

At Last!

At last the high cost of living, insofar as the U. S. is concerned, seems to be due for a jolt.

For a considerable time the problem has caused much discussion among not only "experts," but also it has been the topic for much argument among the masses of the lay members of society.

Professors of economics—the usual University brand, amateurs and armchair spittoon philosophers have aired their views on the subject, and many pet theories have been advanced in the press columns advocating methods to be adopted in regard to manner by which it could again be brought within the range of vision.

But just as in the days of yore, when critics of Marx, in attempting to prove where Marx was wrong, simply proved their own lack of knowledge and inability to understand, so is it today among the wiseheads who have come forward with their own pet theories as to how the deed should be and could be accomplished; they have shown their own denseness.

The organizing of housewives to boycott milk, butter, eggs, bacon, etc., the forming of co-operative "consumption" societies, increasing production, and last, but not least, the ingenious idea of introducing the composite dollar, have all been advanced in all seriousness, but needless to say, little has been accomplished by such theories and suggestions.

The growing baby still continued to thrive in a most alarming manner on such treatment, much after the fashion a human baby is supposed to grow when fed upon some patent food, as depicted by alluring advertisements.

After the complete failure of these several nostrums, it seems as though we are about to see it felled to the ground if the financial situation is any criterion to go by.

As is well known, some short time ago, America advanced huge loans to her Allies to enable them to carry on the war to a successful conclusion. Now she is going to try and get a little of the interest accruing from the loan, back, by taxing the exports to her beloved ancestor, England.

England is under suspicion. She is accused of building up her foreign trade at America's expense, and America is determined to try and put a stop to such despicable and unladylike actions on the part of the mother country, and to accomplish this they have taxed goods which England was importing, such as cotton, food, etc., to such an extent that the pound sterling has dropped from a pre-war basis of \$4.87 to the low figure of \$3.19, thus making it unprofitable for England to do business, and of course as profits are the objective, Britain threatens to retaliate by cancelling orders on such goods.

What does this mean? It means that the law of supply and demand which has been working one way will now reverse its working order, and that food which has been kept in cold storage with a view to business will now be thrown on the market in an attempt to sell and realize on it.

Already the effect of such a move has made itself felt. Cold-storage eggs have slumped in price, not value, from 45c to 11c per dozen wholesale. In the Chicago market the price of hogs has taken a turn in the same direction, and the packing houses have quit buying, as they too wish to dispose of the surplus on their hands. Grain, which has been stored up in elevators for years is to be let loose on the market. That which the President and his war on "profiteers" could not accomplish has been accomplished by an economic law.

What will be the effect on the dear long-suffering public? Clearly the proletariat will gain by such a move, that is, from the viewpoint of the purchasing power of wages, but such gain will be only momentary, for the same economic laws which forced down the price of the commodities will eventually locate in the vicinity of his pocket and his wages will soon become a shrinking quantity. Our stout-hearted, horny-handed son of the soil, the "backbone of the nation," will likewise have a few troubles of his own.

The outlook for him is anything but rosy, for he also stands to lose financially from such a move. Stock will be left on his hands which cannot be gotten rid of unless he hies himself to some local

market and attempts to get rid of it there. Again, feeling himself hit in the pocket, he will have to retrench, and the maxim of "cut down expenses" will be cruelly thrust upon him.

He is liable to adopt the "ca' canny" system by limiting his activities on the farm, cut down on many essentials, such as machinery, etc., which he procures from the city, and form some kind of agricultural society in an effort to stem the tide.

If such action on the part of the rural worker should take place, its effect upon the conditions of the city dweller will have far-reaching consequences. Several industries relating to farming supplies would begin to feel the pinch, entailing the curtailing of production within that sphere, the laying off of "hands," which in turn would be thrown upon the unemployed list, and so form an army of competitors for the jobs of those working within other industries, and bang goes the high wages.

Clearly, we have arrived at a position where the proletariat is worse off than formerly. Low prices or cost of living, and less to busy them with, will not have improved matters any, not to count the growing unemployed army, swelled from the ranks of the small tradesman, who is doomed to be squeezed out by the bigger interests.

But if the cost of living be reduced in America by such methods, what will be the result over in England?

If England hasn't huge supplies on hand of raw materials and food, the effect over there arising from such an action is fraught with disaster to somebody.

Workers engaged in the cotton industry will be thinking the end of the world has arrived for them. Not only will he be unemployed, but the little satisfaction that may be his American brother's will be denied him. As to the cost of living being reduced, just the opposite will be the case, and one will need an aeroplane to keep up with them. Verily a bright outlook.

But there is an old proverb which sayeth, "Necessity is the mother of invention," and another which says "Necessity knows no law," and if the masters of finance are not very careful how far they go with their little squabbles, they are very liable to start something to which there can be but one ending. Anyway one looks at it, the prospects of England opening up trade-relations with Russia are very bright indeed, as there is no other course left open to her.

Regarding the farming elements of this country, any pet scheme they may foster in the line of forming organizations at the expense of the city worker are doomed to failure. There is only one way out, and the sooner we become acquainted with it the better it will be for all concerned. Capitalism has nearly reached the end of its tether. The contradictions which are inherent within the system are unsolvable on a capitalistic basis. Nothing but a complete overthrow of the whole shebang will benefit us in the least.

Let us realize that the farmer and the proletariat have one interest in common, and one common enemy, and that they must unite with one common object—the overthrow of the capitalistic system.

J. CONLAN.

Here and Now

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From 26th February to 11th March inclusive—total, \$160.90.

ON THE NATURE AND USES OF SABOTAGE

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of the dynastic regime have gone to their work of sabotage on information because of a palpable division of sentiment between their government and the underlying population, such as does not exist in the advanced democratic commonwealths. The case of Imperial Germany during the period of the war is believed to show such a division of sentiment between the government and the underlying population, and also to show how such a divided sentiment on the part of a distrustful and distrusted population had best be dealt with. The method approved by German dynastic experience is sabotage, of a somewhat free-swung character, censorship, embargo on communication, and also, it is confidently alleged, elaborate misinformation.

Such procedure on the part of the dynastic statesmen of the Empire is comprehensible even to a layman. But how it all stands with those advanced democratic nations, like America, where the government is the dispassionately faithful agent and spokesman of the body of citizens, and where there can consequently be no division of aims and sentiment between the body of officials and any underlying population—all that is a more obscure and hazardous subject of speculation. Yet there has been censorship, somewhat rigorous, and there has been selective refusal of mail facilities, somewhat arbitrary, in these democratic commonwealths also, and not least in America, freely acknowledged to be the most naively democratic of them all. And all the while one would like to believe that it all has somehow served some useful end. It is all sufficiently perplexing.

The Bats of Liberalism

TWENTY-FIVE hundred years ago, less or more, a gentleman by the name of Aesop, told a fable about a bat. We will quote the fable in full, not only because it is a good story in itself, but also because of a few remarks we intend to make later.

"Once upon a time there was a fierce war between the Birds and the Beasts. For a long time the issue of the contest was uncertain, and the Bat, taking advantage of his ambiguous nature—part Bird and part Beast—kept aloof and remained neutral. At length when the Beasts seemed to be getting the better of it, the Bat joined their forces, and appeared active in the fight; but a rally being made by the Birds, which proved successful, the Bat was found at the end of the day among the ranks of the winning party. A peace being speedily concluded, the Bat's conduct was condemned alike by both parties, and, being acknowledged by neither, and so excluded by the terms of the truce, he was obliged to skulk off as best he could; and has ever since lived in holes and corners, never daring to show his face except in the darkness of twilight."

Anyone who has ever read this fable of the bat, cannot fail to think of it, while he watches the antics and listens to the tale of woe, of our modern middle class Liberal. The Liberal resembles the bat in the fable in two ways. First, his inability to see in broad daylight. And, second, the conclusion that because of his ambiguous nature—part worker and part capitalist—he is neither one nor the other. Reasoning from this premise our friend the Liberal bat, arrives at the further conclusion, that human society is not divided into two conflicting classes, and that there is no class struggle. He looks upon the Socialist movement, and the Radical-Labor organizations on the one hand, and the imperialistic capitalist organizations on the other, not as the hostile manifestations of a class struggle, but merely as two greedy disagreeable groups, who have entered into a kind of conspiracy to make life as miserable as possible for the poor innocent long-suffering public, which is himself.

Once in a while we come across a Liberal of a pugnacious disposition, who advocates the extermination of both the Bolshevik and the profiteer, in the interest of the public, but this type is rare. The Liberal in general, is of a conciliatory turn of mind;

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