

The Achievements of Capitalism.

Ages of chattel slavery were necessary to break ground for feudalism. Centuries of feudalism to prepare the way for capitalism. In a dozen decades capitalism has brought us to the threshold of Socialism. Capitalism has done a great work and done it thoroughly.

It found the workers for the most part an ignorant, voiceless peasant horde. It leaves them an organized proletarian army, industrially intelligent, and becoming politically intelligent. It found them working individually and with little co-ordination. It has made them work collectively and scientifically. It has abolished their individuality and reduced their labor to a social average, levelling their differences until today the humble ploughman is a skilled laborer by comparison with the mere human automata that weave cloths of intricate pattern and forge steel of fine temper. In short it has unified the working class.

It found the means and methods of production crude, scattered and ill-ordered, the private property of individuals, very often of individuals who themselves took a part in production. It leaves them practically one gigantic machine of wealth production, orderly, highly productive, economical of labor, closely inter-related, the collective property of a class, and of a class wholly unnecessary to production. A class whose sudden extinction would not affect the speed of one wheel or the heat of one furnace.

It found the earth large, with communications difficult, divided into nations knowing little or nothing of one another, with prairies unpopulated, forests untrod, mountains unscaled. It has brought the ends of the earth within speaking distance of one another, has ploughed the prairies, hewed down the forests, tunnelled the mountains, explored all regions, developed all resources. It has largely broken down all boundaries, except on maps. It has given us an international capitalist class with interests in all lands, on the one hand, on the other, an international working class with a common interest the world over.

The Passing of Capitalism.

Aristotle, with something akin to prophetic vision, laid down the axiom that slavery was necessary until the forces of Nature were harnessed to the uses of Man. This has now been accomplished and the necessity for slavery is past. Armed with the modern machinery of production, with steam, electricity and water power at their command, the workers, a fraction of society, can produce more than all society can use or waste. So much more, that periodically the very wheels of production are clogged with the superabundance of wealth and industrial stagnation prevails.

In the throes of just such a period we now find ourselves, and of one