

## A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE RULING CLASS

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what as they do H. G. Well's latest novel—something exquisitely elegant, but almost painfully harmless.

Indeed, the capitalists, as a class, have nothing to fear from State Capitalism. They certainly feather their nest and feather it well, by exchanging stocks, in many instances of doubtful value, for well secured government bonds. The dangers lie all in the side of the working class. There are the dangerous consequences, and they are considerable, that will ensue from the increased power the government will secure as a large employer of labor. The quality of mercy which a government as an employer of labor has towards its employees has been sufficiently illustrated during the war so as not to need any further comment. The government as the national trustee of capitalist property, will become as ultra-conservative and reactionary as such trustees always are. Besides, the government officials, usually recruited from the ranks of the bourgeois class, will have few sympathies for the aspirations of the toiling masses. They never do. Alienated from the people by the jealousy with which they guard their prestige as officials, they will be further estranged by their over-estimation of their responsibility as wards of government properties. It will not make these officials any more sympathetic because they have been elected by some democratic form of election procedure. It has never had that effect in the past, so why in the future? Especially in a land where the corporate interests have always succeeded in securing the election at the polls of their political favorites. Besides, the corporation stockholders and the government bondholders will not relax in their efforts to secure suitable and desirable officials and members of parliament. Quite the contrary. For under the new arrangement, even more so than under the old, it will be necessary for the latter class to see to it that there is an obedient government in power, with a sufficiently pliable retinue of officials, so that its property and its bonds may be securely guarded. Thus, government under the order of State Capitalism is but a more thoroughly organized hegemony of the capitalist class.

Accordingly the reconstruction projects as designed by the capitalist class, through its agents, does not aim at making any radical changes in social relationships and in the machinery of government. Of course, some of the more antiquated social forms and relations will be discarded, and new ones substituted. And as for the government machinery, certain repairs will be made, and improvements will be introduced into some of its working parts. But all this will only enable the plutocracy to guide, direct and control, the more efficiently, the many national activities. Moreover, this governmental machine will spin long, legal fingers that will stretch out and worm themselves into and direct even the simplest social relations. Indeed, its buzzing wheels will hum with but one tune—the siren song, direct and control.

To control the working class, that is the great objective of the whole reconstruction policy. For unless the working class is put under control, the capitalist class cannot go on with its work of extending trade, increasing profits, grabbing new possessions and preparing for the next war. Before a working class that it cannot control, the capitalist class stands as helpless as a lamb does before a lion. Consequently, it does not take a very great power of insight into political matters to see how essential it is that our class government should plan on passing such legislation, should seek to create such social conditions, as will give it the proper control over the minds and bodies of the toiling masses.

This, at present, is the greatest problem which confronts the government, and its array of officials and social welfare workers. And owing to its intricate complexity and the many variations

that enter in, it is a difficult problem to solve. But, on the whole, the proletariat is looked upon by the bourgeoisie as a mass of human animals that must be given employment, must be housed, must be amused, and whose thinking process must be trained to run along certain cerebral grooves. These four requirements constitute "the problem of politicians, and professors, too, is to accept it as a law that the measure of peace and order that will obtain in a state at any given moment can be gauged by the degree to which these four fundamental requirements of the proletariat are satisfied. Evidently, politicians and professors have their own peculiar way of sizing up the needs and demands of the working class. They are clever enough to know that the first thing the working class demands is employment. Indeed, employment has a double virtue. For a working class that is employed can not only furnish itself, to some extent at least, with all its requirements, but it can and does also, at the same time, create profits for the employers. The latter is, of course, the highest virtue. On the other hand, a working class that is unemployed is a hungry mob and dangerous. It is not, therefore, strange that the chief concern of the government in the coming adjustment from a war to a peace basis, should be to secure employment to all the workers in Canada. In truth, its fate does, in the last analysis, depend upon its capacity to do this.

But peradventure the government cannot provide the necessary number of jobs—what then? Recourse will then be taken to other means. These means easily suggest themselves. For it is a fact that man does not live of bread alone. He has the hunger for amusement, the hunger to bury and to forget his personal troubles in the bosom of pleasant imaginations, the hunger which arises from the hope "which springs eternal in the human breast." This hunger for the ideal is certainly a legal appetite, and its presence promises well for the future development of the working class. But the capitalist class wants to use this appetite for its own purpose, as all ruling classes have always done. Knowing full well that as a man thinks so he is, it wants to get the working class to think in such a way that this class will play right into its hand. And by puffing up the workingman with a sense of national pride, by indoctrinating him with a narrow patriotism, by centering his reading on nothing more serious than the ordinary love story, by limiting the range and the depth of his thought to the vagaries of bourgeois ethics and by feeding his imagination with such intellectual treats as the common run of moving pictures, the bourgeoisie hope to develop a type of workingman that can be easily controlled, and to whom amusement and recreative pleasures will act as a substitute for food, a stimulant to the body and a narcotic against the pangs of physical hunger. Such an one would indeed be an ideal workingman. For passively and patiently he will hope and wait for and dream about better days to come, although he may, all the while, be wasting away and dying in poverty and misery.

But what the government wishes to do and what it will actually do are, of course, two different matters. It may be that the working class has learned so much that it will not take kindly to being indoctrinated with the bourgeois ideal of a workingman, for assuredly, it is only the most ignorant and docile that would submit to such an indoctrination. And so, in the way of a precautionary measure, lest the patience of the working class runs out too soon, the government has revived the old, and once disbanded, R.N.W.M.P. to look after the recalcitrant.

Obviously, however, all other plans and schemes to the contrary notwithstanding, the first and most difficult problem the Canadian government has to solve is the providing of employment, for no one can live any length of time on hot air and the imagination. But as the solution of this problem depends upon international relations over which no one government has any complete control, there is no one national government that can

solve it. The Canadian government cannot solve it alone—no, not even for Canada. So all its promises and endeavors along this line appear as so much stage play. Hence one is forced to the conclusion that the reconstruction policy of the government, so far as the working class is concerned, is, when boiled down to its simplest form, the old game of the capitalist class—to keep the working class quiet and apparently contented while it develops the means whereby it can continue its parasitic existence on the body of the toiling masses.

## WHY ARE YOU OUT OF WORK?

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forts of individual business concerns, each taking care of its own particular line of sabotage within its own premises. The needed sabotage can best be administered on a comprehensive plan and by a central authority, since the country's industry is of the nature of a comprehensive interlocking system, whereas the business concerns which are called on to control the motions of this industrial system will necessarily work piecemeal, inseparably and at cross-purposes. In effect, their working at cross-purposes results in a sufficiently large aggregate retardation of industry, of course, but the resulting retardation is necessarily somewhat blindly apportioned and does not converge to a neat and conspicuous outcome. Even a reasonable amount of collusion among the interested business concerns will not by itself suffice to carry on that comprehensive moving equilibrium of sabotage that is required to preserve the business community from recurrent collapse or stagnation, or to bring the nation's traffic into line with the general needs of the vested interests.

## Necessary Modicum of Sabotage

Where the national government is charged with the general care of the country's business interests, as is invariably the case among the civilized nations, it follows from the nature of the case that the nation's lawgivers and administration will have some share in administering that necessary modicum of sabotage that must always go into the day's work of carrying on industry by business methods and for business purposes. The government is in a position to penalize excessive or unwholesome traffic. So, it is always considered necessary, or at least expedient, by all sound mercantilists to impose and maintain a certain balance or proportion among the several branches of industry and trade that go to make up the nation's industrial system. The purpose commonly urged for measures of this class is the fuller utilization of the nation's industrial resources in material, equipment, and man power; the invariable effect is a lowered efficiency and a wasteful use of these resources, together with an increase of international jealousy. But measures of that kind are thought to be expedient by the mercantilists for these purposes—that is to say, by the statesmen of these civilized nations, for the purposes of the vested interests. The chief and nearly sole means of maintaining such a fabricated balance and proportion among the nation's industries is to obstruct the traffic at some critical point by prohibiting or penalizing any exuberant undesirables among these branches of industry. Disallowance, in whole or in part, is the usual and standard method.

The great standing illustration of sabotage administered by the government is the protective tariff, of course. It protects certain special interests by obstructing competition from beyond the frontier. This is the main use of a national boundary. The effect of the tariff is to keep the supply of goods down and thereby keep the price up, and so to bring reasonably satisfactory dividends to those special interests which deal in the protected articles of trade, at the cost of the underlying community. A protective tariff is a typical con-

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