

The Evolution of Industry

By W. McLAINÉ.

(Continued from last issue)

EVERY new invention, every revolution in the productive process, and every fresh application of science to industry, increases the power of capital, because it increases the productivity of labour without the benefit of that increase going to the producers. The function of the capitalist, so far as his relations with the workers are concerned, is to buy their labour power at the cheapest possible price, and to get as much in return for the price he pays as he possibly can. If, therefore, a new machine is introduced into the workshop which will make it possible for one worker to do the work of two, or more than two, then the individual worker becomes a greater profit-producing asset. If, in addition, by the aid of the "speed-man" and the scientific manager, output can be still further increased, capital will give these industrial pacemakers its blessing. But of the workers in general it will mean that while a greater volume of commodities is being produced, some of their number will find that their places have been taken by the machine, and they will be forced by the pressure of circumstances to compete for employment with those inside the factory. The history of industrial evolution is the history of a movement of the workers to a situation in which they have less and less of security, and in which they have no guarantee that tomorrow will not find them in a far worse position economically than they are in today. Production has increased a thousand-fold as the centuries have advanced. Yet the workers still find themselves engaged from day to day in a ceaseless conflict in the workshop, in order that predatory capitalism shall not encroach further upon their meagre standard of living. This conflict is not new between sections of the workers and sections of the employing class. It is between the workers as a class and the employers as a class. The workers fight with the only weapon they possess—the power to withhold themselves from production and hence to make for the time being no profits for their masters. The employing class, combined, federated, interwoven and intermingled nationally and internationally, fights with its hands upon the storehouses of nature, upon the tools and the means of producing wealth. The struggle has within recent years entered upon a still wider phase. The control of the machinery of Government being in the hands of capitalism, it has, time and time again, been placed at the disposal of the dominant class when open warfare has taken the place of the silent, ever-present contest in the sphere of production. The strikes of the last few years have very largely been against the use of the power of the state to assist Capital the better to control the workers. Labour has discovered that in its economic power, that is, in its organised power to labour or not to labour, it has a weapon that can make or unmake legislative enactments. The State proposes, and may enforce, while labour is quiescent, but against labour in revolt the capitalist State is powerless. That is the lesson of the movement towards State Capitalism, that state now in actual process of becoming and in which the capitalists relieved of all personal concern in industry, but provided with State guaranteed interest on their capital, will function more actively in the political sphere for the purpose of extending that form of legislation which in its modern form began with the Insurance Act and has culminated in the Munitions Acts, that form of legislation which, in short, differentiates between the workers as such and all other members of the

community, and aims at giving to labour a definite Labour status, a legal fixing of a dividing line between a working section of the community and a permanent funded patrician class. The capitalist class knows that society cannot remain stationary. Its dream is of a future state in which it will be transformed into a great functionless Feudal hierarchy, its maintenance made possible by reason of the surplus wealth which labour's energy will make greater as each day passes. Thus from out of the class conflict does capitalism look to the Servile State.

Labour's Great Task.

Viewed from the standpoint of industrial development, the day of the capitalist class has passed. No longer pushing forward and helping along evolution, it represents all that is reactionary in society. The only class that, looking forward, can still be revolutionary and that cares nought for the status quo, is the working class, which, by labour of hand and brain, keeps the wheels of all social life revolving. But the capitalist class will certainly not voluntarily abdicate in favour of the workers. On the contrary, the lesson of history is surely this: that the dominant class in every epoch has striven with might and main to retain its hold upon the source from which its wealth was obtained even when the changed conditions had taken from that class its economic significance. The walls of the capitalist Jericho will not fall down in response to resolutions trumpeted by Labour Conferences, but must be stormed and ultimately levelled by the workers organized as a class for the purpose of taking all power into their own hands. In spite of the abundance of riches which is manifested on every hand, capitalism has failed to provide a decent standard of life for the people. It has failed to provide a continuity of any kind of existence that is worth while, and it has failed to safeguard the lives, the health, and the well-being of the workers. Capitalism must go, and with it the wage system.

Machine development has removed most, and is fast removing all the dividing lines which have kept the workers separated in groups, each seeking its own advancement even though that brought an injury to some other group. It is now possible for a worker in one industry or branch of an industry to be transferred to some other and yet become, in a very short time as adept in his new occupation as he was in the old. The Trade Union form of industrial organisation, that was in keeping with the conditions that produced the craftsman, the apprentice, and the demarcation dispute, will not and cannot perform the task that lies ahead. That task is not negotiating for minor improvements in working conditions; these will be conceded by the employing class with alacrity, as that class is placed more and more on the defensive, and will be given for the purpose of sidetracking the revolutionary elements in the army of organised labour. The industrial organisations of the future will have placed upon them a double duty. They will have to displace the employing class from its position as the dominant factor in industrial life, and will have to undertake the work of organising the industrial life of the new society. Industry, that is to say, the production of wealth, is the basis of the whole fabric of social life and the success of the political revolution will be measured by the amount of attention that has been paid to the question of the workers' control of industry. The chief duty of the workers to themselves is to organise, so that they may be assured that they themselves will control their own destinies, which means that they will control the product of their own labour. Before this has been finally accomplished, capitalism in the political sphere will make its last stand and will rally to its aid all the counter-revolutionary forces that it can induce to join it. The working class has therefore to organise in readiness for that solemn moment when it will throw down the chal-

enge to the most inefficient and most corrupt class that history has produced. It has to organise politically for the purpose of preventing the chaos which a counter-revolution can only bring and of seeing to it that what labour is prepared to do on the industrial field is not jeopardised.

Industrial development has made it possible for all to live in the very fullest sense of the word, free from care as to what the morrow will bring. Hitherto all the happiness, all the leisure, all the freedom to enjoy what bountiful nature has provided for her children has gone to one class, which has appropriated all that labour has produced and has given to labour in return a mean, miserable lodgement on sufferance upon the outskirts of what life really means.

Workers, the future is ours. We have been robbed through the centuries, we are robbed today to a greater extent than ever before. Let us organise and dare to claim our own.

THE END.

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PLATFORM

Socialist Party of Canada

We, the Socialist Party of Canada affirm our allegiance to, and support of the principles and programme of the revolutionary working class.

Labor, applied to natural resources, produces all wealth. The present economic system is based upon capitalist ownership of the means of production, consequently, all the products of labor belong to the capitalist class. The capitalist is, therefore, master; the worker a slave.

So long as the capitalist class remains in possession of the reins of government all the powers of the State will be used to protect and defend its property rights in the means of wealth production and its control of the product of labor.

The capitalist system gives to the capitalist an ever-swelling stream of profits, and to the worker, an ever increasing measure of misery and degradation.

The interest of the working class lies in setting itself free from capitalist exploitation by the abolition of the wage system, under which this exploitation, at the point of production, is cloaked. To accomplish this necessitates the transformation of capitalist property in the means of wealth production into socially controlled economic forces.

The irrepressible conflict of interest between the capitalist and the worker necessarily expresses itself as a struggle for political supremacy. This is the Class Struggle.

Therefore we call upon all workers to organize under the banner of the Socialist Party of Canada, with the object of conquering the political powers for the purpose of setting up and enforcing the economic programme of the working class, as follows:

- 1—The transformation, as rapidly as possible, of capitalist property in the means of wealth production (natural resources, factories, mills, railroads, etc.) into collective means of production.
- 2—The organization and management of industry by the working class.
- 3—The establishment, as speedily as possible, of production for use instead of production for profit.