

## "We Must Produce Cheaper"

**T**ODAY, the subject of greatest interest and importance to our masters, is how to increase production—how to reach the maximum of wealth output with the smallest possible expenditure in wages.

Much has been done during the war, by dilution and the abolition of privileges, toward this end, but the capitalist looks forward to the piping times of peace, when the supply of labor-power will exceed the demand, for a fuller realization of his avaricious dreams.

The question as to how it will affect the workers does not concern him: first, because he is a capitalist and therefore only interested in profits, and secondly because he keeps an army of unscrupulous journalists whose business it is to persuade the workers that whatever is beneficial to the class that own the means of wealth production, must be beneficial to society as a whole, and therefore to the working class.

To prove, however, that an increase in production, side by side, with a reduced wages bill, will improve conditions for the working class, would seem an impossible task; nevertheless, the economic quack, relying on the workers' ignorance of economics, proceeds to demonstrate it. One writer who advocates shorter hours of labor as a means to increased production says that after the war—

We shall need the greatest possible output and the most economical production, consistent with health, to enable us to get the most trade and re-establish our position and profitably employ all our people.

Other writers lay even greater stress on the last suggestion, claiming that industry is run by the capitalists as much to give employment as to obtain profits. Hence we find an economic quack measuring a capitalist's usefulness to society by the number of "hands" he employs.

It is perfectly true that the capitalists of every concern have a keen desire to employ more and more workers, but there is a proviso—markets must be assured in order that the surplus-value produced by the additional workers can be realized in profits on the same scale. For that reason only, and only in that sense, is the capitalist interested in giving employment to the workers. He employs the workers when by doing so he obtains profits. In the past, when new machines and methods have enabled him to increase output while at the same time reducing the number of his workers, he has never objected on the score that unemployment would be intensified. Neither has he hesitated to advertise extensively among the nations of the earth for workers with which to flood the labor market, long before the wage-slaves who were "his own countrymen" were absorbed. In short, the record of the capitalist class speaks for itself. Ever since the days when our peasant forefathers were driven off the land in order that they might be available for the fore-runners of the modern capitalists in the towns, up to the present day, it has been one of the chief concerns of our masters to have a substantial margin of unemployed, and for two reasons. First, to keep down wages, and second, to be called upon in case of a sudden expansion in trade.

There is another side to the question, however. The capitalists of every land want "the greatest possible output, the most economical production, and the most trade." They know that the world market is limited, that within a certain period, say one year, the world's population can only absorb a limited amount of wealth, and that goods or wealth produced beyond this amount will be left on the owners' hands. The same applies to those goods whose owners, for some reason, fail to place them on the market at the prices ruling there. Hence the need for the most economical production, in other words, for the maximum of labor-power in exchange for a minimum wage. "Consistent with health" is capitalist irony, be-

cause the workers' health is never studied except for the purpose of increasing their productive power.

The other side peeps out in the sentence "to enable us to get the most trade." The workers of each country must submit to "the most economical production" in order to assure to their masters "the most trade." Thus they enter into a new form of warfare against the workers of other countries in the interests of their masters. And when the capitalists of one nation succeed in obtaining the "most trade," and their workers demand higher wages, because the masters can afford to pay them, these same masters reward them with the sack, and entice the workers of other lands to fill their jobs. Where, then, do the workers of the world come in, whether they win for their masters markets or wars?

The capitalist group of every nation will point to their own prosperity as evidence that employment is good, when they deem it necessary to gloss over the unemployed army—that instrument of coercion against their workers. They boast that there is no sentiment in business, and an unemployed army is necessary to their business. In the past they have—except in a few rare instances, chiefly occupational—always been blessed with a solid margin; the future is full of promise for them, and we can rely on them to make the most of their opportunities in order to coerce the workers into the economic war.

Already in the mad race for markets we are told that—

The old slack methods have given way to something approaching American hustle. Supervision is more strict, rest times have been reduced, furnaces are bigger and hotter, machines run faster, tools and appliances are heavier and need more strength and nerve for their manipulation, shops are more noisy and crowded, dusty and hot, materials are harder to work, labor is more fatiguing and hazardous.

But, like everything parasitic, the capitalist is insatiable. The concerns in which his capital is invested must either beat their competitors in the race for cheaper production or go under. And concerns do go under almost daily, their share of the market being taken up by their competitors, while the workers they have employed swell the unemployed army until they can be "profitably employed" by other capitalists.

Capitalist governments have for years made promises to deal with unemployment—they have even made pretence of doing something—but the evil has grown. One government gave us labor exchanges—to find jobs for the unemployed, they said—but all these institutions did was to save the capitalist time and money in his search for the workers he needed. The latest suggestion is that hours of labor should be reduced, but those who advance it claim that a reduction in hours would result in greater production. Coming from those who plead that the workers should be more fully employed, this suggestion is a curiosity in logic.

But the richest contribution to the whole discussion has been made by the "Committee on Adult Education." They say:

Industry exists for man, and not man for industry. The world seems to have been carried on in the opposite principle, and it will be no easy task to alter it.

Rich in irony is this utterance when we get behind the camouflage of assumed innocence, for the committee know that industry is run for their class that they, as a class, own the nature-given material of the earth, that the dispossessed workers of the world, owning nothing but their energy, are forced by hunger to sell even that as a commodity. They know that the factory with its raw material and machinery absorbs the commodity

labor-power, and out of the union comes surplus-value to be realized in profits. To them the working class is God-given—a class to work for them while they luxuriate in idleness.

Industry will only exist for man when man controls industry. Today the workers cannot control industry because the means of wealth-production are owned by the capitalist class, and their ownership is defended, through their parliament, by armed forces.

Until the working class control industry, industry will exist for the capitalist class, as it exists today. And the working class can only control industry when they own the means of wealth-production. Ownership of the means of wealth-production is the basis of capitalist domination; their ownership, however, is maintained politically and until their political power is broken, or acquired by the working class, the latter cannot take possession of the means of wealth-production.

### SATURDAY REVIEW, JAN. 11

It would be a piquant event if the Entente forces were to co-operate with the German troops in putting down Bolshevism in Berlin. And yet it may be the wisest, indeed the only course, to pursue. There is no possible comparison between Germany and Russia, where ninety per cent. of the inhabitants can neither read nor write, and are steeped in superstition. The vast majority of the German nation must be on the side of law and order, and all the adult males have some military training. It ought to be possible to co-operate with the law-abiding and sane majority of Germans in establishing a responsible government for the German confederation. Unless this is done, the conference at Versailles will be wasting time.

### PRITCHARD-MAKOVSKI DEBATE

(Sunday, Feb. 9, Empress Theatre)

The debate between Comrade Pritchard of the Socialist Party of Canada, and L. W. Makovski of the "Daily Province," on Bolshevism, was held last Sunday afternoon in the Empress theatre before a crowded house.

Comrade Pritchard based his argument on the concrete achievements of Bolshevism in Russia, "open diplomacy," "restoration of the land," education, and the fact that they have remained in power up till now through the expressed will of the majority of the people, being his chief points.

Mr. Makovski based his argument on the capitalist press reports, which he assumed were true, and on Lenin's "Soviets at Work," which he misinterpreted. He tried to establish an analogy between "Soviet administration" and "German junker autocracy," in which he miserably failed. He could see no difference between discipline for the benefit of capitalist exploitation and discipline for the social good.

The debate will probably be given in full next week.

### DEMONSTRATION BEFORE PRES. WILSON

A significant incident of the reception of President Wilson at Paris that received little attention in the American press at the time, is reported by "Common Sense," London, in its issue of Dec. 21. In spite of the prohibition by Premier Clemenceau of a Socialist and trades union parade in honor of President Wilson, a demonstration was organized by the Labor Fédération of Mutilated Soldiers. Carrying red flags and singing the International, crippled and mutilated soldiers marched through the streets and broke through several cordons of police and mounted municipal guards that tried to disperse them. The paraders, numbering several thousand, also made hostile demonstrations before the officers of the Action Française and the Matin.