

Cotton's Weekly

50c A YEAR IN CANADA—TWO FOR \$1.00

Devoted to the Propagation of the Principles of
International Socialism

\$1.10 PER YEAR IN UNITED STATES

COWANSVILLE, P. Q., THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 1909

CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH

VOL. XXXVIII No. 38

THE POST ON SOCIALISM

The Winnipeg Saturday Post is raving socialism. The Winnipeg Post evidently received a copy of the Appeal to Reason containing Debs' reply to Roosevelt. Roosevelt had shown his monumental ignorance of the question and Debs had picked him to pieces. The Winnipeg Post, emulating Roosevelt, attacks socialism and, as is natural, makes a botch of things.

The Post declares, "Socialism is not only criminal in its teaching—it would be utterly impracticable if the world should ever become sufficiently insane to adopt it." A course in pragmatism would benefit the editor of the Post exceedingly. He would, after taking such a course, know the meaning of words. Socialism is not criminal in its teaching. There are hundreds of socialist papers scattered through the world and the authorities let them carry forward their propaganda without interference. If socialism were criminal in its teaching these periodicals would quickly be suppressed.

The world is not going to go insane and adopt socialism. From the way the Post speaks we gather that the Post considers that people can adopt and discard political and industrial forms of government in the same way that a man puts on a suit of clothes and then discards it and puts on another just because he happens to want to change. The world is not going to adopt socialism. Socialism is going to be forced upon humanity by the logic of events.

The Post continues, "If all the capital of the world were to be handed over to the state, as socialists propose, in ten years not only the capital, but the state itself, would be in complete control of the same class of men who control the capital today. Those who have brains enough to secure control of the capital of today would have brains enough to secure it under any other system that might be devised." In the foregoing sentences the editor of the Post shows his utter ignorance of history. He also exhibits his ignorance as to what capital is. Under the feudal lords the capitalists had little chance to develop. The feudal lords through their exactions prevented the capitalists from becoming powerful. The feudal lords despised the capitalists. The struggle between the lords and the bourgeoisie became intense and culminated in the French Revolution. No doubt the city editors of pre-revolutionary France declared that there had always been feudal lords and there always would be feudal lords. No doubt it was asserted that if the feudal lords were overthrown they would get right back into power again because it was fore ordained that there must always be feudal lords. The lords, however, were overthrown and the bourgeoisie triumphed. Now the descendants of those rich and powerful families who drew large revenues from the feudal system are living in the back streets of Paris, Montpellier, and in the back streets of other cities. They are proud and exclusive, but their brains have not enabled them to dominate in a hundred years, much less ten.

The editor of the Post looks upon capital as he does upon a chunk of iron. Capital, according to him, is something that can be handed from one person to another. Capital is not so tangible as all that. Capital is an abstraction which represents the unpaid portion of labor. If labor received its full reward there would be no capital. Capital would disappear under socialism just as feudal rights disappeared in France before capitalism. Socialism does not advocate the handing over of capital to the state. In a strict sense that is impossible. Socialism, being based upon the theory of the class struggle, looks upon the capitalist and the laborer as both striving to get the greatest share of one thing viz:—the product of labor. At present the capitalists are getting a large share. The laborer earns and the capitalist gets. Under socialism the capitalist will get nothing because the laborers, whether mental or physical, won't allow the capitalist anything at all. Under such circumstances, it is ridiculous for an editor to declare that capitalists will be able to use his brains and get revenues for doing nothing at all.

The trouble with the critics of social-

ism is that they do not understand that the foundation of government must be changed before socialism can become possible. They imagine that the same useless crowd of members now at Ottawa will be allowed under socialism to run the industry of the country. The workers will run the industry, not the financiers, nor the politicians. The capitalists dethroned the feudal lords, the workers will dethrone the capitalists. Morgan and Harriman will be dethroned and Gompers and Mitchell will replace them in power. As for the revenues which now go to Harriman and Morgan they will go to the men who do the work, the rank and file of the laborers.

IDEAS AND ENVIRONMENT

The question as to whether the ideas of men produce their environment or whether the environment produces the ideas of men is on a par with the conundrum, "which was first the hen or the egg?" The ideas of every age are formed by the environment. The ideas of a certain age react on the environment conditions to change them and to form a new environment for succeeding generations. The progress of man's mental development through the ages has been slow and painful. Most of his discoveries have been by accident. Just as the water of a river will sometimes overflow and form for itself a new channel, so the ideas of men gradually formed new channels.

In every age the conflict of man with the brute forces of nature and with his fellowman has faced humanity. This conflict has been a blind unreasoning one. No revelation has come to humanity to help him in his difficulties. He has felt within him the stirrings of the unknown depths of his being; he has felt the instincts and passion of former ages that have come down to him mingled in his being as faint far-off echoes of the struggle of his forefathers. He has listened and felt these mysterious unexplainable currents within him and imagined that they were the voice of the gods speaking to him. He has built up whole systems of religion based on these impulses from the past. The individual possesses these ideas simply as the result of past environment upon the human race.

But not only does man possess these instinctive ideas, ideas against which reformers of all ages have hurled themselves more or less in vain. He is an active, conscious being who must get his living in the present and mould his environment to his needs. In this sphere of present activity he reacts upon environment and hands on a more completed environment to the generations to come. Railroads, steamships, wireless telegraphy, flying machines, sabotage, Ibsenisms, new technologies and the like are the conditionings of the present environment for future needs.

At present the benefits of civilized environment are reserved for the few. The great mass of toilers, by whose labor civilization is rendered possible, are shut out from the environment which they themselves create. It is the problem that the socialists have set themselves to solve to give to the creators of civilized environment the benefits of their own creation. This cannot be done by ministers of the Gospel and priests telling the workers to be moral and frugal and hard workers. These virtues are good in themselves, but when taught to a slave class which will not reap the benefits of their virtues, it is simply the inculcation of slave virtues into a servile class. The socialist remedy is for the workers themselves to study the limitation of their environment as produced by the system of capitalistic exploitation and to do away with those limitations by refusing to be exploited for the benefit of others.

Gaius, the great Roman jurist, declared that the aim of law was to do right, not to injure another and to give to each that which belongs to him. Our twentieth century law has departed from this aim. It strives to give to each that which belongs to him without reference to the question whether such giving will injure another person or not.

ENGLAND AND ROMANISM

The Orange lodges of Canada are excited over the attempt to remove all the disabilities from Roman Catholics in Great Britain. Protestants are also excited and are dumbfounded over the decay of the protestant churches of England.

The question is not so much a religious as a political one. The disabilities to be removed are purely political. And as political questions are now, as they always have been, economic, the question resolves itself into a phase of the class struggle.

Wherever Rome enters democracy disappears. Rome always stands by the rulers against the ruled. Rome is an universal autocracy and in order to maintain its universal character, it calls all other autocracies to its aid.

In Great Britain the class war is becoming more pronounced. The workers are facing the exploiters of all kinds. The exploiters, including the King, the financiers, the capitalists and tax gathering bishops, have tried their old schemes to divert the attention of the workers from the robbery which is being perpetrated upon them. Patriotism has been flaunted shamelessly in the face of the workers. Thousands of pounds have been paid to organizations like the Salvation Army, whose chief aim is to fix men's attention upon things not of this world. Thousands of pounds have been paid in emigration schemes. All these schemes fail before the growing solidarity of the labor movement. As a last resource Popery is called in and given free reign. The king visits the pope and the Church holds its mummeries at Westminster. The ruling class in sore fear are relying upon the diplomacy of the Vatican to forge fetters of superstition for the minds of the free workmen of Great Britain.

The Roman Catholic Church will undertake the task, but she has troubles enough of her own. The union of British autocracy with the Catholic Church will hasten the downfall of the upper classes of Great Britain. The day is past for such an alliance to carry and weight.

CAPITAL

H. MARTIN

Capital is not money invested in the machines and means of production. Capital is the "use" that the money invested in the machines and means of production, is put to, or in the last analysis the power in the hands of the capitalist class, by virtue of the ownership of the machine and the means of life, to extract out of the hide of labor, surplus value. The laborer receives on the average a bare existence, sufficient to feed his stomach with cheap food, clothe his back with cheap clothing and propagate his race, which enables him to return on the morrow with sufficient strength to produce some more unpaid labor.

I may have money invested in machines and make use of those machines myself and not have capital. So that capital is the power in the hands of the capitalist class to extract unpaid labor out of the muscles, sinews and brains of the working-class, which is in turn converted into greater and larger machines, which enables the capitalist class to increase their share of what labor produces.

More capital, or more power to exploit, means an ever increasing army of the unemployed. The competition for jobs increases and the standard of living for the worker decreases; this means more vagrants, more and larger jails.

With the abolition of the capitalist class, of capitalism, and the rearing instead of an industrial democracy, capital will disappear.

Socialism is inevitable. Before it comes there will be great suffering. If the workingmen want to go with the tide and not do anything to help socialism along, they can. But they will find their jobs slipping from them and themselves crushed out of the struggle. It is the fighting workingmen who will cause socialism to be realized. It will be the spineless, go-as-you-please workingmen who will be wrecked by the struggle.

BRITISH FINANCE SCHEMES

A local contemporary is very much perturbed over the financial methods adopted by Lloyd George in the current British Budget. It appears that the most influential financiers of England have come to the deliberate conclusion that the chancellor's methods of financing are economically unsound. Our local contemporary concludes that if the British financiers declare that to tax their wealth is economically unsound, their statement must be true. Behold! The knowing ones have spoken wisdom, let us bow down in reverence before their opinions.

Once upon a time, in our younger days of ignorance, we shared the same views as does our contemporary to-day. If a banker spoke we listened and believed that he knew what was good for the nation and would declare it out of patriotism. Now, we know differently. We know that financiers are out for themselves and, for all they care, the nation can go hang itself. We would no more think of going to a financier, who is out for the coin, to get his views upon who should be taxed than we would think of going to a Catholic Archbishop.

It is a notorious fact that everybody under this capitalistic system of graft and greed wants to pay as little taxes as possible and the ordinary man will stretch his conscience considerably to lie himself out of his payments. Financiers are no exception. They want to make as much money as they can and pay as little as they can for their privileges. It is to laugh when an elderly, thoughtful editor will gravely declare it bad policy to tax wealth simply because the wealthy who are being taxed say so.

THE LAND OF GREAT BRITAIN

By a fiction of the British law all the land of England is vested in the crown. The lords do not own the land, it is the King. There are many quaint old laws which still survive in Great Britain and which can be used on occasion. Recently an actor escaped jury service because an old English law declares he is a vagrant and a vagabond.

When the people of Great Britain come to nationalize the land they can work according to this fiction of crown lands. As all the land is vested in the crown the lords and landholders, who now enjoy these lands, are clearly usurpers. Usurpers have no right in the thing usurped, consequently the lords lose their rights without remunerating, and without legal recourse.

The land belonging to the crown, and the king being a constitutional monarch, it follows that the people in their Parliament assembled can deal with the land as they see fit. In this manner the nationalization of the land can easily be accomplished according to legal and constitutional formulas.

As a matter of fact, the nationalization of the land will not take place in any so simple and inexpensive manner. The landholders will sell to the government at large figures. Their spirits may be slightly tamed by heavy taxation and they may sell their lands at less than what they now hold them for. Nevertheless, the price will be rather high. The debt of Great Britain will be increased.

The debt of Great Britain will be extremely heavy. But as the land will have been changed into debt certificates and as these certificates will be considered private property, they will be heavily taxed in the way of death duties when the large holders die. A twenty per cent death duty would soon extinguish the national debt.

DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

Every man and every class of men look at life from the viewpoint of their own economic interests. A labor dispute comes before the court and the court decides. If the decision, as in recent Winnipeg cases, declares in favor of the employer and fines the union of the workers twenty-five or fifty thousand dollars for loss of business due to boycotting and picketing, the judgment will be regarded in a different manner by different classes. Employers, like Shylock, will declare, "A

Daniel come to judgement. Oh, wise and just judge." Employers will rub their hands in glee and will contentedly think that capital is coming into its own. The union men, on the other hand, will regard the judgement as an outrageous instance of class law interpreted by a biased and unjust judge. They will feel that the ground is being cut from under their feet and that they are being hounded into a base and servile bondage. A man who relies for his judgements upon the opinions of others will be puzzled to know the truth in reading the different accounts of the same judgement as put forth by different writers. As soon as he becomes initiated into the theory of the class struggle, his wonderment will cease and he will perceive the true conditions of things.

If a man wants to discover the iniquities of the Protestant religion and the glory of the Catholic church, let him go for information to a Catholic priest. If he wants to know the horrors of Catholic domination, let him seek information from an Orangeman. It all depends upon the point of view and the point of view is determined by the method the individual has of getting his bread and butter or his revenue.

WILL NOT LEVEL DOWN

G. DESMOND

Socialism is not, as our friends the enemy sometimes endeavor to make out, an impossible scheme to level down humanity. On the other hand, it is a purely commonsense and practical way in which the people can be raised to a higher level. The present day system is essentially one of levelling down. It tends, in the first place, to bring the great mass of the people, the workers, down to the level of economic slavery by making them absolutely dependent upon others for a job. It tends to lower them physically by making them do too arduous labor under undesirable conditions. It tends to keep them down mentally by denying them access to the fountains of knowledge. It tends to bring them down to the inferior animal level morally by forcing them to compete in an absolutely brutal and bestial manner with each other for a livelihood. It tends to bring them down financially by cutting their wages and raising the cost of their living. Talk about levelling down. We are getting pretty well levelled down now. But socialism would give us a sure job. It would give us a good wage under better conditions, and with the absolute certainty of permanency. How could that level down? Is not the very idea absurd? Would it not bring us up physically by surrounding us with better conditions? Would it not bring us up mentally by affording us leisure to study and attain access to the stores of knowledge? Would it not raise us morally to a higher plane by allowing us to co-operate in a spirit of fraternity instead of competing in the present day cannibalistic "dog eat dog" style? The only connection socialism has with levelling down, as I said before would be to stop the process of levelling down which is going on under the present system.

Robbers do not like to see ordered government invading the regions of their activities. Neither do the capitalists like the approach of socialist government. The militia department of Canada is cutting down the strength of the militia and increasing the strength of the regular standing army. This is in the line with the conduct of all capitalist countries. The masters, fearing the storm, are preparing an armed force to thwart the will of the people.

The farmers think that they do not need socialism. This spring the Eastern farmers have been buying hay and grain and are wondering what is the matter. They are just experiencing a touch of capitalistic robbery. They are easy people to pluck, are the hard working Eastern farmers. And they think they know so much too.

Seventy-one per cent of American socialists are native born. This effectually disposes of the statement that the socialist party of the States is made up of discontented foreigners.

BRITISH NATIONALIZATION

The question is frequently propounded as to how the socialists will acquire the great industries. Will they be paid for or they will be taken by a confiscatory methods? The answer is both. The Independent Labor Party advocates the nationalization of the land, of the railways and of the other means of production. The social democratic federation advocates the repudiation of the national debt.

As the pressure of public opinion becomes stronger, the land owners and the shareholders of the great industries will recognize the inevitable and will dispose of their properties to the government. They will drive a hard bargain just as the Irish landlords did. The government will pay exorbitant prices for the properties acquired. The Independent Labor Party will acquiesce, if it is of the same temper as it is at present. The government will get the properties and the owners will get British Consols.

The social democrats will now have a chance to advocate their scheme of debt repudiation. The issue will be clear cut and will not be confused as it is at present by private revenues as well as public. The people will have become disgusted with a capitalist government playing into the hands of capitalist drones. The lords and capitalists in driving a hard bargain will have overreached themselves. Public sympathy will have turned against them. The repudiation of the national debt will become a popular cry.

Moreover the difference between earned and unearned incomes will be clearly perceived. The man who works eight hours a day and gets a hundred pounds for his work from the socialized state will not feel very contented or very friendly towards the man who gets an income of two hundred thousand pounds a year from the same socialized state and does nothing whatsoever. The men who work will figure up the total national revenues and the proportion that goes to the workers and the proportion that goes to the idlers. When the workers have done a little bit of arithmetic and have discovered that if the idlers are given nothing the income of the workers would become trebled, the chances are that the repudiation of the national debt and the refusal to longer pay interest on consols would become a most popular measure and soon become law.

The Independent Labor Party will probably work with the Liberals for the nationalization of industry. After this the social democrats will no doubt get their innings.

MEASLES

What "small-pox" is to the whites, measles are to the Indian. In the South-western States epidemics of measles have swept over the Indian population killing them by hundreds. During the sixties, an epidemic of measles struck the Piute Indians in the State of Nevada. Many Indians perished. The Indians had a curious method of treating those who were afflicted by the outbreak. They would heat a small stone tower by building a fire within it. When the temperature within was raised to a high degree, the fire would be extinguished and the patient would be placed in the heated atmosphere. All outlets were closed to prevent the cooler air entering. When the measles had become beautifully developed by the heat, the patient would be taken out and would jump into the coldest water that was handy. Needless to say the patients expired in great numbers.

If we remember aright, the cold water treatment a few years ago was used extensively in the Montreal hospitals in case of fever.

There were doctors known as medicine men among the Piutes. They were ignorant of the modern doctor's methods, yet the Piutes held them to stricter account for the killing of patients than we do our doctors. If a medicine man had three patients die under his treatment, he was killed.

We look upon the Piute customs as strange and barbarous. Our own customs will be regarded with just as great disdain by the future citizens of a true civilization.