

Conflicting Interests

By Sid Earp.

TO those people who are capable of viewing in a practical scientific manner, the pitiless competitive struggle for existence which, in the name of freedom, Capitalism imposes upon the individual, modern society in its economic and social life stands condemned as being absurd, wasteful and brutal to the extreme. Furthermore, to the careful observer it is quite clear that this condition of affairs must inevitably become worse while society remains upon a basis of personal interest. Evidence of this can be seen by the rapid increase in the number of protective organizations which are now a feature in every branch of human life.

As in a calamity of natural origin such as by fire, wind or water, human life is conserved by the drawing together for protection in face of a common danger, so is it, that in the struggle for existence, are groups formed to conserve personal interests in those trades and professions by which men seek to gain a livelihood. Boards of Trade, employers' associations, retail merchants' protective societies, trade unions, etc., all function in the interests of the individuals comprising their membership, for the perpetuation of Capitalism, whether consciously or otherwise, and all are doomed to failure. One of the latest additions to the ranks of these small bore protectionist groups in British Columbia is the Asiatic Exclusion League, whose object is to bring to an end the successful competition of the Chinese retail merchant, which constitutes a menace to the white retailer in the grocery and kindred trades. Acting as a distributor of goods for the big wholesale firms, the retailer takes on the character of a business man, which places him in a social category one notch above that of the wage worker upon whom he depends for the sale of his goods. In this, as in other lines of business, trade comes in greatest volume to those who market their goods at the lowest price, without any consideration of race, creed, or color. In Capitalist society human attributes count for little or nothing, price quotations and cash payments are the things that count. Of late the Chinaman, who is not any man's fool when it comes to a business deal, has demonstrated that he can retail goods cheaper than other people; in other words, he is more efficient. Hence the storm of hostile criticism and bitter denunciation which is being directed against him by the Asiatic Exclusion League. They have discovered at this late hour that Western civilization can never absorb the Oriental type. He is a danger to our moral and ethical standards, and his habits of life tend to debauch and degenerate our rising generation!

Comparisons, of course, are odious, but if only a cursory glance is given to those portions of the earth where the white race have succeeded by force and trickery in establishing themselves among backward and untutored peoples for the purpose of trade, the criticisms lately directed against the Oriental appear as sheer ranting hypocrisy. Mankind, in very truth, is a reasoning animal. His reasoning is fearful and wonderful to behold. Whatever action he may take to serve his material wants, must be cloaked in moral or ethical guise. He has achieved the distinction of doing that, of which no other animal is capable. He can fool himself and get much glory out of the process.

But, willy nilly, the struggle for life will get more keen, and in its keenness, his reasoning will change in form. As the gods of his religions appear in a true light as superfluities, he will discard them. Likewise his moral and ethical scruples as an aid to satisfying his material requirements. Also will he change and discard them. Capitalism is the great leveller of men; under its influence they will inevitably become welded into one common, despairing mass, regardless of any artificial distinction. The purpose of life is to live. The opportunity to live with a minimum of discomfort and a maximum of pleasure and satisfaction for all is available right now. A policy for the exclusion of the Oriental or any other type is a policy of foolishness. The root cause of conflicting interests lies in the social re-

cognition of the claims upon the wealth of society by the owners of its means of life—the Capitalist class; towards whose maintenance all social effort is guided.

The legality of this ownership, in the form of title deeds, bonds, mortgages, etc., is made effective by State control in the hands of the Capitalist class. And by no other way than the elimination of this control will the conflicting interests of today be ended. Society will then have free access to its means of life; and parasitism by constitutional property right will give way to a full enjoyment by mankind of all that his toil and ingenuity through the ages has made possible for him.

OIL.

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able to maintain representatives in areas that would otherwise offer obstacles to commercial investigation.

In the case of France, she is tied to British control in the matter of oil supply. The French oil trust operates merely in distribution of an imported oil supply. By the terms of the San Remo agreement British oil companies which are able to furnish the necessary guarantees have a right to operate in French colonial territories. The necessary guarantees obviously mean British governmental guidance. Tunis, Morocco, Algeria, France itself, in places where oil oozings have shown are all subject to British operation. In the French territories French capital is allowed to exercise financial control, but France has no industrial experience in oil operation and her bankers and oil trust have been content with foreign enterprise. Politics plays its part too, for British consent to French occupation of Syria was consequent upon French agreement at San Remo.

The "Manchester Guardian" reported on August 21st that Standard Oil was interested in a new French company just formed to operate the French part of the Bagdad railway. The same dispatch says Standard Oil and the Bank of Paris are jointly interested in several European oil fields. There are some other Franco-American oil companies also but up to the present their operations or proposed operations, notably in former Turkish territories, have been restricted within the terms of the San Remo agreement. No doubt this agreement has tied the hands of France at the Mudania conference.

Recently the London "Times" reported an estimate of British oil holdings and their importance as compared with American present resources. The report estimated that in the course of ten years United States would be dependent on British oil to the amount of 200 million pounds sterling per annum.

Baku oil is an all important factor in present international rivalry. The Genoa conference saw a mad scramble for oil concessions in the Baku field. Last May "The Lamp," the organ of the Standard Oil, described Baku as the most prolific oil field in the world. Its oil outlet is through a pipe line to Batum on the Black Sea, the outlet from which is through the Dardanelles. Control of the Straits is an important element in the exploitation of the Baku fields which, no doubt, all the competitors hope to resume a share in. At any rate, recent events have brought Turkey and the strategical position of Constantinople into prominence again, with the usual palaver about Christian minorities, and the regular war-time atrocity crop has been well up to the standard.

It is not to be supposed that the scramble for oil is the whole reason for international rivalry, but in a world run by power driven machinery it is an ever growing cause of dispute.

The working class lesson lies in an understanding of the fact that oil as an indispensable factor in present day industrial life is sure to be a factor in any wars that may crop up. Present day industrial life in all its ramifications and enterprise is devoted to the interest of capital, and war is an essential corollary. War between rival capitalist groups is therefore devoted to the interest of capital also and as such is no concern of the working class.

E. M.

THE MANUFACTURE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN ENGLAND.

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tured. The most important morning daily is the Daily Mail (circulation 1,817,947). The Daily Mail vulgarizes for its readers the opinions of the aristocratic Times (circulation 75,000). The Times is the semi-official organ of the Government, more especially of the Conservative Party, the enemy of all progress. The Times demanded the "war to the bitter end" against Germany, and favored intervention in Russia. Today it defends the "Entente cordiale." During the Hague Conference, it never referred to Comrades Litvinov and Krassin except as "bandits." The Times belonged to the deceased Lord Northcliffe, the greatest poisoner of English public opinion.

And while we are at Nord Northcliffe, let us consider a while the activity of this man who has just died, mourned by every journalistic prostitute. Lord Northcliffe owned (and his heirs still do) the following dailies: Times (75,000 circulation), Daily Mail (1,817,947) Evening News (894,558).

Irrespective of their owners, the English bourgeois journals are all very much alike. Daily Mail, Daily Mirror (1,059,861), Daily Express (855,000), Daily Sketch (837,654), Evening News (894,558), Star (702,600), Daily News, Daily Telegraph, Morning Post,—all print 10 to 20 pages, large size, 4 to 8 of which all are entirely devoted to advertisements, which make a newspaper a paying proposition. A page in the Daily Mail costs £1,000; in the Daily Express, over £500. The advertisement tax nets the Government a yearly income of £13,000,000,—9 million from the morning papers and 4 million from the evening editions. The English dailies have financial, commercial, sporting, literary, society, pages. They relate the least incidents of the St. James Court. But the Moscow reader, accustomed to his Pravda and Izvestia, would be very much surprised. Never a word of the working class, unless it be to combat some strike, or give a line or two to some labor accident in which a larger number of workers have lost their lives ("lesser" accidents are not judged worthy of notice). Needless to say, that the English newspapers have neither pages for the woman worker, nor for the youth.

Here are the principal owners of the English press:

1. Lord Northcliffe (now his heirs).
2. Viscount Rothermere, owner of Daily Mirror (London), the Leeds Mercury (Leeds), the Glasgow Record (Glasgow) and the weekly Sunday Pictorial (2½ million circulation) very much read by the workers because of its numerous illustrations and its cheap price (2 pence).
3. Baronet Halton, owner of Daily Sketch, Daily Dispatch, Evening Standard, the weekly Sunday Chronicle, and a number of provincial sheets.
4. Lord Burnham, owner of Daily Telegraph.
5. Lord Beaverbrook, Daily Express and Sunday Express.
6. Lord Inverforth, Daily Chronicle.
7. Viscount Cowdray, one of the petroleum kings, owns the Westminster Gazette.
8. Baronet William Berry, one of the Brothers Berry who own about half the apartment houses of London, owns the Daily Graphic, Sunday Times, Financial Times. One of the Berrys, Seymour Berry is manager of the Western Mail, published in Cardiff, the coal centre of Wales.
9. Mr. Cadberry, big chocolate manufacturer, owner of Daily News and Star, a great enemy of France, because of the serious competition of the Meunier products.
10. Lord Riddle, owner of the News of the World, an idiotic weekly filled with melodramatic serials, with a circulation of 3½ million among the English working class.
11. Countess Bathurst, Morning Post, ultra-reactionary.

Well, there is a thing to be proud of this press freedom of England! English "public opinion," which unfortunately includes the working class opinion, is manufactured by a dozen capitalists who have no interests but those of their business. From this it is easy to understand their hatred of the Proletarian Dictatorship, and their zeal to defend the freedom of their press. Let us hope that the reader of this too summary article will have understood also.—I. P. Correspondence.