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CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH

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EXPOSURES

The socialists have little need of pointing out the defects, the inconsistencies and the contradictions existing in the present state of society. The evils which afflict humanity are patent to every beholder. The single taxer bares the injustices and the inconsistencies. The reform politician explains them to his audience. The Christian minister sees them around him. The daily press could not exist in its present shape were it not that the contradictions and the inconsistencies produce murderers, thieves, embezzlers, failures, suicides, divorces, monkey dinners, evictions, cunning politicians and the whole panorama of an anarchical and senseless social system. It is in applying the remedy that socialism comes to the front.

Socialists do not need to criticize the present order. There is a self criticism inherent in the present order which does away with all necessity for subjective criticism. A whole literature of exposure has risen and has formed one of the chief literary commodities of the American magazines.

There are persons, however, who are so blind, or rather whose environment has been so limited, that they cannot see the contradictions and inconsistencies of the present business and industrial methods. These persons generally dwell in peaceful village communities where the methods of production are still in the peasant or artisan form. These persons sometimes exist in the capitalist atmosphere. They get their revenues regularly from the work of others. Personally, they have nothing to do with the industrial system save to live off it calmly and contentedly and to follow their own sweet will. To persons of the above limited environments the capitalist system is not understood. To them murders and suicides, divorces and corrupt politicians, vice and slum miseries are utterly inexplicable save on the assumption of a wicked devil who goes about to corrupt the hearts of men and women. These persons form the backbone of the Christian churches. They cannot explain the world on a rational basis and therefore explain it on a supernatural basis. These persons employ a minister at a stated salary to explain the world, its origin and its mode of action to them. As the minister is not forced into the capitalist arena he little understands the business world. He too is forced to explain the world on a supernatural basis. Thus a false philosophy is taught from the pulpits and the great capitalistic world gives but slight attention to the moralizing and supernaturalizing homilies emanating from the pulpits.

Exposures are unnecessary. Corruption and vice are known to be rampant. The only thing is to solve the problem of present misery. This cannot be done by the churches. They are proving themselves to be institutions of very limited use. The remedy must come from scientific socialism—consciously applied to the economic structure of society.

THE BRITISH BUDGET

There are many schemes on foot for the betterment of the working class of Great Britain. Old age pensions have been granted. The workman's compensation act is also law. A tax on unearned increment is being passed. The next measures foreshadowed are state insurance against unemployment and government labor exchanges for the purpose of decasualizing casual labor. All these measures appear to be socialist and many people are wondering why the socialists are not satisfied when measures they advocate more or less are being passed.

The measures passed and promised are weak, war creatures compared with the robust measures advocated by the Social-Democrats. The measures passed are compromises with most of the benefits on the side of the capitalists. The Liberal government is not a socialist government. It is not even an independent labor government. It is keeping all the benefits it can for the old order. The English rulers are the most sagacious in the world. They feel as by instinct the newer movement

arising within the body politic. Instead of opposing these new forces and repressing them until they burst forth in a red revolution, the English rulers examine the new forces, compromise with them and endeavor to weaken them as much as possible by giving them a limited sphere of operation. This is what the Liberals are doing at present. They give an old age pension which is very limited. They give a workman's compensation act which is passed ostensibly for the benefit of the workers, but which benefits the employers equally through the prevention of numerous costly damage suits. They tax unearned wealth very gently. The man who has an income of twenty-five thousand dollars a year for doing nothing will gladly reduce it to twenty thousand rather than have it extinguished altogether by the triumph of socialism.

Government employment bureaus will assist the workers slightly. Insurance against unemployment will help some of the workers. These measures, however, cannot solve the problems facing Great Britain. When they are granted they will be found to be so hedged around with restrictions as hardly to touch the real problems which must be faced and which can only be solved by the sweeping away of the present capitalistic production for private exploitation.

In the discussion of these measures, in their original passing and in their subsequent amendment, Parliament would be occupied many years and the master class would still enjoy their immense revenues were it not for the ever increasing pressure brought to bear by the Social Democrats. Lloyd George and Winston Churchill are so radical as to be near socialists. Being radical, however, they want to patch up the old system, not revolutionize it. They probably have an eye out for the future coalition between Liberalism and laborism. This Cabinet coalition may take place very shortly. But the Social Democrats will be ever active for the complete revolution. The Liberal measures passed and to be passed are simply measures given grudgingly because it would be dangerous to the domination of the master class to longer withhold them.

EATING UP CAPITALISTS

Among the finny tribes of the rivers and the lakes the big fish eat the little fish. In the same way among the capitalists the little capitalists disappear and the big capitalists become more swollen in appearance.

The economics of capitalism are based upon the theory of perpetual competition. The idea put forth is that if competition is given free reign then goods will be sold at the lowest possible cost. If the price goes up beyond a fair margin of profit then others will enter the field and compete.

But competition is warfare and in warfare there must come victory for one side or the other. When victory comes the conquered are despoiled and the spoils add strength to the victors.

Competition is still at work in the economic arena. But the competition is no longer between individuals. The competition is between large aggregations of capital and between groups of men who control the labor of thousands of men. This competition results in the victors and the vanquished. The defeated capitalists are eaten up as it were by the bigger capitalists.

When a few of the bigger capitalists have caused all the lesser capitalists to disappear from off the face of the country, the organized workers in the form of the industrial state can eat up the few big capitalists.

Many farmers object to socialism because they are afraid it will take their farms away from them. Socialism will release the farmer from his present slavery to toil. Of course if the farmer really prefers getting up at four in the morning and working till eight at night and then dying comparatively poor let him stick to capitalism and the plunderbund.

The black night of capitalism is breaking. The dawn of socialism is appearing.

THE FARMERS

The farmers around this section are getting a taste of capitalism and it makes them writhe. The farmers of the Eastern Townships have been living in the back wash of Canada. They have been stagnant. They have tilled their little farms and have raised their sons to blue jeans and hard toil. Some of the more ambitious sons have gone west. The farmers have been sorry to see their sons go and wondered what was the call they heard.

Lately capitalism has invaded the peaceful regions of the Eastern Townships. The farmers have been getting good crops and good prices and have had visions of wealth before them. But somehow the wealth did not seem to materialize.

They have been finding that the few dollars the big Canadian trusts have been letting them play with for their amusement have been taken back again. They find that they work hard, everything comes high, and what they do make goes as fast as if not faster than they get it.

When they sell hides and buy boots they pay through the nose. When they sell wool and buy underwear they pay dear. Anything they sell, when they can sell it, goes fairly cheap and anything they buy they pay well for.

Moreover they find it impossible to remain in old conditions. They are forced forward by the feverish rush of capitalistic development. They are finding that this is the machine age and he who does not possess up to date farm machinery might just as well lay down and die. Corn cutters, mowing machines, threshing machines, separators and other machinery are necessary or else the farmer is outstripped and cannot raise enough produce and market enough to pay for a decent funeral.

These machines are necessary and these machines wear out. The farmer toils for the benefit of the implement makers. He is ever on the rush to catch up with his expenses and make money and he can't do it.

Recently the hay crop failed and he has had to pay for his hay freightage and it has turned him blue. The only thing he can sell readily is dairy produce and if his cows become consumptive he must keep right on milking them or be put down and out of the race by a back-breaking mortgage.

He cannot sell his produce. His apples rot on the ground. His lands go half tilled. There are many men who would like apples and turnips and prime roast beef but can't afford it. They work in the villages for a pittance while their employers build big houses or buy automobiles. If the boss had less the farmers would have more because of a greater market for their goods. But the boss fills his stomach with the best and then spends the balance on luxuries while the workers are glad to get butcher scraps.

There are many farmers who don't want socialism because it might take away their farms. A few more touches of capitalism and they will begin to see light. At present a lot of them are pitying the poor multimillionaire manufacturers and voting to give them greater scope for their activities.

The farmers of course know it all. They do not want socialism. The only teacher is experience. It will come high but the farmers will learn by no other.

Socialism is bound to come. All socialists can do is to consciously assist the coming of socialism with as little possible misery to the people of the country. The blind working of the social struggle may result in a red terror of alternating despotism and demagogic tyranny.

Twenty years ago the tariff discussion in the United States Senate would have interested all America. Today the Americans consider it nothing but one wild scramble by thieves to see who can get the greatest chance to rob the public. The greed of the rich is sowing the seeds of a mighty revolution.

The possession of great wealth indicates that the possessors got it dishonestly, or inherited it from those who did.

PROHIBITION

Prohibition of the liquor traffic is a live issue. The position of the socialists on the question appears to be divided. In many countries temperance and even total abstinence is looked upon with favor by socialists. In some sections and by some socialists prohibition is looked upon as a tyrannical interference with the right of the workingman. Even in Canada there are divergent views on the question. To us it appears that there are two aspects to this question, the physical and the economic. In its physical aspect the liquor traffic is detrimental to drinkers. This naturally suggests that the liquor traffic should be prohibited by law. Yet more and more it is coming to be seen that the average man does not drink except when physically run down or mentally discouraged. In this modern age poverty is the great cause of intemperance. Abolish poverty and we will abolish, to a great extent, the evils of intemperance. By abolishing poverty we also abolish great riches, and thus we abolish at one stroke both the slum bar-room and the club-room wine-cellar.

A revolution is taking place with regard to liquor. Men are not drinking as much as they formerly did. The socialists need not worry over the question of prohibition. That fight is being fought and won by non-socialists. The capitalists themselves, in many instances, are fighting the saloon. The wage slave who drinks is not so valuable a wage slave as the one who does not drink. The capitalists therefore more and more are fighting the saloon in the interests of dividends. The whiskey baron and the steel baron will fight for supremacy and the whiskey baron will be beaten. The advance of capitalism is putting the saloon out of business. The abolition of the saloon is good for the physical welfare of man. Let the capitalists carry on the good work with such left handed assistance as individual socialists may want to give.

The economic aspect presents a different phase. Here again, in our opinion at least, the abolition of the liquor traffic will work for the good of the social revolution. There are many millions unemployed. Unemployment is a sign of the break-down of capitalism. As long as capitalism can find work for the great body of wage slaves, capitalism will remain dominant. It is only when the present system has shown its utter incapacity to provide work and food that it will be discarded for collective effort with collective employment. As long as millions of men are employed in making booze, the labor problem will be solved to a certain extent. Let these men be thrown out of employment and the problem facing the capitalists would be made more acute. The state of the workers must become worse before it can become better. Let the capitalists, if they want, abolish the liquor traffic. Its abolition will make more socialists.

A thought for those who oppose prohibition. The saloon in Canada and the United States, especially in the large cities, has been the corrupting influence in politics and in vice. When politics become corrupt it is the workers who suffer. When saloon promoted vice becomes rampant it is the workingmen's daughters who become the victims. Let the socialists ponder this phase of the question well.

THE PAST

There are many individuals who claim to be great reformers. They pride themselves upon their stern principles of justice and abstract right. They consider themselves to be in the foremost files of time. In reality they are fossils.

History does not repeat itself. We are constantly advancing into newer forms of production and newer conceptions of life. This advance may seem to be a retreat as when capitalism becomes decadent. But no movement is a retreat. The road in the onward advance may lie through a dark and gloomy chasm yet the march is onward.

There are individuals who consider they are in the forefront of the onward

movement because they want to go back to old conditions. They remember the palmy days of individual initiative, days which have passed away forever. Their idea of reform is to go backward. We have them resurrected in the shape of Young Conservatives and Young Liberals. They stand by the doctrines of their fathers and wish to drag Canada backward. Bryan is a fossilized specimen of mental outlook. He belongs to this class.

Competition is dying. Individual initiative has gone in its old form. And it is as impossible for humanity to return to the conditions passed away as it is for water to run uphill.

There are only two classes in which a living mind can find breadth. The one class is the capitalist class with its autocratic and selfish outlook. The other class is the socialist class with its eyes fixed on the future.

The capitalist outlook is dying. There is yet life in it, yet the life is becoming aged and crabbed. Still there is life. The Socialist outlook is the outlook of the young mentalities. There is no moribundity about it. It is of the dawn. To it belongs the future as well as the great throbbing heartbeats of the present.

There is life in these two outlooks.

But the old free trade outlooks, the old protection shibboleths, the freedom of individual contract cries, the honesty in business mottoes, these are all but echoes of the dead past. When you meet a man with such ideas you know that his brain is fossilized. You pity him, and shun him and his outlook as you would a galvanized mummy.

THE LITTLE BUSINESS MAN

It is pathetic to watch the expressions of the small business men when they are struggling over the acceptance of socialist doctrines. They are afraid that socialism will interfere with their petty trade. They wonder whether they should accept or reject the doctrines. Poor fools.

The small business man does not realize that he is doomed. He has been finding it harder and harder to make a living. He has to work hard and the profits are small. Any slump in the local market will send him into bankruptcy. He hangs on and hopes conditions will get better.

He does not realize that he is doomed. He does not realize that it is only a question of time when the gigantic trusts will reach out and take his business away from him as easily as he could steal milk from a baby. And he wonders whether he had better accept socialism or not.

The Rockefeller group of capitalists have already cornered oil and many other products. They are now reaching forth for the retail trade of the big cities. The cigar and tobacco stores are mostly controlled by the tobacco trust. The beef trust has the butchers in its grasp and is squeezing them. And the little trader wonders whether socialism will interfere with his business.

We could point many morals to small merchants but they will not listen. There will be a few of the keener ones who will join and fight for socialism. But many of the traders will go on wondering till they learn by sad experience that their business has been taken away from them and that they have nothing to lose. When they have been put on a meagre salary as clerk for some trust or when they are refused work and sink into the ranks of the day laborer or the unemployed, when in fact they have become proletarianized, they will become ripe for the socialist message and remedy by revolution. But even when they are thus reduced, some of them will not have brains for the message. They will listen to the message of Christ as it falls lovingly from the lips of the paid preachers and will trust to charity. And when they come to this they will wonder why Christians are so cold and unsympathetic in actual practice. They will not realize the Christianity as taught in the churches is merely a cloak for capitalistic cruelty. They will remain unlightened to their dying day.

There are some petty merchants and traders who wonder whether socialism will hurt their business. The poor fools.

THE GODLESS PEOPLE

On all sides ministers of the Gospel are complaining of the lack of church going on the part of the people. To the ministers this means that the people are Godless and irreligious. The ministers wait faintly and pray sadly for the awakening of the peoples.

As a matter of fact this age is earnest and serious. Men are seeking a remedy for the terrible woes that afflict humanity. But they cannot waste their valuable time in attending what are evidently untrue religious services.

When ministers talk of the love of God and his power and they couple with this love and power a pharisaical morality the people just keep away. They know the ministers are talking guff and the people are tired of it. The people judge God from their daily lives and as they are living in a crisis of history with all the inconsistencies, immoralities and impossibilities of such a period, with all the unmerited sufferings and unavoidable sinning that such an age implies. The people can believe either in the love of God but not his morality, or they can believe in the morality of God but not his love. The people are living in a contradictory age which forbids the old conception of divine characteristics.

Recently a woman was arrested in Cobalt for keeping a house of ill fame. The women she kept were prisoners in her establishment. This is the white slave traffic. The woman was let off on suspended sentence because forsooth she had a feeble minded husband to support out of the proceeds of her toll from the white slaves she kept imprisoned.

In Montreal it was rumored that the Salvation Army wanted to establish a rescue home for women on Dorchester street west. This is the residential street for all the fashionable church goers. These church goers immediately became indignant to think that they were to be polluted by having to live on a street with rescued women.

Men are forced into thievery and crime by economic pressure. Women are forced to earn their daily bread on insufficient wage and men are kept from the home life by the competition of women and boys in industrial pursuits. Great wealth is rolled in upon the favored of humanity without their putting forth an effort to obtain it and other sections of humanity cannot get a living no matter how hard they strive.

Over this inferno of injustice and enforced crime and immorality broods the minister. His sleepy voice wafts itself down to the inferno with an impossible message of peace and goodwill and rest and right living. And the devilish ministers have the blasphemy to declare that they are giving forth the message of God.

They have their big churches piled stone on stone. They have their cushioned pews and their silver communion services. They have their broad robes and their comfortable houses. And under the shadow of their so called houses of God poverty walks in misery. Within the shadow flung by their moral robes women are forced into prostitution by the wages given to them by the church communicants.

Is it any wonder the people pass by on the other side from the churches? Is it any wonder that respectable reformers shun the churches? Is it any wonder that the people do not believe in ministers or in the God they preach? Is it any wonder that the theological colleges are filled with country youths who have to be caught young and green or with the brainless leavings of the other professions?

Is it any wonder that the God of the churches keeps the churches empty of decent men and filled with fulfilled hypocrites and pharisaical moralists?

If rent and taxes were done away with it would make no difference to you workers, your wages would dwindle down accordingly until they were again at the existence point.

The Methodist Ministers of Montreal are going to hold street corner meetings. Will the police arrest them for obstructing the sidewalk?