

Things As They Are

obtain hearing before the Lusk Committee some during this month, and moneys are required to expenses.

We do not feel that we are required to elaborate O'Brien's qualities as a man devoted to the cause of working class emancipation. Whoever is acquainted with the history of the early day efforts towards education to this end in Canada is acquainted with the story of the pioneer work of Willie O'Brien. Some criticism is necessary however on the attitude of those who hold that the legal fight is necessarily a losing fight for the worker, and is therefore a waste of time, effort and money. We constantly teach that the political, legal, moral and religious relationships of mankind change correspondingly with their underlying economic basis, and that, maintaining a relationship, each with the worker, and all with the base, they each play a part in moulding the affairs of men, races, classes, etc., in the course of time.

In our own case, that is, in the case of those who are devoted to the education of our class, we constantly come into contact with the law. Under certain circumstances we may be disfranchised, thus losing our privilege in so far as it affects the political structure; in other circumstances we may be excommunicated in social life or excommunicated in the religious world, and while we may not experience such grief over these happenings, contact with the legal institutions of any country is a grave matter for us. In the case of contact with the Criminal Code, the personal liberty of civil life that we enjoy, even in these days, is threatened. If we are even in dispute or protest on any charges, on grounds real or imagined, that the minions of the law choose at any time to lay against us, we would have to be easy victims under our masters' rule. Building would have boom times. In entering dispute and argument on the charges laid against us we enlist the support and interest of our fellows. And when we come to the point of presenting the argument in the case, directly or indirectly, we are in need of the training that department of man's divided activities that a lawyer has, to argue a case where it necessarily comes to be decided in the courts. In O'Brien's case the following moneys have been received here. Further donations may be sent to Louis Stark, 580 St. Paul St., Rochester, N.Y., or to E. MacLeod, 401 Pender Street East, Vancouver B. C. Further donations will be acknowledged. W. McQuoid, \$1; E. MacLeod, \$1; H. Williams, \$1; Blampin, \$1; H. Howland, \$1; J. Johnson, \$1; Hanson, \$1; Mrs. Streeter, \$1; A. Sabanski, \$1; Leurin, 50c.; J. Dekowsky, \$1; F. Saary, 50c.; Gbrosetti, \$1; J. Shepherd, \$1; F. Larson, \$1; Johnson, \$1; Managos, \$1; McPrice, 50c.; Charlie, 50c.; Smith, \$1; Anonymous, 10c.; Brown, \$1; Lamont, 25c.; Lahorre, \$1; Reorsa, 10c.; E. A. Gibbs, \$1; Local Vancouver, No. 1, \$25; A. Slave, \$1.—Total, \$46.70. (This is up to Dec. 10th.)

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THE happiness of the world, and the true prosperity of man in society, therefore the real happiness of that society, lies in the complete realization of Socialist philosophy. Whoever regards existing conditions of life, and has a glimmer of the nature and objective of political society—and the numbers that are being compelled, through bitter experience, to examine those conditions are being constantly increased by the inevitable contractions of capitalist maturity—knows that in this society there is no possibility of prosperity to any but the owning class, and but scant happiness to any others. Human society has grown into, and developed through, ever changing forms of slavery, perceiving neither their identity of principle, nor their material necessity of form and function. Hence, although crucified on this necessity, and dimly conscious of his degradation, man has expended his efforts for his real welfare, vainly against one or other detail,—always stubborn to alter, and valueless when achieved.

But out of the determinism of the world process has come a consciousness of this principle, a consciousness clarified with development, kinetic with necessity, as a climax of which the body politic will lose its polity of class rule. This class rule, although in appearance different is, nevertheless, functionally the same as all ancient political societies, holding a subjugated class in bondage by precisely the same methods, government—for the same reason,—the exaction of tribute—based on the same economic foundation—ownership of the means of life—the one and only way man can be enslaved.

This "political" means of obtaining a livelihood is the key to our exploitation. A ruling class in society, of necessity owning the materials of production, is master in, and of, that society, since a master class predicates a subject class. That is the meaning of capital. That is capital. But a master class, owning the material of production, by exactly the same right of property controls the entire product of the productive machine. Hence automatically, a steadily accumulating stream of wealth flows to the master, a weightier burden of degradation to the subjugated.

The commodity nature of capitalist production,—production for sale—ultimately means the stifling of all industry. Because, by the invention of mechanical appliances, and the involved displacement of labor, there is an ever-increasing surplus to dispose of, on a steadily diminishing market. Free competition between buyers and sellers eliminated all unnecessary material from production, necessitating commodities exchanging at value, value being the socially necessary labor embodied in their production. Machine production therefore, by progressively augmenting the producing capacity of labor, progressively decreases its purchasing power. No purchasing power, no market; no market, no profit; no profit, no production, since, as stated, production is entirely and absolutely for profit. With this stoppage of industry, we disport ourselves in the manifest delights of "financial panics," while our masters diligently seek for an outlet for their goods, which our activity produced. That is the owning class end of the business.

But we, too, alternatively, intelligent voters and recalcitrant workers, have a commodity to sell. And in selling our commodity we have the same "freedom" as our masters: viz., freedom of competition. Our commodity is labor power, subject to the same law of value, determined in the same manner, as any other commodity—the socially necessary labor involved in its production. Or in common or garden English, the amount of food, clothing and shelter requisite to maintain itself in the realm of production. And just as the competition of the capitalists among themselves for profits compels them to exchange—sell—their merchandise at value, so the competition of the workers, for jobs, compels them to offer their commodity at its value. But the perfection of the tools of production so enhanced the productive capacity of the worker that, while he receives the full market value of his labor power (wages, to buy

necessities wherewith to restore the energy consumed in the day's work) he does not receive the full value of his productive power (surplus, which is exported). This immense surplus which labor creates, through the medium of machinery, belongs by right of property to the owner of that machinery. This is where we are exploited. Here is the fountain spring of master class profits; the yawning gulf of slave class poverty. Here, we discover the mysterious and variegated tree of opportunity, whence Sir William gathereth figs, and Henry, thistles. And both are blindfolded.

Before the master can realize the profit contained in this abundance of creative toil, he must exchange it on the world market. But here the law of value reacts, exactly limiting the purchasing power of that market to its capacity. Consequently surplus increases until, at last, the glutted market compels the production machine to halt; and the indigent feverishness of stagnation reigneth instead of the indigent feverishness of industry. Furthermore, to the greater misery of the slave, to his infinitely greater humiliation—here is the founded cause of war. Capitalist government meets capitalist government on the commercial field, competitively for "place," "privilege," "concession," "rights," "tariff favor," "spheres of interest," one and all squarely based on the economic necessity of markets, obtainable by "diplomacy," "tact," or "peaceful penetration" if possible; by the weightier penetration of Krupps and Vickers, if not.

Since the hope of capitalism is profit, and since profit is only obtainable through exploitation, obviously all endeavor to exalt human society, that does not abolish this exploitation, is futile. Classless society is the hope of the world, yet we must possess our souls in patience, until the mills of the world process grind out the conditions of its advent. We cannot thrust our ideal on the psychiatry of wealth accumulation; nor force dialectics on the illusory ideation of interest. We can only preach to whosoever will listen; and only those are disposed to listen who suffer from the necessities of the omnipotent machine.

The one great fundamental of capitalist society is class ownership of the means of life. When the growth of the system, which consecrates this ideal of property has, by its inevitable expansion consummated its own dispossession, the truths that now clamor for acceptance will find a fertile soil in the great body of dispossessed, thrust out of the ruts of custom; expelled from the havens of individualist opportunity; fated to see their all swallowed up by the sateless Moloch of monopoly.

It is for this reason there is no short cut to the "golden age." The precessional of the system itself must vanquish the confusions, hoary and hallowed, draping the ideal of property right in life's requirements. That accomplished, the inexorable facts of economic law will stand out, clear as the summer sun. We, the workers, suffer from the spoilation of capital. Obviously, therefore, we must be the instrument, in the logic of time, for its overthrow. But to abolish requires wisdom; to act knowledge. That is our part in the substantial of evolution. While we are passionate with hope, vibrant with enthusiasm, eager with the heroism of an ideal, we must also be girt with understanding staged on the invincible rock of material fact. There can be no compromise with political parties, no dalliance with the reforms of the declassed, or the opportunist. The ghosts flitting among the crumbling ruins of revisionist utopias are arguments, eloquent "as the tongues of angels," and it is for us to benefit from the tear-misted failures of the disappointing past.

History speaks with unwavering voice, and the lessons of the times have shown the unflinching necessity of loyalty to our ideal—the civilized commune—unyielding adherence to our basic principle—the abolition of wages,—and witnesses with the fervor of inspired truth, that whoever walks in the narrow and precipitous way of historic materialism, must be freed from all expediency, absolved from all prejudice, and speak with clear utterance from the calm summits of unclouded reason. R.

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