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THE Crack of the Slave Whip will be Heard Over the Backs of the Prisoners of Ontario. This is the Decree of Hanna, Whitney and Reaume

PRISON LABOR

The capitalists of Ontario are chortling with joy. The weak minded reformers are clapping their hands in glee. The politicians are preening their feathers and blushing with conscious pride. For, behold, the Ontario politicians have discovered what the Egyptians knew four thousand years ago, that prisoners and criminals can be made to do the work of a parasite master class to advantage.

The Ontario government has established a prison colony farm of eight hundred acres near Guelph, Ontario. Here short term prisoners are set to work at farm labor. A hundred and five prisoners are being employed in milking cows, building road ways, installing a telephone system, and doing other work. A forge, carpenter shop, brick kiln, stone crushing quarry and other machinery of production are being operated by prison labor.

The prisoners seem to be productive workers. And the politicians who serve the master class have great schemes on foot. The stone quarry, run by prison labor, will aid municipalities in the construction of roads and boulevards. The dairy will supply milk products for provincial institutions. The prisoners will eventually be put to work on public buildings. Magnificent structures will arise out of the unrequited labor of prison slaves.

But this is not all. Northern Ontario is to be opened by roads built by convict chain gangs. Up into the Northern wilderness, into the terrors of the bog belts and the black fly areas will be driven the prisoners who have been caught in the meshes of the damnable criminal law of Canada. There, hundreds of miles from the watchful eyes of the public will be worked the chain gangs of the miserable wretches who have been jailed for some crime committed against the legalized thieves of the parasite profit mongers of the capitalist system.

Free workers are not free. They are economically bound. But they can unite to protect their own interests. They can strike. They can vote. They can at times compel a raise in wages. They can at times unionize shops and improve the condition of labor. None of these things can the prisoner do. He must work when Hanna tells him. Get up when Hanna rings the bell, whether at three, four or five in the morning. Eat when Hanna tells him. He cannot quit his job. He cannot organize with his fellow workers. He is a slave, bound, hand and foot, voice, and body to the will of Hanna. Hanna declares that this prison slave is to work in competition with the free laborers. Hanna says he is doing this out of kindness to the prisoners. Rot. Hanna is serving the labor thieving capitalists. Hanna cannot make any sensible worker of Ontario believe that prison labor is in the interests of the prisoners.

Argentina is going to do what the experience of nations through the ages has proven to be impossible. It is going to stamp out certain ideas from the heads of people by means of force. A new law just passed by the Senate and Chamber of Deputies in Argentina provides that residence of Anarchists in Argentina shall be rigorously interdicted. All Anarchists are to be expelled. This persecution of a certain brand of people with a certain brand of thought will defeat the aim it is intended to serve. Anarchism thrives on persecution. Anarchism will become a live, potent force in Argentina now that the authorities are resolved to stop it. The blood of martyrs will be the seed of Anarchism.

The Montreal Daily Witness was quite shocked at the patriotic issue of Cotton's Weekly. It called it unwholesome and tried to combat the ideas therein set forth. To prove the spirit of patriotism in Canada the Witness mentioned the glow that comes over the faces of school children when they sing The Maple Leaf Forever. This glow, however, does not prove patriotism. It proves the reaction of children to sensational stimuli. I have seen the same glow come over the faces of youngsters when singing around a posy, or easy melody miny mo. But thus ever do plute apologists twist and misinterpret the facts of life to fit their fallacies.

The plunderers of Ontario want prison labor, for such is the kingdom of profit.

Electing a capitalist politician to protect the interests of labor is like setting a wolf to guard a sheepfold from harm.

The capitalist system is full of contradictions. The lightning of the lot of the prisoner means increased burdens for the wage workers.

Prison labor degenerates into peon camps. Does Hanna think his little brain can devise schemes of utilizing prison labor and escape the experience of all countries? If he does then he is puffed up vainly with his own conceit.

HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

Whitney, Hanna and Reaume, the politicians responsible for this innovation, are either ardent hypocrites or infants in wisdom. Hanna and Reaume have become humanitarians. They are glibly talking about the humanity of the prisoners. They have actually come to the conclusion that prisoners are really living, human, loving, hating men. They have actually perceived that prisoners are not devils but are just like other men.

They announce this discovery to the world and then they attempt to apply it. And, being the thorough capitalist henchmen they are, they immediately do the thing which is pleasing to the master class. They fling prison labor into competition with free labor.

Of course this side is not dwelt upon. The hatefulness of dark prison cells is painted to shock the public mind. The old treadmill is shown up in its ugliness. The dull routine of the prison life is illustrated. The new order of things is shown in glowing colors.

Take the prisoners out of the prisons. Prisons are bad for prisoners. Let them get where God's free air abounds that their lungs may be filled with oxygen. Let their bodies toil so that they may become fine specimens of humanity. This is the plea. This is the humanitarian principle which Hanna and his mates are claiming to enforce.

And the newspapers rejoice. The capitalists cry amen. Prisons are bad. Of course they are, because prisons cost money and the capitalist plunderers do not like to pay taxes. Therefore it is good to empty the jails, providing you can do it so that the terror of the law remains, the fear of which allows the capitalists to garner their unearned dividends and profits in peace.

Whitney, Hanna and Reaume have found the way. It is no new way. It is the way as old, if not older, than the pyramids of Egypt. Let the prisoners be turned into slaves for the creation of comforts for the master class.

The prisoners are going to be made to till the land. They are going to produce the food to feed the governmental institutions. They are going to quarry stone and do other things now done by free labor. Taxes will not be so heavy. Therefore the owners of the machinery of production are more than content with the humanitarianism of the Ontario executive.

The movement has been met with acclaim. Great is Whitney who turns the criminals, the byproducts of capitalist plunderings, into productive muscle to heap higher the share of the capitalists and to beat down the wage laborers. The capitalists have looked upon the work of Whitney and found it to be good.

So Whitney spreads the system. The prisoners are marched north to the wilds. There camps are established and the men are set to work doing the heaviest kind of work, whether they are accustomed to it or not. Men bred to the city are turned into pawns. If they die there are fresh prisoners being caught in the meshes of the capitalist law and the dead will make less prisoners to feed.

The humanitarianism of Whitney is only in appearance. Take the stripes off the clothing of the prisoner, not make him work like a wage slave. Remove him from the walls of the prison and put him where he will be useful to the profit lords. While lips are dripping kindness to the prisoner, let him be driven forth to work like a slave.

THE ENSLAVING PROCESS

There are three possible ways in which the experiment of Hanna, Whitney and Reaume may work. The experiment may be a success from the capitalist point of view. If the experiment proves a success and is continued to its ultimate conclusion, then all the workers of Ontario will become prisoners. The prisoners, in the second place, may be used not on productive work, but on works of magnificence. In that case, the province may raise grand structures on slave labor and re-inact in Ontario the ancient custom of raising mighty structures on the misery of men. In the third place, the experiment may be a failure. Free labor was introduced simply because it was more economic than slavery. Let us consider the first case first, and see what will happen should the experiment prove a success.

The capitalist system is based upon the robbery of the workers. The worker gets in return but a bare living. The rest goes to the capitalist class. The cheaper worker displaces the more expensive one. The fight in Spain against the monks is an economic one. The religious institutions are untaxed. The religious brothers produce many things for sale. Owing to non-taxation, and the fact that the monkish workers can work cheaper because they have no families to support, make them able to produce goods cheaper than the free workers, thus depriving the free workers of a market and a job. The monkish workers displace the free workers.

In the same way prison labor, provided it is as efficient as free labor, will displace the free laborers. The government feeds, clothes and shelters the prisoners out of taxation. The government therefore, has a huge supply of labor power for the production of articles for sale. These can be sold at a price below that of regular industrial establishments employing workers whose wages must cover the cost of their own keep and the keep of their families. Prison labor can out compete free labor, providing always it is as efficient.

The basic fact of the capitalist system is that the workers must find a market for their labor power. The labor power is sold to a boss who in turn must find a market for the commodities produced. If the market of the boss is monopolized by prison made commodities, the boss will not be able to employ wage workers and the wage workers will become jobless. Without a job the workers become vagrants and are liable to six months imprisonment. Even if the worker is not jailed on this charge he will later on become committed on some other charge for the jobless worker will have to get a living in some illegal way, his legal method, the sale of his labor power, having been taken away from him.

Thus begins the enslaving process. Prison products displace commercial products. Some free workers lose their jobs and become criminals. They are jailed and set to work with the other prisoners to produce a greater quantity of prison products to displace more workers, who are jailed to produce a greater quantity still of prison products.

Once allow the process to start, its logical conclusion will be to turn all the Ontario wage slaves into prisoners and the work of Ontario will be done wholly from jails or prison farms under the guns of guards.

Are Whitney, Hanna and Reaume fools, or are they resolved to introduce into Ontario the peon conditions which have made Mexico a disgrace to the world? Are these three men simpletons, or are they crafty enslavers of the workers of Ontario?

It looks as though they were crafty enslavers. The prison farm at Guelph is an experiment. If it succeeds other farms will be started. It is intended to supply government needs from prison work. This will cut out contractors and free laborers. These politicians, whether they be fools or traitors to the hard won bodily liberty of the workers, have started out to do their utmost to beat back to chattel slavery the wage workers of Ontario.

Rockefeller, Carnegie, et al are doing good work with their fortunes according to their light. But their light is a mighty poor one.

MAGNIFICENT STRUCTURES

The Honorable W. J. Hanna, Provincial Secretary of Ontario, addressing the Legislature on February 26th, 1907, declared that he wished to find a solution of the question of prison labor that would avoid all possibility of its being put into competition with free labor. That solution has certainly not been found by Hanna. The solution is impossible within the capitalist mode of production. It can only be solved by the abolition of the wage system. The attempted solution by Hanna et al is to put prison labor on works which are now not being done. Short sighted Hanna does not realize that new work, new structures, new modes of employment must be continually put into operation to keep the wage workers employed.

No matter what work prisoners are employed in the form of productive enterprises, prison labor is bound to compete with free labor. In primitive Rome, the workers were so productive, that not only did they produce their own needs, but they produced the luxuries of the patrician, and also equipped and fed vast armies for the conquest of the world.

But let us imagine that the workers are taken out of competition with free labor. What would result from their labor? Only such things as the pyramids of Egypt, vast heaps of stone useless for all purpose of life could be produced.

No doubt Hanna thinks that Northern roads, city pavements and provincial public buildings can be built by prisoners without hurt to the wage workers of Ontario. This is a mistake. As long as capitalism lasts; as long as the worker must seek a job from an employer, just so long will every blow on a quarried stone, every hammer tap on a public building applied by the fettered arm of the prison slave, be so much less chance of work for the wage worker seeking employment.

But there is a spiritual degradation in the building of great works by slave mortals. The pyramids of Egypt, the temple of Karnak, the ruins of Babylon, speak mournfully of men driven to their task, slaves worked to the limit of their strength and against their will.

Slowly through the ages the idea of liberty has been conquered. In pain and tribulation and strife, the freedom of human effort has been struggled for. The fight for freedom has been a long one. And from the fierce strife has risen the conception that luxury based on slavery is a thing that should be abhorred. Hanna must either fling the prisoners into competition with free labor or else set them to work building magnificent structures that will rival the slave glories of the kingdoms of past ages. In the latter case, he will base magnificence upon misery, luxury upon slavery, and he will teach the master class of Ontario to consider it a goodly thing to have great structures reared by the destruction of freedom.

The protest that is rising throughout Ontario shows that the ideals won through long ages are still cherished. The fight for economic liberty is too near won to have this liberty flung into the far distant future by the crafty minded politicians of Ontario basing a new economic despotism on the world old idea of forced labor.

Mrs. Ella L. Palmer, near Boston, hired an immigrant girl for \$2.50 a week. When the girl found that she was underpaid according to the scale of wages for servant girls, she quit. Her mistress sued her for damages and was awarded over a hundred dollars damages against the girl. Slave girls must live up to their slave agreements or the slave courts will know the reason why.

There were free workers in Rome at the time of the wars of conquest. When Rome conquered foreign nations the Roman market was glutted with slaves. No employer would hire free laborers. He would buy slaves. Thus the free workers became masterless and drifted into the slums of Rome. Today Reaume is trying to produce in Ontario the same decadence owing to the smashing of the power of the workers. Reaume is doing the trick through peon labor. He is building magnificence upon slavery. And calls it progress.

Socialism is the new civilization.

The dreams of the humanitarians lead the world upward.

The discontent throughout the world is the most hopeful sign of the times.

The brotherhood of man can only be realized by the cessation of the class struggle.

Man was made to mourn, and the capitalist system is on to the job of making men mourn all right.

Men are not prosperous because of the capitalist system. The capitalist system produces misery and poverty.

The capitalist, under the capitalist system, is a capitalist. Under the Socialist system he will be a fellow worker.

Socialism aims at the abolishing of all forms of economic parasitism. Let the people who do the work spend the money.

The strong arm of the law lets the capitalists escape its grip. The laws were made to keep the petty thieves in order, not the big ones.

Prison labor is being thrown into competition with free labor. Prison labor can enslave free labor. Therefore the capitalists need it in their business.

Men should work to live seems to be a simple little maxim. Yet the capitalists do not like the doctrine when applied to themselves by the Socialist agitators.

Many capitalists are kind, lovable men in their own family circles and among their own friends. Nevertheless they are parasites who live off the labor of others.

A vote for a Socialist candidate means nothing if the voter does not know what he is voting for. Happily few but Socialists will vote for a Socialist candidate.

Socialism means the abolition of wage slavery. There are many good men who are pained at the exuberance of the Socialist venom. But the task of freeing slaves is not conducive to the cultivation of drawing room amenities.

How do you like the prospect of competing with prisoners for jobs? That is what the capitalist politicians hand out to you. Yet you still vote for them. Get wise to the game. Get into the Socialist Party and vote for your own interests.

In Canada there is a strong movement for government ownership of public utilities. Public ownership and democratic management of the means of production with the abolition of rent, interest and profit will relieve distress which government ownership under the Liberal or Borden gang will never do.

There are many who think that Socialism is immoral. But Socialism is a political movement for allowing people to have access to the machinery which is necessary for the production of things for the sustaining of life. How can it be immoral for men and women to be allowed to earn an honest living?

A bunch of Toronto reporters went out to the prison farm at Guelph and were smitten with astonishment at the wonderful cheerfulness, briskness and happiness shown the prisoners. The farm is a plaything now and moreover was on its best behavior. For were not the eyes of the boosters of slave labor on the prisoners? But wait a few months when the prisoners get tired of working for nothing. Then will there be practised revolting cruelties in secret.

Lord Sholto Douglas, brother of the Marquis of Queensbury, has gone broke and is working for two dollars a day for the C. P. R. on a surveying crew. This news is printed in many plute papers, and many persons sympathize with the noble Lord for having tumbled off the backs of the workers. But ordinary wage plugs can work all their lives for one fifty per diem and nothing is said. For according to the gospel of the capitalists it is the duty of the workers to support the parasites.

FAILURE

There is the third alternative. The experiment may be a failure. Prison labor applied to productive enterprises may be found not to be so profitable after all. Moreover the protests of the toilers, the contractors and other interests involved may prove effective.

So far through history one mode of production has given way to another mode because the new has been found to be more economical. Feudalism did not give way until rising capitalism became the more powerful. Chattel slavery in the States was overthrown because it was more wasteful than wage labor. Prison labor partakes of the essential nature of chattel slavery inasmuch as the prisoner has no control over the disposal of his body and no choice of the work to which he is to be put.

The experience of the human race has shown that free labor with the incentive of reward for labor is the most productive kind of labor. It is for this reason that Socialism will make labor free indeed and give it the full product that results from applied labor power. Wage labor is more productive than slave. The wage laborer has some slight choice as to the occupation he will select and he has some slight choice in the selection of a job. He has the power to combine to raise wages and to collectively better his condition. The wage laborer works to better advantage than the slave and is consequently more profitable to the master class.

Prison labor, therefore, will not be popular with the wage earner or with some parasite bosses or with the middle class member. A chain gang on the streets is now considered a disgusting sight. Human instincts are against it. The wage worker feels his job is being taken. Some bosses will feel that their profits are being lowered. The middle class feel that prison labor that earns no money will buy no goods from the store, employ no doctor, give fees to no lawyer. Therefore the chain gang is not liked. The economic interests of the many are against it.

As is well known, moral sentiments are based upon economic interests. Slavery and torture endured as long as they were profitable. When they became unprofitable the moralists of the master class awoke to the horrors of the institution of slavery. Of course the economic interests of the slaves were against the institution of slavery, and slaves also had their moralists. But these moralists, as long as slavery stood, were regarded as pestiferous fellows who attacked the basis of the state and the social order, and they were killed with a vim by the master class and their killing was applauded by the moralists who moralized in the interests of the masters.

Prison labor being inefficient, it is possible to draw moral lessons which will help show why prison labor will fail. To work well there must be incentive. Socialism will give a full incentive because the worker will get the full reward of his labor. Wage labor gives a partial incentive as the worker gets a part of his labor. The prisoner has no incentive as he must be kept fed, clothed and sheltered anyway and he gets no reward for the labor the provincial executive will exact. Incentiveless labor is poor and inefficient. Prison labor will be this.

Now comes the inevitable result of slavery and unrewarded toil. The incentive of gain is lacking. The incentive of fear must take its place. Wherever slavery or prison labor flourish, their flourish floggings, oppression and cruel task masters.

Hanna and Reaume are now weeping salt tears of pity over the idle condition of the prisoners. They must be set to work for the good of themselves. Soon, however, Hanna and Reaume will be gleaming hate and wrath at the prisoners. "The poor prisoners do not know what to do. For pity's sake let us give them work," is the public cry of Hanna and Reaume. "The prisoners won't work. For God's sake give them the lash," will be the wrathful secret cry of Hanna and Reaume when the prisoners are set to their appointed tasks and lie down on them. Thus tyranny will be born and moralists will thunder against the tyranny to excite the powerful wage labor skinner to exert influence against the weak prison labor skinner.

Hanna, Reaume and Whitney are foolish mortals. Oh that our politicians had only the power to think and reason, instead of being the blind fools they are.