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of These Leaden Days

Official Organ of **OCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA**

HISTORY BOONOMICS PHILOSOPHY

VANCOUVER, B. C. DECEMBER 17, 1923

HOSE who employ the long days of iro the Socialist have ceased intricacies of capitalistic attention to is the great revoluore baffling problem: be effected. Even. minority has its co dy maturing condi grim terms of pa garding the might one side, and the mans, slow to inno on the other, real tration." Yet

terms of "peaceful nen ory as the alternative but two aspects of pear, they are, premacy to be achie issue: How is in the disruption of se without whelm economy! Wh Phoenix-like, from n the halting improv ashes of civil or as a sharply vis tions of class of capitalist war! d not linger. Becau should it be presecu Christian peoples, there n: it will be a shatter will answer the pro ithout presuming to s

"hard faced" ones.

the latter

In the processes of capitalist development, wealth, and the power of wealth, is continually concentrated into fewer hands. Capitalist progress destroys the social status of one rank after another. It expropriates in ever higher planes. More and more it usurps "social right," and entrenches privilege. Individual competition is changed into corporate expansion; single capital into industrial investment; independent property into "ordinary shares." This concentration is accompanied by centralization. Large masses of capitalist property are aggregated in one estate; controlled by one directorate; interlocked with finance. The movements of industry are governed by the dominance of finance. Those omnipotent oligarchs determine the activities of all classes, throwing whole people, nations and groups of nations into the melting pot of them speculations ' and ambitions; using the government-which is their government—for the prosecution of their projects of capitalist civilization.

Social relationships are thus held and determined by capitalist relationships. Changes of technique and distribution of trade and the routes of trade are all leashed to the "tied-house" operations of political syndicates and concessionists. If those activities are disorganized, from whatever cause, the activities of the pawns of the game are also disorganized. The authority of centralization is dependent upon concentration. It is the result of that process. It has become the director of the industrial process, yet it directs and is forced to direct—the process to its own undoing. Because, Capitalist concentration negates the forces of production. It undermines the vaunted freedom of bourgeois individualism, and replaces it with the crushing dominance of imperialism. It places embargoes upon the necessary flow of commerce. Its power of production overreaches its capacity of expansion. It annihilates the market by cheap production, and abrogates (denies) social necessity by forced restrictions on social energy.

Curbed necessity, driven in on itself, and social existence, unable to find expression and satisfaction,

as but one remedy—to disintegrate. It can dissolve rits intolerable present relations, and react to dis-unity and decentralization—as it did when the Roman empire fell-or it can cothe the centralized concentration of capital with its own social authority. Both ways meet force and repression. In the first case, capitalist necessity for unity, social and industrial, for chesp production to meet imperialist competition on the world market. In the second, capitalist private property. In Europe the tendacy is towards the former method. Reaction, distegration of a distnited projetariat struggling by whatever means for bare subsistence, and small (comparatively) dissociate states, strung an the whip ash of an imperial power. With the triumph of France in Europe, Britain faces a grimmer struggle than she has ever faced, checking ted in Europe, with continental power to redress the balance, forced by rerwhelming debts and over helming industrial tagnation to forsake Japan plead to America. She prepares for a solution to the problem of the "rights of small nations," by an arbitration in which Me League of Nations will in to wise figure. Comnercially hampered by mounting tariffs; probably mposing them on herself; driven to foster a none

oo rosy interempire trade; commented by the cheap-st of cheap competition, and a restricted world mar-

ket; she will be compelled, militantly, to herd her

industrial slave gangs, either in the sweat pens of

price cutting, or to repress them in the slummeries

of compulsory idleness.

How far the process of decadence and reaction may triumph in Europe we shall leave for the moment, and glance briefly at another set of considerations. The above argument-if argument it is-is applicable primarily and mainly to capitalist indus-But there is another social (or unsocial) class not much spoken about but equally important in the order of things, and which is destined for a greater part on the stage of world events—the food produc-The farmers and peasants, like their brother slaves in the towns, have no economic power, so long as capitalist industry runs smoothly. But, unlike the town slaves, the moment the great machine develops irregularities, which are self increasing, the peasantry begin to develop economic standing, and which increases with the disorders of machine indusgrow lean with deepening anxieties, the latter may rejoice in the substance of new realities. And it is certain that if the town proletariat, as well as its rea spectable burgesses, cling faithfully to its "private property" the rural folks are still more loyal.

Is it not true that in Russia the peasant is the power behind the State? (And I don't mean a "Communist" or "Sociaist" "peasant," but a plain ordinary property loving hombre, like unto the rubes f this yere democracy!") Is it not true that in France the peasant is the support of aggression? Is it not true that to a very considerable extent he prospered in Germany, while industry went down into the valley of the shadow?" In Hungary, the peasantry fought against "property," i.e., the property of great estates. But they fought for peasant private ownership. And in the Balkans, the land of peasants, and Bavaria, the land of kings, reaction is complete.

In Britain the case is different. There the farmers suffer along with industry. But those "ragged expectedly became the torch bearer of social freegentlemen" of rigs and pigs, "bien" on "halesome

parritch," and solvent on the unremitting exploitation of the guid wife and her progeny, look not with kindly countenance on the black malcontents of the towns. Quite the reverse. The real reason for this communion of poverty is because Britain is the classic land of capital, and "free trade" (not the Bible) the secret of her greatness. "Free" imports of raw material for the hungry machines of profit; and cheap sustenance for the efficient mobs of slaves deprived the farmer of the heritage his landlord could not abstract. But, with the silence of impending doom hanging over her once dominant industries, those same farmers, at once the support and the pawns of property will have the wherewithal to sustain existence; while the necessitous tenders of the machine struggle, with the valor of the bulldog breed, to subsist on the political manna of "democratic" bombast.

On the North American continent the conditions are again different. As a class they are not true peasantry, but machine food producers, "diluted," and highly volatile. And primarily, throughout the whole extent of the great central plateau, they are wheat growers, and cattle ranchers, not farmers. Being producers, mainly wholly for export, the great world bumper wheat crop of this year, the vanish ing of the Buropean market and the deliver stricts against trade have left them in a deep dark 'coulee' of insoluble depression. But true to form this depression impels them to the ranks of reaction and away from the socialization of the means of life. Continued depression,-and it is likely to continuewill overwhelm them deeper in indebtedness,-if that is possible. In Canada at least, to loan and machine companies, the wheat growers are praactically indissolubly bound. Consequently those who can stand up to the strain, and the influx of immigrants who "go back" to this "national way of living" will be compelled to turn their attention, either to less production or to the production of other commodities, less risky (if finance and landlords generally will permit) where moth and rust doth not corrupt, and where the thieves of monopoly may not break through and steal. This will but strengthen depression. It will hamper yet more the activities of commerce. It will defeat the ends of its profit by denying the purchasing power that is the market. try. While the city drifts into chaos and famine It will expose the broken towns of capital, fenceless the farmers may reap a profit. While the former against the famine of languishing trade and no wag-And though it will also overshadow the country with the white death of capitalist maturity, though it drives its "holders" to bankruptcy and peonage. it cannot altogether dispossess, and deprive them of sustenance. That is where economic power-the food question-plays its vital part in the revolution.

Under those circumstances the highly developed centres and countries of capitalist industry, in normal times, will feel the pinch first. They will act for the amelioration of their conditions. But acting, they will be sharply opposed by the military state. The country will also feel the pinch. But with a modicum of eats, a thought content of property right, and the shuttlecock of political dynasties, the movement of the country will coincide with the movement of the town only as the revolutionary conditions in the later coincide with the anti-social hopes and desires of the former. Under the pressure of the tangling confusions of capitalist declension, that may happen. Peasant Russia, quite un-

(Continued on page 2)