression because they did not come into personal contact with it. The rent collectors may have felt the oppression but they had to collect the rent or lose their jobs.

Wherever history shows absentee proprietorship there is exhibited more or less the curse of poverty and oppression.

Today we have the absentee proprietorship there is exhibited more or less the curse of poverty and oppression. Today we have the absentee proprietorship of mines, mills, factories, railroads and industries in general. Those who manage do not own. These things are owned collectively by a large number of capitalists who never visit their properties. They draw their dividends and are pleased when the dividends go up and are provoked when the dividends go down. If a manager does not make dividends for the shareholders of a concern it is declared that the manager is a poor business man and he is sacked. A huster is put onto the job and the investors wait eagerly for the dividends.

The manager knows he has to make good. He begins by speeding up the workers and cutting down the pay. The pay may not be cut down directly but schemes are introduced such as the infamous mail and medical system in force in many places. The employees may be forced into signing away all their rights against the company in case of accident, such as was done on the G. T. R. The employees may be forced to buy at high prices from the company stores as is the case on the construction gangs on the G. T. P. Here the ignorant foreigners are kept in debt to the contractors. The reduced pay or increased charges may take many forms.

Under this speeding up process women are employed in the place of men and children in the place of women. Men must go unmarried and women are forced into prostitution. Slums spring up and children die and the whole life of the workers becomes sordid and unwholesome. Nevertheless dividends are increased; the absentee shareholders rejoice and the financial columns of a capitalist press heap praise upon the manager whose job is to squeeze bloodmoney from the poor.

## THE PROHIBITIONISTS

The prohibitionists are fighting the liquor traffic. They are showing up the corruption existing in the carrying on of the liquor traffic. They are proving their case and as a result they are ousting the money seeking saloon from town after town. There are many persons both socialist and nonsocialist who do not fall in with the ideas of the prohibitionists. Yet the prohibitionists, as far as socialism is concerned, is doing good work. They make the mistake of limiting the fight to one particular trade.

Wherever the big trust goes corruption follows in its wake. The beef trust, the steel trust, the oil trust, and many others have abused their powers. These trusts including the whisky trust, are the result of economic pressure and themselves result in corruption. The whisky trust was the first to develop. There monopoly was first established and profits first grew enormous. The result was corruption in politics, corruption in business, corruption among the rich exploiters of the traffic and immorality and misery in the homes of

those caught in the meshes of the business.

The prohibitionists have laid bare the evils of the liquor business. As long as they harped on the moral ills alone they were voices crying in the wilderness. When they adopted the socialist attitude and expounded the loss of business and showed where the liquor traffic was hurting men in their pockets then they began to be successful.

When the prohibitionists begin to think a little deeper they will find that the same objections which exist to the liquor traffic from a business point of view also exist in the other traffics in the necessary things of life also from a business point of view. The profits of one trade hurt all the other trades. The corruptions in one large industry react deleteriously on all the other industries. To avoid the profits which mutually hurt all the businesses and to rid the people of the corruption existing in the large industries, the present form of doing business and the present method of conducting the large industries must be abolished. The only way to abolish the profits and the corruption is by the practical establishment of socialism.

## THE POOR FARMER

The farmer has an idea that he knows all there is to be known about farming. The people who make money out of him keep him primed to this idea. It is so much easier for them to carry on their little schemes if the farmer is under the impression that he has nothing to learn.

The farmer may be a good farmer and may know about all there is to be known on the subject of raising crops and taking care of cattle. If he thinks this is enough, he can be plucked as easily as a spring chicken.

The farmer must not only know how to raise good crops but also how to get the benefit of those good crops. At present he works like a slave and gets little for his work. If he has a bumper crop he cannot sell his produce and it rots on the ground. If his crops are a failure he has little to sell and his labor goes for nothing.

The farmer will have to study out the problem of how to make a good living on less work. The problem is easy of solution but the farmer must get rid of his hidebound Liberal or Conservative notions; he must not listen in blind faith to the men who get rich from robbing him as he has listened in the past. He must begin to think for himself.

It is admitted that the present system is a failure so far as comfort and wealth for the farmers and workers are concerned. It is also admitted that the farmers and workers have the right to vote and are in the majority. And it is also bluntly stated in many quarters that the farmers and workers should not whine at what they are getting as they voted for it.

As long as the farmers will listen to protectionists talking about the woes of the manufacturers; as long as the farmers will listen to professional politicians who expatiate on the benefit of letting all the services upon which the farmers depend for the marketing of their goods be run by a few multimillionaires in their own interests, just so long will the farmer deserve to work hard and have someone else get the reward.

The Dreadnought scare of Great Britain was deliberately planned by the Tories to divert public attention from their own schemes and to harass the Liberals. This provoked the Liberal government and they are answering by putting forth a budget that taxes the Tory beggars. The only thing that can really get the aristocracy of Great Britain mad is to tap their pocket books.

Federal officers have been seizing hogs at the Union Abattoir in Montreal claiming that the hogs were affected with tuberculosis. The farmers suffer the loss. But the Eastern Township farmer is just that kind of an individual that don't want collective effort to protect him from the losses incurred in agriculture. He wants to be independent even if he busts at it.

## THE FAILURE OF CAPITALISM

Capitalism is failing because the means and methods of production are becoming so abundant that it is almost impossible to produce for profit. Shoe factories can turn out more shoes than the people need. Clothing establishments could produce clothing more abundantly than the people require. The farms of the Dominion can raise more foodstuffs than the people eat. The railways can build more cars and lines than the community can use. Builders can build more houses than the people can inhabit.

Before a thing can be sold under capitalism regularly there must be a market for the thing at more than the labor cost price. If the market becomes glutted beyond this profitable basis then the goods are no longer made even though many people are in need of them. Men are thrown out of employment and commerce halts. The nation suffers from what is known as a plethoric panic.

Men have toiled through long ages to arrive at this productive period. Arriving at it the majority are not aware of their arrival and still continue under the old system of individual appropriation for profit although such a system is profitless to the majority.

Capitalistic production for profit was beneficial and necessary at one time. It stimulated production. Now the system has run its course and must give way. Even now it is failing. Trusts are limiting the output while the people starve for the necessities of life. Under a sane system each man, woman and child would have all the necessities and to spare. The failing of capitalism is bringing misery. The introduction of socialism will bring abundance and leisure and brotherhood.

## REOCCURRENCE OF LEPROSY

A number of cases of leprosy are being discovered in the United States. Leprosy was practically unknown in America until recently. Its discovery is an ironical comment upon the benefits of capitalism.

Leprosy is a skin disease. It originates in filth. Where people lead clean open lives leprosy does not exist.

But American people are no longer leading clean health giving lives. The rich are becoming reckless and corrupt while the poor are forced into all manner of uncleanly lives. The best families of the States found their fortunes on unsanitary slums where water is at a premium and where filth is unavoidable. The capitalistic food producers are selling all manner of vile compounds for the consumption of the people. The Chicago beef canners are still putting rotten stuff on the market. The pure food law is a dead letter.

Private water companies give the people diseased water to drink. Tuberculous milk is given to infants to make them strong. Streams are polluted and the people grow diseased.

Leprosy walks in the wake of decadent capitalism. Free and glorious America, under the financial leadership of the Rockfellers and the Harrimans and the Morgans, is being afflicted with the dread diseases of the filthy and corrupt East. When will the awakening come?

The Trades and Labor Council of Nova Scotia wants to form a labor representation committee and send labor men to parliament. Good. But what will the laboring men do when they get there? If they are not imbued with the socialist spirit they will order the troops out to shoot down striking workmen as quick as would a capitalist. This has been shown in the Broken Hill strike in Australia.

The Imperial Press Conference were entertained at the White City, a sort of London Coney Island. This concern is run on sweated principles. But, pshaw, what do our colonial journalists and paper proprietors, who were picked because of their reactionary views, care for such a small item as that as long as they are fed well?

Machinery is becoming so productive that it is getting harder and harder to produce for profit.