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# Cotton's Weekly

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## DEPARTMENTAL STORES

The departmental store has been the stock-in-trade of reformers. The low wages paid, girls not allowed to sit down, the long hours, impudent and immoral employers and the petty tyrants they place in charge have furnished many a reformer with matter for speech to respectable audiences.

Consumers' leagues have been formed, the members of which pledged themselves to purchase goods made only in good conditions and sold in model stores. These consumers have been easy marks and have paid more for what they buy under the impression they were helping to right conditions.

Legislators have been appealed to and still the old conditions were not changed. And the "respectable element" heard the speeches and the pother and rested calm in the hope born of their laziness that the wrongs were being righted.

This is the result of "reform from the top," of the "uplift" work. A different tale is told when labor itself awakes. In Buffalo, N.Y., two thousand employees of twenty-two houses have gone on strike. The strike affects the clerks, salespeople, check boys and girl drivers of delivery wagons and their assistants. The strikers demand an eight hour day, and a minimum wage for boys of \$8, for girls of \$8, for men of \$15 and for drivers of \$18.

I know just how the "uplift" people feel about this strike. They feel it rank ingratitude. After they have toiled and talked and gone round in their nice dresses and good suits to the parlors of the best people to tell them of the woes of the poor store workers, it is rank ingratitude for the clerks not to stay in their misery quietly and peaceably. Besides, their demands are too much, don't you know. The creatures should be content with an eleven hour day and a minimum wage of \$5 per week next year or the year after.

The reformers look upon the workers as inferior creatures to be talked over and uplifted like the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals deals with the animal class. When the workers show spirit, it frightens the reformers.

But the best hope of the future is the revolutionary, independent spirit of the exploited many. Their solidarity, their struggles, their throwing down the gage of battle to the masters, show that the spirit of liberty lives and breathes.

The masters and the reformers have caused fear and be started. For the strike of the Buffalo departmental employees will spread to other cities. It means a new spirit among a hitherto sleeping section of the working class. It is a part of the revolutionary fire which is flaming over the world.

Today it is a demand for the forty-eight hour week and a minimum wage. Tomorrow it will be a demand for the ownership of the stores by the working class and the full earnings of those stores to go to the working class.

Well may the livers upon the labor of others view the situation with alarm.

May Day in Nova Scotia was ushered in by labor unrest. At New Glasgow the men of the Albion and MacGregor Collieries struck work for the recognition of the recently established branch of the United Mine Workers of America. The returned to work pending an investigation by the Lemieux Conciliation Act for the peaceful chloroforming of rebellious slaves. At Sydney the painters for the Rhodes Curry Co. went out for a nine hour day and \$3 per day. Also the carpenters of Sydney went out. The quartermen at Armdale and Smith's Corners are out. The Halifax Tramways employees have demanded an advance in wages. These strikes show the rebellious spirit of the slaves. A little more class consciousness among them and they will rush their legislators to Halifax and take over the control of the places in which they work.

Strikes occurred on May Day in Toronto among the construction iron workers, the cabinet makers, the glass workers, and the plasterers' laborers. The men say that with the increase in the rents and the high cost of living they cannot live on their present wages. If the workers of Ontario should capture the Ontario legislature they could confiscate the land and buildings now owned by the landlords and abolish the rents. They could seize the control of the slave pens and let the workers produce for use and not for profit, thus cutting down the cost of living and raising the rate of earnings of the working class by all that now goes in rent, interest, profit and waste under capitalism.

The J. W. Heweston Company, Ltd., Toronto, manufacturers of children's and misses' shoes, is going to Montreal. Seventy-five employees struck suddenly for a ten per cent. advance in wages. So Mr. Heweston is going to Montreal and have nice, peaceful slaves work for him. Unhappily for his dreams, the unrest in Montreal is just as bad as in Toronto. Heweston might as well make up his mind that the days of his robbery of the working class are numbered. The little job in his pocketbook through a ten per cent demand for increased wages is as nothing to the jobs that are coming to him and his class through political Socialism.

How the capitalists hate to dig their own graves!

## THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

There is a struggle for existence going on in society. This struggle ranges all through the fields of industry. The tools compete, the owners compete, the workers compete, and the organizations both within the capitalist class and within the working class compete.

The tools compete. The spade competes with the horse plow. The spade went down in the struggle and the horse plow supplanted the spade as a method of cultivating fields.

The traction plow is competing with the horse plow, and in the west is driving the horse plow out of business. Various types of traction plows are competing. The most efficient will win out in the struggle for existence.

The owners compete. The owner of the spade competed with the owner of the horse plow and was outclassed. Today the owners of the traction plows compete. The ones most favorably situated, or with the largest masses of capital win out. The other owners are crushed down into the ranks of the wage workers.

The workers compete. The capitalists organize themselves into companies. These companies fight each other, and one or the other goes down to defeat, or they merge into one company and fight other companies. Those organizations the master class find most suitable for their purposes of exploitation survive. The others perish.

The organizations of the workers compete. Those ones which prove themselves the fittest to survive crush out the others. A struggle is on in the U. S. between the American Federation of Labor and the Industrial Workers of the World. The one which proves itself the best to push forward the interests of the working class will gain adherents to the detriment of the other, and finally triumph.

Tactics compete. Those tactics which best serve the ends of those practising them will survive. Let us illustrate by a strike. The workers go on strike. Scabs are called in, and take the places of the strikers. What tactics shall the workers adopt towards the machinery? Shall they, when they go on strike, tamper with the machinery in such a manner that the scabs cannot operate the machines? Or will they leave the machinery perfect for the scabs to operate? Tampering with machinery by strikers to render it useless is sabotage. Will sabotage survive? It will if the working class find it a beneficial tactic.

Finally the owners and the workers struggle for the ownership and control of the means of production and distribution, the former to hold and the latter to gain control. This struggle is becoming more acute as the workers' organizations become more powerful and united and the workers become more class conscious.

The Socialists are the workers who are struggling for the ownership against the present non-producing owners, so that the united working class may own and control. The fittest to survive will survive. Do you consider the working class fittest and best? Or do you think four masters are the fittest and best? The way you look upon this question is an indication of your spirit, whether it be that of a slave or that of a man worthy to be a free worker equal in industry with your fellow workers, and worthy to have no boss to give you work so he may live without work.

The training camps of the Canadian militia during the months of June and July will be scantily attended. The authorities declare that 50,000 will be under canvas, but we can assure the capitalist class that there are not so many fools who are willing to have their bodies stuck full of bayonet holes to protect the revenues of a Pellatt, a Forget, a Juchin or a Strathcona. If the rebels feel that anybody is going to rob them of their legalized stealings, let them put their own carcasses in danger.

The Liberals at Ottawa are objecting strenuously to the gag rules the Tories are putting through. In Nova Scotia the Liberals have been in power for many years. At Halifax there is a gag rule worse than the Tory one at Ottawa. It was put into the rules by that great Liberal ex-Minister Fielding. The hypocrisy of the capitalist parties is so apparent that it is a wonder any honest man votes for them.

I must confess I believe that if by some juggling with space and time Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Edward IV, William the Conqueror, Lord Roseberry and Robert Burns had all been changed at birth, it would not have produced any serious dislocation of the course of destiny. I believe that these great men of ours are no more than images and symbols and instruments taken, as it were, haphazard by the incessant and consistent forces behind them; they are the pen-nibs into which the world is writing, the diamonds upon the drill that pierces through the rock. And the more one inclines to this trust in forces the more one will believe in the possibility of a reasoned inductive view of the future that will serve us in politics, in morals, in social contrivances and in a thousand spacious ways.—H. G. Wells.

Socialism is an economic and political movement, and does not interfere with morality only where economic conditions make people immoral, and thus leaves the churches plenty of room to use their influence in the spiritual realm.

## May Day in Montreal

May Day in Montreal was a surprise. The enthusiasm and numbers of the comrades came as a great joy to us all.

Only two weeks were taken to prepare for the event, and the result was an astonishing spectacle of unity.

The parade began at seven o'clock from the corner of Milton and St. Lawrence Boulevard, and marched to the Champs de Mars. Over 5,000 persons lined up. Comrade Albert Saint Martin was Grand Marshal. The red flag was carried by two young labor comrades, Miss Sheffer and Miss Rosenstone.

Headed by a brass band of twenty-five pieces, the majority of the players being Socialists, the parade ended its way to the scene of the speeches. In crossing St. Catharines Street and in crossing Craig, long lines of street cars were held up.

There were many banners displayed. Russian, French, Jewish, English, Ukrainian and other groups marched behind their respective banners.

At the Champs de Mars an attentive audience of over ten thousand persons listened to the speakers from ten different platforms. The speakers were changed every ten or fifteen minutes. Over forty soapboxes gave the straight revolutionary principles. This is a tremendous change from even two years ago, when speakers were scarce, and the comrades had to rely upon the old standbys.

## CAPITAL IN CONTROL

Capital is in control. Capital is the means used to exploit labor.

This means that the owners of capital will not operate mills, etc., unless they can skin the working class. A factory will not be operated unless it can be made to show unearned revenues for its owners. A railroad cannot show graft for its owners will be sold or abandoned. Houses which do not bring in a revenue will be allowed to fall into decay.

Yet you are not allowed to enter into a vacant house and live in it. The owner would eject you. A group of workers cannot go and operate an idle factory. The capitalist owners would arrest you for trespass.

Socialists say they want the means of production operated by the producers without rent, interest or profit going to the capitalist class. This sounds ridiculous to the capitalists.

They say that it is impossible. Factories won't run, railroads will rust, and the people will starve in the midst of plenty.

What they say will not happen at all. But the capitalists cannot look at the problem with common sense. They cannot imagine themselves not owning the establishments.

Of course, as long as capitalists own, they will allow the places to rot down if they cannot derive rent, interest and profit from them. Socialists say that rent, interest and profit will be abolished and the capitalists think the means of production will rot.

They will do no such thing. For the Socialists will take the ownership away from the capitalist class and vest it in the collective working class. Then the workers can run the mills, mines, railways, etc., and they can run them even if no rent, interest and profit is paid.

When the capitalists get hard up they shut down their mills and produce a panic. But under Socialism there will be no hard times, for the factory doors will always be open to the working class, and they can go in and make shoes and bake bread and mine coal, and no master class stricken with fear will be around to say them nay.

The capitalist owners may just as well make up their minds now as later, that their bugaboo tales can only make the shivers crawl up and down their own backs.

You, as a worker, produce say \$10 a day worth of wealth. You get \$2.50 per day of it, if you are lucky. Out of this \$2.50 say you save with much hard work a couple of hundred dollars. The Socialists ask you to join them and work so that the working class may get the full social value of what they produce. The capitalists, to frighten you, say we poor little \$200. Nothing of the kind. We want to give you the full social equivalent of the \$10 worth of wealth you create each day. Under such a system you could save \$5,000 as easily as you can \$200 now. The capitalists get the greater part of what you produce, and then try to frighten you against it by saying we want to make you divide up. They know this is not true, but lie to you because it pays them to deceive you.

A Socialist candidate in Ontario went to his slave work the day the elections were being held. His conduct surprised the old party heeler. Why was he not out campaigning? Why was he not rounding up the weak-kneed followers? This candidate was not seeking office. He was as it were taking a census of the Socialists in the riding. He knew that every Socialist would vote for him, and he was not looking to get a big vote by silly conduct. That is the way Socialists act. That is why their vote is so impressive. It is a solid vote which knows what it wants and will be content with nothing else.

There was no hostility by the workmen who lined the streets as the procession passed. There was much sympathy shown the marchers. Some of those in the parade recalled the May Day Demonstration two or three years ago, when even the little children thought it their privilege to hurl missiles at the red marchers.

At the Colonial Hall, Clark street, a dance was held and refreshments served after the speaking. In another room Socialist speeches were made to a crowded audience.

If but one year ago a thousand listened on the Champs de Mars to the speakers and this year ten thousand gathered and applauded, what will not be the sentiment a year from now?

The great and outstanding feature was the number of young men and young women who took part. The new generation arising is Socialist.

There was no disorder, no disturbances. The young ladies conducted a tag day and were in no wise molested by the police. This shows that Socialism has arrived as a serious movement and one the authorities dare not attempt to suppress.

Today, in Montreal a new enthusiasm has gripped the forces of revolution. In the shop, on the streets, in the private gatherings, ten thousand Socialists and their sympathizers are at work leavening the proletariat.

The dawn is breaking into broad day.

## PROSPERITY AND THE SLAVES

We all know the wonderful prosperity that has come to the owners of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It was given tens of millions of dollars cash, a completed railway worth thirty millions of dollars, and millions of acres of land worth over a hundred million dollars. These gifts came to the C.P.R. owners and has made them immensely wealthy.

We all know the prosperity the Canadian Northern owners enjoy. The road has been built practically by the credit and cash of the people of Canada. It has been given \$10,000,000 in cash. It has been given land worth \$20,000,000. Its bonds and stocks have been guaranteed to the extent of \$175,000,000.

Surely this generosity on the part of the people of Canada would open the hearts of the railway magnates to the hearts of the men who toil in a decent manner. But no.

At Mission Junction, B.C., a Provincial Labor Commission has been investigating conditions. Mr. A. M. Verchere, a justice of the peace, testified. He finds the men are not paid in money, but in time checks, which they cannot cash.

The men are working on construction work in the wilderness. They get paid in time checks which are marked "not negotiable." The result is that no merchant will cash them. The railways themselves, both C.P.R. and C.N.R., will not accept these time checks for transportation. But the saloon keepers will.

You see the idea. The workers are rather far from distant quarters under false pretenses. They arrive, and are held practically in peevish slavery. Mr. Verchere has had men brought before him charged with the crime of stealing a ride on the C.P.R. These men would have checks of the C. P. R. on them for work done, but they could not cash them for transportation. If they want to get out, they have to hoof it out.

Some men do this, and when they call for their checks, they find deductions made for hospital fees, municipal road tax, commissary supplies, etc.

The saloons cash the checks, and come out all right. The employers do not mind if the men drink. If they do they will be sodden animals who will work and will not kick against their cursed treatment.

These are a few of the ills the workers have to endure so that our "builders of empire" may riot in wealth. The so-called "builders" are nothing but big grafters whose records would disgrace the books of a Kingston penitentiary. The real empire builders are the men down in the construction camps, treated like slaves, robbed, kicked about, and ever toiling so the grafters may have places a Nero or a Pharaoh never dreamed of possessing.

This is the treatment your class gets, workers of Canada. This is the treatment you get from the McBrines and the Bordenes and the Lauriers. Cannot you see that these gentlemen are your enemies, all the more to be distrusted and despised because they fawn on you and pretend to be your friends?

Workers, we call upon you to forever leave your enemies. Join the members of your class who are pledged to obtain justice for themselves and you.

The moving picture show is working a revolution in people's thoughts. The fine palaces and wonderful gowns and extravagance of the master class are pictured in part. These scenes sink into the brains of the children and young people, and they are no longer contented with their poor pay and poor surroundings. They want more so they can spend more. Divine discontent wakes within them. This is good.

Every new election causes uneasiness among those who live by the labor of others.

## PROTECTION AND RECIPROCITY

Cotton's is quite frequently asked to explain the difference between reciprocity and free trade.

You remember in 1911 how the politicians yahooped throughout Canada. Both the Liberals and the Tories stretched their lungs to almost the bursting point.

The Liberals pitied the poor working class. How the salt tears trembled in the voices of the Liberal speakers as they portrayed the high cost of living, and the woes of the working class thereunder. "Return us to power," they cried, "and we will give you an opportunity to enjoy a lower cost of living."

The Tories pitied the poor working class. They wanted to save them from the deceptive wiles of the wicked Liberals. If free goods were admitted, or the tariff lowered, the workers would have to compete with the pauper product of other countries and their woes would pile mountain high through lower wages.

The working class, acting on the principle of bearing the ills they had rather than flying to others they knew not of, returned Borden to power.

As to the respective contentions of each party, the procedure under the Lemieux Act is enlightening. When the Liberals were in power and when the Tories are in power, the procedure is the same.

When a dispute arises as to wages, a Conciliation Board is appointed to investigate conditions, and one of the questions always investigated is the COST OF LIVING in the disturbed area.

If the cost of living is high, the Board decides for a comparatively high rate of wages for the workers. If the cost of living is low, the Board decides for a comparatively low scale of wages.

The Boards always consider that the COST OF LIVING SHOULD DETERMINE THE RATE OF WAGES.

Under protection the cost of living is high. Wages therefore rise in proportion.

If reciprocity reduced the cost of living by flooding Canada with foreign commodities which sold for less money, then the employers of labor within Canada would have to sell their goods for less, and THEY WOULD CUT WAGES TO THE COST OF LIVING.

The workers would get a living wage only under either system. The master class would get similar profits in either case—that is all the workers produce beyond what it costs them to live.

This is the great issue which divided the two old parties at the last election. Was it not a great question? And many workers left for it. These workers told their fellow workers that as long as the employing class controlled the wages paid the master class would get all the surplus the workers created. These candidates wished the producing class to send their own members to Ottawa to make the laws so that the working class should enjoy the wealth they created.

But the great majority of the workers, led by the able yahoos who were running in the interests of the capitalists, were too wise to listen to any such foolish arguments. No. The great question before them was whether they should cut the cost of living and their wages twenty per cent., or have the cost of living and their wages remain as they now are.

This was the great issue, and the wise working class resolved to remain slaves under the guidance of the Conservative party to the profit, ease, luxury and arrogance of the owners of capital.

Last year 3,865 railway employees were killed and 130,158 injured, on American railways. On account of this growing danger from accidents, the "safety first" movement has been started among employees. The adjusters state that from 60 to 90 per cent of the accidents were due to carelessness by those handling traffic. Of course the workers are alone to blame. They are supposed to be to blame for running too many trains on a single track and being forced to work too many hours without proper rest. According to railway rules they can "book rest" after working a given number of hours, but if the railway worker tries to make the company live up to this rule, he usually gets all the "rest" he wants.

Seven hundred men employed by the McKinnon Dash and Metal Works at St. Catharines, Ont., struck work on May Day. The men wanted a regular pay day. The practice has been to pay the men four times a month, but upon no regular day. When the men went out, the foundry men left a large quantity of metal, valued at \$2,900, in the furnaces and declined to run it off. This is sabotage pure and simple. It is what the striking workers have practised more or less since strikes began. Only when we name it and describe it, it causes a great flurry and fear among the employing class.

The machine produces the type of civilization. Have you ever tried to picture the future the aeroplane is preparing for us? The air craft is wiping out international boundaries. Frontiers will vanish before it. An aeroplane has travelled a thousand miles in twelve hours. And the air craft is just in its infancy. The elimination of frontiers will do away with customs houses and international jealousies. It will help bring about the world peace.

## FRATERNAL SOCIETIES

Would you kindly explain through your columns the part fraternal societies such as Oddfellows, Free Masons, A. O. U. W., etc., etc., play along the lines of the class struggle? Of course I have my own ideas about the matter—which are in no wise complimentary towards said societies—but I may be all wrong. This is a phase of the subject that I have not seen or heard discussed as yet anywhere; and I have digested quite a lot of scientific and revolutionary literature in my quest after truth. Probably you could name the book I have failed to read. At any rate give us your opinion at your earliest convenience. Very truly yours—D.H.F.

Society is divided into two classes, the capitalist class and the working class. The owning non-producers and the non-owning producers.

Through the ownership of capital—the means used to exploit labor—the capitalists take all the wealth the workers produce and give them back a wage which will just keep them fit to produce more wealth for the owners of capital.

Between these two classes a struggle is going on, the capitalists to hold and the workers to capture the public powers. The capitalists wish to retain their ownership so as to continue to live on unearned revenues. The intelligent working class wish to capture the public powers so as to transform the means of wealth production into the collective ownership of the producers.

There is a class struggle on in society. This results in much misery. Misery will continue as long as the class struggle lasts.

Fraternal societies are organized on the false supposition that the members of such societies shall be united in a brotherhood bond. Under capitalism such a supposition does not work out in practice.

The economic interests of the various members of such societies, in so far as they are antagonistic, will prevent the brotherhood bond from operating. Such societies are largely shams today.

If a lodge is composed of capitalists, there can be a sort of brotherhood bond, for the interests of the capitalist class are an economic bond of unity.

If a lodge is composed of workingmen, there can be a brotherhood bond, because of similar interests.

But if a poor member gets into a rich lodge, he gets the cold shoulder. If a workingman gets into a capitalist lodge, (he can't very well get in, he would be rejected), he would be like a fish out of water.

In Cowansville I have had some quiet amusement watching the various members of the Free Masons, and how they pulled together or apart, and how they try to work their society for business. I have watched the same thing in country churches.

## A Visionary Brotherhood

Numerous instances can be cited of two or more lodges of the same society in the same town or city holding nothing in common. They belong to the same society and are under the same laws and constitution, but the great dividing wall of class is between the two. The oaths and vows are pure hypocrisy.

Here is a case: In the town of Oshawa, Ont., are two lodges of Oddfellows, both strong in numbers. The Corinthian lodge is composed of professional men, merchants, and the class who are more or less on Easy Street. Phoenix, the other lodge, has on its roster the black-faced mechanics of that great industrial town. They are the slaves of the malleable iron works, the McLaughlin Co., the Pedlar People, the piano factory and other great pens. These two lodges of Oddfellows are far apart as the Orange and the Knights of Columbus. The members do not fraternize, they "knock" each other, and entirely forget their protestations of Love, Friendship and Truth.

In the Phoenix Lodge the bread and butter question is paramount; in the Corinthian Lodge the members seek the best means to make an easy living off the efforts of the working class, among whom are the big brother Oddfellows of Phoenix lodge.

We cannot build a brotherhood bond against economic interests. Where a member goes into the lodges and takes their pretensions for truth, he gets sadly left in the end. While he is in his delusion, his true position in society as a slave or as a slave driver is obscured.

I knew a working class candidate who was a Mason. He ran for Parliament and he thought his fellow Masons would support him. They did not.

As long as rent, interest and profit lasts, the workers will be robbed, and the capitalists will rob. How can a worker and a capitalist, the victim and the thief, be united into any true brotherhood bond through any fraternal society? It is an impossibility.

The capitalists are forced to concentrate and monopolize and organize industry. The capitalist who lags behind goes bankrupt. But the very process of organizing industry, when it is completed, renders the capitalist unnecessary. He becomes simply a drawer of unearned revenues and is ready to be thrown off whenever the useful members of society so decide.

Calgary, Alta., will probably establish a municipal foundry to escape from the excessive rates charged the city. If municipal foundries why not municipal bakeries and tailors and shops and municipal banks and public credit and municipal houses to get ahead of the landlord? All the public services could be run without paying toll to the capitalist class just as soon as the people want it so.