

EXAMINING "THE GYPPO SYSTEM"

(Continued from page one)

price. We must not forget, however, that the "Law in its majesty equality," guarantees to the buyers that the sellers shall conduct themselves "in a civilized way," to quote "C."

Now, how does the law of value fit in with the facts of the Gyppo System? The law of value applied to the commodity labor-power asserts that labor-power will sell at its cost of reproduction. This means that the labor necessary for the reproduction of the commodities whose consumption forms the worker's standard of living, which will vary in time and place, forms the value of labor power. The fact that the standard of living of the workers is the antithesis of that enjoyed by the capitalist class of any given country gives us the key to the argument concerning the law of value, when applied to the only commodity the workers have for sale.

It does not require a massive intellect to observe that the existence of the worker, and consequently his labor-power, depends upon him living, which, in turn, requires that he eat and drink, that he get the customary allowance of snoose, tobacco and overalls, a suit of clothes every other year, with occasional visits to the movies where he can vicariously enjoy "A Woman of Paris," or something equally entertaining. We may note in passing that the worker's standard of living does not include pleasure trips to Florida or California, "charming residences in respectable neighbourhoods," nor the financial standing necessary to "slip" a cabinet minister \$100,000 in exchange for an oil lease, etc.

The substitution of piece-wages for time wages does not alter this. "Wages by the piece are nothing else than a converted form of wages by time." This must be so, seeing that the status of the worker remains unaltered—the property relation is unaffected and so also is the legal condition of bourgeois freedom. The development of the "gyppo" shews the tendency to be the very reverse to that expected by a certain John Watts, (page 603, "Capital," vol. 1), who said:

"The system of piecework illustrates an epoch in the history of the working man; it is half way between the position of the mere day laborer depending upon the will of the capitalist and the co-operative artisan, who in the not distant future promises to combine the artisan and the capitalist in his own person."

The fact that those small contractors, the fore-runners of the "gyppo," have been supplanted by straight piece-workers and now occupy "the weakest position" in the system proves that, as with time-wages, piece-wages, even where some implements are owned by the piece-worker, it allows of no accumulation of capital, no payment of dividends, but merely the reproduction of the laborer.

The companies are enabled to pay higher individual wages because the intensity of labor is greater. They do not, however, pay higher wages in the aggregate. The cost of production will be lowered immediately by the lessening of the constant capital necessary to the carrying on of the industry, because of the less men and tools needed. And as the price per piece is reduced to conform more nearly to the time wage, further lessening of the cost of production results, until the outstanding result is not rich loggers differentiated from other workers in their standard of living, but "highball outfits" in the woods, cut throat competition on the labor-market and an increased rate of profit for the boss.

The forcing of this system as a result of some success by the wage workers along organizational lines has no importance when looking at the economic side of the matter. It does become important, however, when the class-struggle comes under attention; that is when the political aspect of the matter is being considered. Neither organization on the job nor the piece-work system are anything new, yet all tendencies that increase the disproportion between what the workers produce and what they receive in the form of wages intensifies the contradictions inherent in the profit system, and "gyp-

poing" is evidently a case of that sort.

Well, let us not denounce Brother Gyppo too violently; he may be a believer in what H. L. Mencken calls, "the cardinal article of the National Religion, that any bright boy can make himself a capitalist." Moreover, we are looking for a job ourselves, and, you never can tell.

F. C.

CONCERNING "VALUE"

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have deliberately refrained from a perusal of this notorious work for two good reasons, first, I suspect it to be full of headaches; second, it pleases me on occasion to discuss the economic theories of Herr Marx, and I want to be in a position to do this freely, and without restraint, and there is nothing so calculated to hamper one in such an enterprise as a perusal of the man's own works. There are of course some narrow minded and bigoted people who will contend that this is all the more reason why I should keep my ideas on economics to myself. However, there is nothing small about me. I give this discovery—if such it be—to the World, with a regal gesture. The Revolution may now proceed.

C. K.

REVOULTIONS, ETC.

(Continued from page 7)

for peace. The other, Napoleon III. Emperor of France, snatched from his dreams; in the last hour realizing the hopelessness of his position; disillusioned, diseased, aged, desirous to return to his idle fancying, his eternal cigarette, and his buxom company at Campiagne: and the two armies already on the march. All because a wily old diplomat had passed several sleepless nights, frantic with visions of headlines in the Paris press, **Prussia Climbs Down.**

Such are the trifling occasions, for which a million men are hurled at each others' throats. We have given the historic background which makes such a maniacal moment possible, and the social conditions which render it inevitable, and there will be no sadness of farewell when they take their place in the record of man's madness along with the Star Chamber, Witch Courts, the Inquisition, and such like antics of the reasoning animal.

We must pass "the noise of the captains and the shouting." France buttoned up the last button on its red pants, tucked French-German easy-conversations under its arm, and headed for Berlin on the 18th of July; two months later to the day, Bismarck and his chums sat down before the walls of Paris to discuss the relative values of a bombardment or a siege.

The dreams that nations dream require a little waking thought and energy. Apropos of which we quote; First, a telegram from the 2nd Army Corps to the War Office, Paris, dated July 21st. "The depot sends enormous parcels of maps, which are absolutely useless for the moment. We have not a single map of the French frontier. It would be better to send a greater quantity of what would be more useful and which are absolutely wanting at this moment." (Emphasis our own)

Second, a remark of Moltke's to General de Wimpffen when discussing the surrender of Sedan, "Why you do not know the topography of the environs of Sedan, and, seeing we are on the subject let me give you a small instance which thoroughly shows the presumption, the want of method of your nation.

At the beginning of the campaign, you provided your officers with maps of Germany, when they utterly lacked the means of studying the geography of your own country, seeing that you had no maps of your own territory." Emphasis our own.

A little lecture which would well be taken to heart by those cuspidor strategists at present order-

ing a world revolution to commence in Germany, at 10 a.m. But as their hot heads are quite balanced by their cold feet it is unlikely they will get as far as Sedan.

But whether or not, we have a greater lesson before us in that supreme tragedy of working class history, The Paris Commune, which we will take up in our next.

ALBERTA NOTES.

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