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The Russian Famine

DESPATCHES in the press paint horrible pictures of famine conditions in Russia. It is beyond doubt that sections of that country have been badly affected by the drought which has also affected other sections of Europe, thus entailing serious crop failures. But experience of the kind of information on conditions in Soviet Russia furnished by the capitalist press in the past, causes us to accept with wariness the particularized incidents of the famine reported in despatches from such centres of hostility to the present regime in Russia as Paris, Warsaw, Helsingfors, etc. Experience has shown us that Moscow is a much more reliable source of factual information, good or bad, in its import, than any from those haunts of "our own special correspondent." In the meantime, we wait for details from where our confidence rests, Moscow. In a recent despatch from there Tchicherin, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, stresses the seriousness of famine conditions and appeals for assistance, but denies the truth of the stories of riotous disturbances and atrocities. He promises as soon as possible, full and detailed information on the conditions and needs of the population in the drought stricken areas.

Invariably, the despatches relating to the Russian famine and editorial comments thereon, cast reflection on the Soviet administration as being the major cause of the calamity. This is untrue and constitutes an ungenerous and base turning of the, under the circumstances, unpreventable, and thus involuntary misfortunes of the Russian people, into a partizan advantage. There are, of course, reasons for this action of the agents of the press. A few words on these reasons, as well as a brief review of the circumstances with which the workers' republic of Russia has had to contend during the period of its existence since 1917, will not be amiss.

The population of the world is, perforce, dependent on the capitalist news collecting agencies and the periodical press for the collection and distribution of news of affairs and events. The different units of that press organization represent capital investments, often huge ones, and are thus profit making institutions. The profits of publication of a periodical depend on its success as a vehicle for business and trade advertisements, which success is again determined by the extent of its circulation among the people. Returns from sales and subscriptions are now a matter of wholly secondary consequence. Besides being a vehicle for advertisements the function of the press, is supposedly to convey information and news of facts. When we consider that a newspaper or a magazine represents a capital investment dependent for its source of profits on the goodwill of its advertising clientele among the business elements, it is easy to imagine, and capable of proof by a study of the methods of the press, that facts and information adverse to particular business interests, or to the profit system as a whole, undergo a radical change by the time they reach the public, after being strained through the fine mesh of censorship voluntarily established by the press itself. Not alone does the mis-named public press resolve itself into a partizan organ for the suppression and distortion of facts and ideas adverse to the established order, but it is also a vast far-sounding megaphone propagandizing as occasion demands for some one or other particular capitalist interest, or group of interests, and always without ceasing, for the interest of the established order as a whole. Whenever and whatever his own occasions, or the occasions of his

group interests demand, when Northcliffe roars, all his thousand editors and press agents throughout the world roar in unison, purveying not facts, not information, but ideas, opinion. In the morning and in the evening, the world has ready-made opinion served up to it in the items of news of passing events, in comments, admonitions, and in the snobbish gossip concerning the activities of the parasitic group calling itself "society." It is opinion into which is wrought traditional sentiments, prejudices and habits of belief; consequently, it is opinion as easily assimilated as the mush at breakfast or the kipper at supper time.

The attitude of the capitalist press towards Russian conditions in the recent past has been characterized by an unscrupulous and partizan use of actual, though largely unavoidable, evils, and an unscrupulous invention of imaginary ones, not in order to enlist sympathy for the masses in Russia, but to discredit the Soviet regime in that country. No editorial heartstrings were wrung when the entire population of Russia was segregated, cut off from the resources of civilization by the economic blockade declared by the Allied powers, which blockade, super-imposed upon that one which was a natural outcome of war conditions commencing in 1914, has isolated Russia for nigh on seven years from a civilization, one of whose chief characteristics is the technological one of specialization of function in productive activities among nations as well as individuals. Thus the existence of any people is absolutely dependent on intercourse and exchange of products with the rest of the world. Coldly, calculatingly, our most noble and Christian editors speculated and prophesied as to how long a people could stand the strain of want imposed by the policies of the leading powers (leading to where?) of civilization. The Russia of pre-war days under the reactionary rule of bureaucratic Czarism, it is well known, was a backward corruptly managed and desperately poverty-stricken nation. To this politically and economically diseased inheritance out of the past, add the disastrous effect of the war in completely wrecking such economic organization as there had been. Add also the counter-revolutionary activities, both internal and external, foes within, and foes without invading over every frontier, aided and abetted by the great nations with left-over munitions from the great war, with military forces, with finances, together with that barbarous economic blockade which denied the Russians even medical supplies, that last poor boon of diseased and wound shattered humanity. Nevertheless, hostile prophesies and the more tangible, hostile efforts to overthrow the Workers' Soviet Republic have failed dismally. And now comes this last nature borne calamity of drought and failure of crops. The editors and correspondents are again hopeful of counter-revolution. They suggest that the Soviet administration is at fault. They suggest that it has not organizing ability even to distribute supplies if they could obtain them. To which, the history of its triumph over unparalleled problems during this last few years gives the lie.

Have the editors no unsolved problems in their own countries, no skeleton in the closet, a meditation upon which should shatter complacency and make for self-abasement and fellow-feeling to the Russian people deeply in trouble? That bloody holocaust in Europe, in which millions, the flower of manhood, were swept out of existence? The force of facts now comes to light, drives towards a general

consensus of opinion of a common responsibility for that unredeeming catastrophe, and that the myth of a guilty nation no longer suffices as an explanation! And since: What of the social situation for the working masses in your own countries where capital reigns dominant and the class you speak for has all power, either for good or ill, boasting claimants of a monopoly of organizing intelligence, preachers of homilies to Soviet Russia! Is there here an abundant and even distribution of social wellbeing? The facts of the situation say otherwise!

At the height of the busy season of the year in the United States there are now over four million wage earners out of work, many with dependents. The conditions in Canada are proportionately the same or, as this country is an economic annex of the States they are probably worse. Materially, for masses of the people, their position is a desperate one, and morally, despicable and debauching, for they are rapidly becoming habituated to pauperism through a system of doles, as were the discharged slaves and workless proletarians of Ancient Rome.

Yet here in north America, nature is not niggardly but bounteous. The climate conditions have been normal, even better than that, taking the country as a whole. Here are not invading armies, or contending forces of warring domestic factions to disturb the peaceful carrying on of industrial activities. Even the late war, remote from us, fostered and developed our industrial organization instead of destroying it, as it did in Russia and some other countries within the war zone. Here is no declared economic blockade. To this North American community the avenues to all the resources of modern civilization are free and open. Here is no inheritance out of the past of abnormally retarded economic development, or of crippled economic powers. Instead, it is universally recognized that this community stands at the peak of human endeavor in productive power. Here there is abundance of modern material equipment for productive purposes, much of it standing idle; Russia is almost without it. Here there is an industrial population, skilled in the arts of modern production. Russia's population is largely untrained and unskilled in modern ways of production. Russia suffers from a shortage of things for reasons herein stated. With us there is an abundance of things, of skill and knowledge, of material means of production and natural resources, yet there is also suffering here. Great numbers of the people are approaching destitution and desperation, and the outlook for next winter is a black one for the North American community. With like conditions present in every capitalist country in the world, (two and a half millions out of work in England) yet possessing such superior advantages over the people of Russia, how can our editors boast of our accomplishments and sneer at Russia's in the face of the manifest failure of our own industrial system as a going concern, to supply a better standard of well-being than it does to the community as a whole? Is their capitalist mentality logic-tight, impervious to the bombardment of facts in their own social situation which are a reproach to the age we live in? Belief in their sincerity we extend to the misinformed, uncritical, readers of the press who still see the social situation through the glamour of traditional preconceptions. But not to the editors: they handle the facts, and by the legerdemain of their craft, turn them into unrealities.

Russia had its famines prior to a working class administration gaining power in that country. Another article in this issue, "Russia's Famine," furnishes evidence of that.

C. S.

Readjustment

"BACK to normalcy" has captivated us. Like its predecessor, "the long way to Tipperary," it has a pleasing jingle—and the same quality of meaning. Therefore is it of much acceptance amongst us, for it is always easier to chase away care with a song than with logical deduction. Still, catch words do not solve problems, any more than reforms can abolish slavery. The remedy for both is knowledge. And through bitter disillusionment knowledge is slowly thrust upon us.

"More production" is yet a common cry. "We must work harder and live harder," says the press. "We must throw off our coats and work," say the lords temporal, while the lords spiritual, in their wanton beefiness, translate the order into the slave ethic of "grace," "patience," "humility," and "regeneration." More production! Yes, But how? Every individual seems as eager to ward it off as Britain is to avert the "dumping" of the indemnity.

Briefly stated, readjustment means markets. It means the conversion of industry from the necessities of war to the necessities of peace; the substitution of the market of construction for the greatly diminished market of destruction. How is that to come to pass?

Since everything is produced for profit, obviously nothing will be produced which does not furnish profit. Individual industries, looking at market conditions and finding them unstable and uncertain, slow down on operation which, in turn, increases unemployment, diminishes purchasing power, limits reinvestments and augments the condition of instability. More production thus appears as the necessity of capitalist society, while its opposite ties the activities of separate operators. There is the irreconcilable contradiction, founded on private property and resulting in the antagonism of class. Yet, patently, all production cannot stop—or society must perish. As patently, production cannot be carried on under the old conditions of anarchic competition. And what then?

War time activities have carried the modern machine industry to an unequalled pitch of excellence. Its efficiency is greater; its co-ordination more harmonious; its organization more perfect; its direction and control more complete. As a corollary there is less necessary labor required, less duplication of effort, less waste of competition, and the decay,—in ever-growing degree—of individual power, and with it individual safety.

But here advanced production is barred by retarded distribution. The new methods of the former are at variance with the old means of the latter. The traffic in war commodities has resulted in the most abnormal exchange conditions—conditions whose results cannot be offset by any financial wizardry. Cancellation of war debts would but precipitate the social climax. And how could an increase in the volume of commerce change the situation if the profits and accumulation are to remain with the creditors? Countries of low exchange are prevented from buying, i.e., importing. They must, therefore, to the uttermost, develop their native resources. But they can sell on the world market at less price than can their competitors with high exchange, because they can produce for less. Hence the involution of exchange conditions, to that extent, threatens the power of "creditor" nations. True, such conditions cannot obtain indefinitely, since all countries are interdependent on each others commerce, but they can—and probably will—obtain long enough to usher in a new menace and a higher level of industry.

Society cannot be rescued from its present economic slough by any haphazard methods, or tentative experiments. Financial exigencies have already determined that. Production, in nations of low exchange, is forced by the exchange situation itself to greater economies and cheap production. That is to say, more efficient industrial organizations,—or in other words, greater and more powerful combinations of capital. The industries of the Central Powers, caught between the indemnity and the necessity of domestic exploitation, must be highly or-

ganized and concentrated, i.e., corporately capitalized. French and British industry, to meet the crushing weight of reparations, and maintain their "commercial victory" must follow the same way, and all Europe fall in with the methods of the strong arm. The ambitious Stinnes, the progressive Loucheur, the consolidation of iron and coal, the recent mergers in British industry and finance, all point the moral of the tale.

But this process reacts on the strong "creditor" nations. They cannot stand by, mere passive spectators of this desperate struggle with destitution for greater profits. They cannot afford to quarrel with market conditions. They must produce competitively on the terms offered by the world market—or lose their places in the sun. They too, must key their industries to the power-shaft of new necessity. And out of this new need comes the higher industry and the new menace. For this new industry will be individualistic competitive industry, but interlocking, international groups organized co-operatively, collectively directed, and controlling production to the effective market: colossal monopolies, with their inevitable supremacy of power, in a death grapple for permanence and privilege. And because this control of production and exchange cannot possibly satisfy the needs of society, we of the laboring class may find ourselves in the grip of a tyranny unequalled, of a misery unmeasured, of a slavery unfathomed and spirit breaking.

True, there is the possibility of revolution. But, today, the proletariat seems to be in no hurry to assert itself. It still retains faith in the prosperity of tomorrow, and consorts with the most grotesque reforms. It is capitalist minded, riven with disension, divided in policy, international only in name, pitifully shackled by love and want to the whirling wheels of gain. What the psychological factors in the situation may be we cannot gauge, nor their influence. But we do know that society is indomitable in its endurance of misery. Certainly, the conditions for revolution are rosy ripe, but who dare say that the powers to effect it are as mature? And if not, the mighty struggle for markets must go on, and with that struggle, concurrently, the greater subjugation of the mass, the wider spreading misery, the snapping tensivity of class conflict, the fiery furnace of new war.

Before Socialism can be, the mediocre, reactionary middle classes must cease to be. Then the industrial overlord and the industrial slave will face each other in the fog clear issue of the class struggle. That may be the final achievement of capital. And it is going to its task splendidly. The "Manchester Guardian" says editorially (substantially) that it is really alarming, the way in which the prerogatives of parliament are passing over into Cabinet direction and control. No doubt. And if the "Manchester Guardian" would look at that, and kindred phenomena in the unflickering light of fact, and not through the chromatic lense of idealist preconceptions, it would easily recognize that those changes in governmental procedure were the indisputable evidences of changes in economic power, and that Cabinet control was but the political reflex of the modern colossus of monopoly. And the "alarming" element in it is that it sounds the knell of the petit bourgeoisie, its Liberal perversions, its reactionary individualism and obsolete competition. But to us, the toilers and wealth producers, it is a call for further "preparedness," for it marks a step forward towards the final reckoning,—and emancipation. R.

RUSSIAN STUDENTS IN ENGLAND

Riga.—According to reports of Moscow papers the English government has given permission for 200 Russian students to attend universities of England and Scotland.—"Rosta Wein."

The S. P. of C. and the 3rd International

IN REPLY TO W. A. P.

It is with painful surprise that I have read Com. Pritchard's contribution to the controversy in the "Western Clarion" re the Third International. Many articles have appeared, pro. and con. and in some cases good arguments for and against affiliation, and it rests with those who have read these articles to decide which of the opposing sides has given the best reasons, i.e., the truest statements of facts, and have shewn the most capable insight of present day events.

How have the mighty fallen!

Rat-hole and sewer-pipe denizens, assisted by U. S. gold (looks like stolen from the capitalist press) is a poor argument, and places Com. Pritchard in the same class as those he condemns. I have no brief for the articles that were printed by the Committee of the Third International of Canada, but has he forgotten that in Russia, for many years prior to the revolution, education on Marxian lines was conducted in so-called rat-holes, and that that education has borne splendid fruit and has enabled the Soviet Government to so far maintain its position, or does he think that Lenin and Trotsky, and a few others are solely responsible?

One chief argument against affiliation to the Third International is that Canada is not yet ready educationally for a revolutionary movement! Was Russia? Notwithstanding the underground education, already referred to, the percentage of the Russian people having a proper understanding of capitalist society was small, yet a revolution took place, practically eliminating capitalist production and distribution. Why then did this happen? Economic conditions, which had at length reached an unbearable stage, due to the collapse of capitalist society in Russia, forced the people to revolt, and there being a certain percentage of the population possessing the proper knowledge, these were able to take the helm.

I maintain that what has happened in Russia will also happen in other countries, and that economic necessity will oblige the people to revolt, and make a change, in spite of the ignorance of the majority as to the true causes of their misery, and that therefore a world-wide organization of the revolutionary working class is necessary to assist in the inevitable struggle for mastery that may be forced upon us far earlier than some of us anticipate, if only to reduce to a minimum the loss of life and chaos that must ensue.

I will not enter into the discussion of the Theses of the Third International. Of one thing I am convinced; nothing is static, and as time develops, and it is found that the conditions laid down cannot function properly they will be changed. Some of our comrades seem to think, notwithstanding their supposed understanding of the absolute, that it does not apply to the Third International.

Kautskys have developed in the last few years in every country among the Socialists, and if before doing so they did good work, more is the pity that they have ceased to continue.

Lenin stated Kautsky wrote well eighteen years ago.—Nuf said.

O. MENGEL.

RUSSIAN PRESS OVER THE AZORES

Moscow.—"Gudok" writes over the intention of the American government to purchase the Azores for the erection of a naval base. "The possession of the Azores ensures the control over the sea route to India as well as to China and Japan by way of the Suez Canal. As the European capitalists are not hurrying with the payment of their war debts and the Anglo-Japanese alliance is a threat of war to America the latter seeks in this way to obtain possession of the key of the sea route to India so that in case of conflict it can cut England off from its allies."—"Posta Wein."

The Famines of Russia

ALTHOUGH as a general thing a non-partisan Providence makes the rain to fall alike upon the just and unjust, an exception must be made in the case of Russia, where the Bolsheviks are somehow to blame when the ground-hog sees his shadow, or the seed-corn rots in the ground. Such at any rate, is the impression created by the common editorial practice of holding the Bolsheviks responsible whenever the peasants fail for any reason to produce food enough for themselves, or to deliver a surplus to the towns. Naturally this interpretation of the news is put in jeopardy by any admission that the misbehaviour of the elements may mitigate the guilt of the Bolsheviks, for such an admission may suggest the advisability of a search for other conditions affecting the production and distribution of food, which are not directly attributable to Bolshevik activity or entirely subject to Bolshevik control.

Recent reports of drought and famine in Russia have put us in the mood for such an inquiry, which may properly begin, we think, with an examination of conditions in the good old days when the Bolsheviks had as little power in Russia as the Communist party has now in the United States. Very frequently our tory friends take occasion to remind us that in the pre-revolutionary era of peace and plenty, Russia was a grain-exporting country; which is, of course, the truth, but not the whole truth. At least Mr. H. N. Brailsford believes that it is not the whole truth, for in his recently published volume "The Russian Workers' Republic" he states that the surplus of grain for export

came solely from the Ukraine, the Volgo Valley, the Caucasus, and Siberia. Central and northern Russia were never at the best of times self-supporting, and it is only over these regions which have always had a food deficit, that Bolshevik rule has been uninterrupted. Their problem was to feed a country which never in Tsarist days had come near to feeding itself.

This statement is doubtless capable of statistical proof, and yet our case does not rest upon the establishment of this proof. Whatever may have been true of the several regions of Russia, each considered as a unit, it is quite certain that a huge proportion of the peasants themselves were unable to maintain their own lives by agriculture alone. At the time of the emancipation, in 1861, the peasants had been expropriated from a part of the land they had occupied as serfs, and excessive redemption dues had been imposed upon the lands allotted to them as freedmen. Heavily handicapped at the outset by these conditions, the muzhiks were quite unable to increase their holdings in proportion to the increase in their numbers, and at the end of half a century of "freedom," the average size of the plots occupied by peasant families was only a little more than half what it had been at the time of the emancipation. In "The Russian Peasant and the Revolution," Mr. Hindus says that in 1905

in forty-seven provinces of European Russia, out of the 11,956,876 peasant households, twenty-three per cent. had less than five dessiatines (13.5 acres) per household, and seventy per cent. had less than ten dessiatines (twenty-seven acres) per household, whereas according to the computation of Government experts the average family required at least 12.5 dessiatines (33.75 acres) to provide it with adequate sustenance.

Writing in 1904, Mr. Geoffrey Drage said that only 8.5 per cent. of the peasantry could spare any of their agricultural products for sale, while 70.7 per cent. could not produce enough food to meet their own needs. Such being the case, it is obvious that some of the food which the peasants themselves consumed, as well as a considerable proportion of the surplus exported to the towns and abroad, was produced on the estates which remained in the hands of the landlords.

For their insufficient allotments, the peasants

were obliged to pay an extortionate price. One authority estimates that at the prevailing market-price, the redeemed lands were worth 689 millions of roubles. The valuations actually fixed for redemption-purposes came to 923 millions, and by reason of the accumulations of interest, fines for delayed payments, and other like charges, the peasants had already paid down a total of 1,390 millions of roubles when further payments were cancelled at the time of the revolution in 1905. In its capacity as real estate agent for the nobles who had formerly held title to the redeemed lands, the Government had thus collected from the peasants a sum in excess of the value of these lands which was in effect a personal ransom. With allotments which would not yield enough food to keep body and soul together, much less produce a surplus to cover the redemption dues and the indirect taxes which replaced them in 1905, many of the peasants were driven to domestic competition with new factory-industries, and masses of them were dumped wholesale into the labor-market of an industrially backward country, where their part-time work on the landlords' estate and in the factories kept wages close to the level of starvation. Even the peasants' expedient of dividing their time between wage-work and the cultivation of their own lands did not save them from periodic disaster; thus in 1911 a crop-failure brought on famine, and the central and local authorities extended relief to eight million people.

To our way of thinking, it was primarily the near-starvation of the peasant food-producers of Russia that turned the respectable revolution of the Cadets into an economic earthquake. The Provisional Government had hardly come to power when the peasants began a jacquerie which was to continue indefinitely, without regard to the ineffectual opposition of the pre-Bolsheviks, or the superfluous approval of the Bolsheviks themselves.

Whether the Government condemned or subscribed to the seizure of the landlords' estates, the peasant uprising was preparing the way for a civil war in which the muzhiks would belong to one party, and the dispossessed landlords to the other; nor was it to be expected that industry and transportation could escape the ruinous effects of this civil war, whatever might be the disposition of the industrial workers and the Government. If the pre-war misery of the peasants was inevitable, then the agrarian revolution was inevitable: the shortage of imported and domestic manufactures to be offered in exchange for farm-produce was inevitable; and neither requisition nor "free trade" could forestall the famine in the towns, which was likewise inevitable.

By their direct attack upon the old land-system, the peasants themselves have cleared away the chief obstacle to their own well-being. As a class, they are now able to produce on their own lands all the food which they formerly produced, plus the surplus which they were obliged to purchase from the landlords. Many observers have reported that they have taken advantage of their new opportunities to such an extent that they are now better fed than they ever were in pre-revolutionary times. The pinch comes when drought or flood destroys the crops in a particular district, and forces the peasants to depend, as the towns must always depend, upon sources of supply over which they have no direct control. It is then, and then only, that the peasant as a food-consumer feels the effects of conditions in industry and transport which he himself, as a food-producer, has done so much to create.

In all this, there is very little that has to do with bolshevism. If the Bolsheviks could have prevented the starvation of the peasantry—in this grain-exporting country—in the days of the good Tsar Nicholas, they might have prevented the economic revolution and the subsequent starvation of many Russian townsmen, and of those peasants whom Providence occasionally tosses into the same dependent class with the dwellers in the towns. As things stand today, not what the Bolsheviks hope to do, but

what the peasants have done is the chief factor in the Russian situation. If the opposition of the peasants to the Bolshevik regime has been by no means so fierce as their opposition to the ex-landlords, it is because the Bolsheviks have acquired in the work that the peasants themselves have done to relieve the starvation of their own class, the hundred and twenty million food-producers of the Old Empire—"The Freeman," (New York).

THE POSSIBILITIES OF TRADE.

TRADER will revive, sing the "wise birds" of the press, and the approach of winter will see the world passing through the most acute form of economic depression into the bright lights of prosperity.

Staid, conservative bank presidents, presidents of railroads, members of Rotary clubs, in soft, lulling tones join in this light-hearted melody—"Trade will Revive."

Whence springs the inspiration for the song; have the boundary lines and territory which once separated the countries of Europe, been restored to their 1914 settings; are the debts and deeds of war forgiven and forgotten, that the joyful notes gather strength from day to day?

No; crop reports from Europe and Great Britain announce drought, the worst in generations threatens those countries with famine; and bankers, jobbers, and the motley crew that make up the "rif-raf" of capitalist society; see in the sorry plight of Europe payments from farmers in this country for those outstanding debts contracted for binder-twines, binders, gas, worn-out parts of Fords, food, clothing and shelter for themselves and stock, all of which are but little necessities, though hard to obtain, required for the greater development of the land.

Farmers and the unemployed in Canada will receive help from financiers in Great Britain; these latter fry will open the money-bags containing the wages for the harvesting of Canada's crop which, when it snugly reposes beside the greater part of last year's in the elevators of the country will prove a more potent force for winning concessions from Russia, and a more powerful weapon of coercion than the forces of the State, for reconciling the conflicting interests in Upper Silesia and the Rhur Valley. A monopoly on the lives of the people of Europe is what this control over the wheat supply of Canada amounts to.

The devitalizing effects of starvation for seven years on the population of Central Europe, the disease and pestilence arising out of this condition, the crimes and vice which multiply as these conditions become worse, threatens the very props of civilization and the entire fabric of capitalist society, even to sounding the death-knell of the race.

Such a condition can not go on unchecked: no slaves, no profits; but not until natural forces supported the more powerful of economic forces was it possible; so long as there was a show of foodstuffs in those countries it was possible to keep up the conflict in each others interest.

A common foe faces each European country today, famine, and circumstances favor British and American capitalists to establish reconciliation in their interests. The proofs of this are not to hand yet; but the speculations in this direction become more logical and sound. Hence the song—"Trade will revive."

To what extent will trade revive; or it is too problematical to write about? These are the facts:

Conferences are already taking place in Berlin, Paris, London and New York, representatives of banking institutions are discussing with the foremost representatives of the financial world the problem of credit and the best methods for dealing with the economy of Europe.

To start industry again in a number of European countries is a task that will require years and enormous

(Continued on page 4)

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ECONOMIC COUNCILS.

Economic Councils are being formed all over the country, composed of representatives of individual business houses, bankers' associations, employers' associations, ex-soldiers' organizations, universities, the armed forces, the federal, provincial and municipal governing bodies, ministerial associations and pure and simple labor bodies.

If the operative causes are not understood, the effects of the capitalist mode of wealth production and appropriation are at least beginning to be recognized, even anticipated, for present distress among the working masses throughout Canada is almost forgotten in anticipation of the sure and certain misery of the coming winter. It is not necessary that these worried gentlemen should understand the workings of the system of things; their ignorance of the economics of this system of wealth production may be colossal, but they have a faint understanding that the life of capitalism lies in the exploitation of human labor, and that its watchword is profit.

An idle working class means starvation and misery for that class, and for the employing class it means the profitless anxiety of dull trade, idle capital and a reduced rate of interest. The worker's problem of existence confronts him as one who possesses nothing but the capacity to produce, and his master's problem is to devise ways and means to exploit that capacity and to continue the process. But the development of the process itself creates a surplus population of wage laborers which, in turn, squeezes wages to a low level and stretches the working day where employment may be had, thus tending to readjust in a small measure the falling rate of profit prevalent in times like these.

Therefore, in times like these the employing class takes upon itself the task of preparation, in common council, for relief measures to ease the wrath and hunger of the unemployed in the unprofitable season ahead.

With all their dull stupidity, falling trade balances and sickly finances prompt them to a state of panic in face of a growling working class, whose producing capacity must lie idle while there is no market for the goods on hand. Recognition of the workers' distress, through their own present hunger for profit prompts them to speak "in the community spirit" for the "common welfare." We are pleased to see their anxiety, astonishment would overwhelm us if they were lacking in effort to conceal it behind a mask of hypocrisy.

SECRETARIAL NOTES.

Conspicuous headlines in the Rochester, N. Y., press announce that "Charles McNamara O'Brien, leader of the Proletarian Party" will soon be brought to trial.

O'Brien was arrested on December 28, 1919, when the famous (or infamous) Lusk Committee raided the Labor Lyceum, 580 St. Paul St., Rochester, N. Y. Later, he was indicted by the Grand Jury on a charge of "Criminal Anarchy." Since then he was again arrested by the federal authorities and the charge has been continuously hanging over his head, no doubt to be pressed by the State authorities at what they in their wisdom consider to be the opportune moment. These recent advices indicate that he is now to be tried on the indictment rendered nearly two years ago.

The press articles referred to seem calculated to

help create appropriate prejudice in the community from which the jury is likely to be selected, not only against O'Brien but also against the Proletarian Party, which is striving to obtain signatures from 1,500 electors so as to be on the official ballot at election time. Our correspondent, Sol. Horowitz, from whose letter these remarks are constructed says:—

"Prosecution and persecution of working class organizations by the party in power was encouraged and practised more by the Wilson administration than by any other in the history of this country. Read 'Report upon the illegal practices of the United States Department of Justice,' published May, 1920, and signed by twelve prominent lawyers residing in different parts of the U. S. A. The articles in the local press about O'Brien, together with what had happened, and is happening in other parts of the country indicate that extreme violation of the constitutional and personal liberties of the most progressive and aggressive members of the labor movement is also the policy of the present administration."

Charlie O'Brien's case has been frequently referred to in these columns since January, 1920. Contributions for defense will be forwarded from this office, or they may be sent to Louis Stark, 580 St. Paul St., Rochester, N. Y.

Correction.—In the article in our last issue, "A Review of Capitalism in 1921," by R. K., figures French naval expenditures for this year read 11,416,000,000 francs. This should read 1,416,000,000.

Local (Vancouver) No. 1 of the S. P. of C. wish to call attention to the state of the local's finances. The propaganda meetings are in danger of being cut off or interrupted through lack of funds. Literature sales are low and returns from collections are insufficient to meet expenses. All comrades who are able to meet back dues are requested to do so at once. Harry Grand, secretary, has been successful through individual letter writing in gathering in a few dollars, and these remarks are inserted here in order that he may be helped to gather in a few more. Other locals are meeting similar difficulties, and where possible, dues payments now in arrears should be made at once.

Comrade J. A. McDonald writes to say he has arrived in Sydney, N. S. W. He reports considerable activity in the movement there (the usual 57 varieties), and has already started to contribute his share to its learning. He spoke on the "Domain" July 2nd in the afternoon and indoors in the evening. His reputation as a speaker and Socialist educator has preceded his arrival, the first question being, as soon as they knew he came from Frisco: "Do you know Jack McDonald?"

The "Clarion" scribes continue to spread their ideas over all the earth. "The Socialist" (Glasgow) reproduces Peter T. Leckie's contribution on "The Industrial Revolution," from his series "Materialist Conception of History"; "The Workers' Dreadnought" (London, England) reproduces "Lessons of the Miners' Strike" by "R," with this editorial introduction: "The following article appeared in the 'Western Clarion,' the official organ of the Socialist Party of Canada. We reproduce it because we think it will prove interesting to the miners of this country to know how our 'cousins' regard their tactics." "The Confederate" (Brandon) reprints three articles from our columns, among them Harrington's article "Ourselves and Parliament," which is calmly inserted as an editorial without acknowledgment to its author or to the "Clarion." That is bad enough to go on with but our main kick is that the article is cut and trimmed, no doubt to suit "Confederate" needs.

Now, all these references to the widely accepted wisdom of the Clarion "staff" of writers are not intended for glorification. We just wish to gently suggest the wisdom of general attention to the following paragraph as of practical moment and well worth reading:

THE PRESENT ISSUE IS NUMBER 849. IF THE NUMBER ON YOUR SUBSCRIPTION LABEL IS 850, YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRES WITH NEXT ISSUE.

Thereupon follows, of course, "direct action!"

HERE AND NOW.

Following One Dollar each: A. Shulman, A. Mogridge, J. Luft, A. R. Sinclair, O. Rayner, R. O. Robson, Wm. Braes, W. H. Camfield, D. Oliva, F. H. James, H. H. Hanson, D. J. Sullivan, W. S. Matthews, J. Olson, J. W. Dargie, G. M. Barrett, Jake Klein, J. Lynes, M. Wallerstein, F. Maynard, Wm. J. Kennedy, J. Muldoon, S. Gelfan.

Following Two Dollars each: S. R. Keeling, C. W. Sies, H. O. Mills, F. J. Connett, D. Stewart, R. C. McCutcheon, E. P. Solomon, H. J. B. Harper.

Sid Earp, \$1.50; M. C. Robson, 50¢; Wm. Glenn, \$3; Alex. Shepherd, \$3.50.

Total subscriptions received from 28th July to 10 August, inclusive—\$47.50.

Our persistent habit of directing attention to the need for subscriptions must continue. The paper is in danger of reverting to a monthly basis if we do not meet with better financial success. We know that conditions now prevalent are not conducive to proletarian prosperity, but this note of alarm must be sounded now or it may be too late. Receipts during the past few months have been insufficient to meet printing costs and accounts due are increasingly hard to collect.

Now that the harvest prospects show signs of failure there will be many workers between coast and coast who will provide good audiences for increased propaganda effort. We have constant calls for speakers from as far east as Halifax, and we are considering ways and means of meeting the need for widening the propaganda field. The work must be done—we don't exactly know how expenses are to be met—but it will be done. We never have had a better opportunity for propaganda. Let us strive to take advantage of it. We can achieve better results if all hands will bend to the task. These are hard times for financing, but that should not interrupt propaganda work.

NAPHTHA CONCESSIONS IN AKU AND GROSNY.

"Nowyj Put" reports: The question of the concessions in Baku and Grosny has been settled in a practical manner. The Central Economic Council of Soviet Russia and of the Soviet Republic of Azerbeidchan adopt the same point of view, namely that the Soviet republics are not in the position to restore the oil fields of the two districts by their own efforts in a short time. As however the need for oil is so great they cannot afford to wait until they have restored the economic forces of their own lands. They intend to give a part of the oil fields to foreign firms under the condition that the foreigners shall electrify their own undertakings and also those of the Soviet republic. In the last two weeks there have been a number of meetings of workers in both districts and the political and economic significance of the concessions has been explained to them.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF TRADE

(Continued from page 3)

mous capital to complete. But one thing is certain, every individual member of the financial world is conscious of the fact that until the industrial life of these countries is again normal, industrial stagnation, economic depression, will continue in every country outside of Europe. Thus, the workers of the world need not expect to ever again see the time when jobs were plentiful. It is true that with the establishment of an extensive credit system short spasms of trade will be noticeable; congestion will be relieved in warehouses, stores, and cold storages, and a certain number of workers will be given jobs to fill them up once more.

In countries like Great Britain, whose chief market for supplies of essential material for commodity production, and most of her exports, was Europe; here the workers need only expect a continuance of large scale unemployment. And in countries like the United States, whose chief market is on the other side of the Pacific, and in the countries south of her; here the workers can look for an ever-increasing flow of emigrants and more intense competition for jobs, with an ever-lowering standard of living, while the burden of taxation upon the propertied class will become greater as the years roll on.

These are but some of the possibilities of trade and well within the known facts. But who is to say that the industrial activity of Europe can ever again be stirred under capitalism, with economic forces within those countries eating at the very vitals of capitalism and the not unlikely natural forces acting in conjunction with these for years yet—for drought has followed drought for years in this old world before and played at times a notable part in the transformation of society.

R. K.

Concerning Value

The Merchant and Commerce. Profit Accruing From Exchange. Independent Development of "Labor" and "Supply and Demand" Theories.

The Pre-capitalist Era. Identity of "Labor Cost," "Cost of Production," "Value" and "Price."

By "GEORDIE."

"So long as merchants' capital promotes the exchange of products between undeveloped societies, commercial profit does not only assume the shape of outbargaining and cheating, but also arises largely from these methods. Leaving aside the fact that it exploits the difference in the prices of production of the various countries (and in this respect it tends to level and fix the values of commodities), those modes of production bring it about that merchants' capital appropriates to itself the overwhelming portion of the surplus-product, either in its capacity as a mediator between societies, which are as yet largely engaged in the production of use-values and for whose economic organization the sale of that portion of its product which is transferred to the circulation, or any sale of products at their value, is of minor importance; or, because under those former modes of production, the principal owners of the surplus-product, with whom the merchant has to deal, are the slave holder, the feudal landlord, the State (for instance, the Oriental despot), and they represent the wealth and luxury, which the merchant tries to trap.

"Merchants' capital in its supremacy everywhere stands for a system of robbery, and its development, among the trading nations of old and new times, is always connected with plundering, piracy, snatching of slaves, conquest of colonies."—Capital, vol. III, p. 289.

I have, so far, attempted to connect the labor theory of value with the conditions prevailing in the handicraft stage of industry. This was a step in which:—

- (1) Production was for use—for a livelihood.
- (2) The tools of production were few and simple and were owned by the individual producers.
- (3) The skill and training required in the various crafts was fairly uniform.
- (4) The raw materials were such as lay close to hand.
- (5) The processes of production and the necessary labor-expenditure required for each product were common knowledge.

It seems reasonable to assume that, in such a society the exchange of local products would take place on the basis of labor-cost, that "cost of production" and "value" would be identical, and that the value of labor (labor-power) and the product of labor would also be identical.

We may also say the same of "price" seeing that the money-commodity would be, in early times at least, a local product and would fall under the same conditions. Even if the money-commodity were not a local product this would not affect the relations obtaining between the local products.

Value, cost of production, labor-cost and price, which we now know as distinct categories, could not, therefore, at that time be separated in thought seeing that they were identical in fact.

On this point Marx says:

"In order that the prices at which commodities are exchanged with one another may correspond approximately to their values, no other conditions are required but the following:

- (1) The exchange of the various commodities must no longer be accidental or occasional.
- (2) So far as the direct exchange of commodities is concerned, these commodities must be produced on both sides in sufficient quantities to meet mutual requirements, a thing easily learned by experience in trading, and therefore a natural outgrowth of continued trading.
- (3) So far as selling is concerned, there must be no accidental or artificial monopoly which may enable either of the contracting sides to sell commodities above their value or compel others to sell below value."—Capital, vol. III, p. 209.

We may assume that, in the absence of any one or all of these conditions, there would tend to be a divergence of price from value as determined by labor-cost. This fact soon became recognized and people tried to take advantage of it and to profit by manipulating the market. This tendency was met by penalizing the "trade offences" of "engrossing" and "forestalling" or "regrating."

To "engross" any commodity meant to buy up the

whole, or the greater part, of any article appearing on the market. The "engrosser" might use his advantage to increase the price, or on the other hand, he might, by dealing wholesale, sell cheaper and do all the business. Either of these courses was a trade offence.

"Forestalling" meant buying up goods before they reached the market, and was probably much the same thing as "regrating" which has been defined as "buying and selling again any goods or victuals in the same market or within five miles thereof" with a view to a profit, of course. All of these practices were, at the time we are speaking of, considered offences and were, no doubt, engaged in by people who, in whole or in part, hoped to make a living by commerce, rather than in production.

This brings us to a consideration of the merchant and commerce. As we have seen, commerce is very much older than industry—in the modern sense of this word. As Prof. Jenks put it, "exchange precedes production in the order of ideas."

The barter which took place on the fringes of the self-sustaining communities of primitive times grew into an extensive trade in the classical and feudal periods and was carried on by trading nations who, having a natural or acquired aptitude for trading or possessing advantageous locations, acted as intermediaries in commerce and as carriers. Such nations were the Cretans and Phoenicians in ancient times and the Italian republics and the Hanse towns in later times.

Now, we observe: (1) that the merchant was not a producer but made his profit in the act of exchange; (2) that the goods were, for the most part, either surplus products or the products of subject or slave labor; (3) that they were the products of relatively distant countries and that the conditions of production were unknown to the parties to the exchange; (4) the conditions of exchange were largely in control of the merchant who was thus able to dictate terms. The trader was thus enabled to exploit both parties to the exchange as sellers as well as buyers, and reaped enormous profits in the transaction. Of course, he did not always get away with it. In early days travel by sea or land was slow, laborious and dangerous, and, in addition there were Barbary Corsairs and robber barons. The merchant of former times was therefore very aptly called an "adventurer" and while his gains were large when his "ship came home" it very often did not.

Commerce, however, continued to develop. The progress of industry; the increase of commodities; the rise of the great European States and consequent suppression of piracy; the improvements in navigation and increased facilities for travel bring about a condition of affairs in which commerce, instead of being "accidental and occasional" became an essential part of social life. This line of development leads us to the point at which the transition from feudal to capitalist production takes place, and that is another question which I hope to take up in the next article. What I wish to point out just now is that among people who made their living in the way I have just described a theory of value based on labor-cost could not possibly arise. Industry and the facts of production were foreign to them, and their wealth, so far as they were concerned, was made in exchange rather than in production. Instead, there emerged a series of concepts of quite a different order. For instance, the conception that money or bullion was the only real wealth, which was the chief dogma of the Mercantile school; the idea that profit was somehow generated in the processes of exchange and those concepts concerning value which were later formulated as the law of supply and demand. This economic law was stated in the year 1804 by Lord Lauderdale in the following terms:

"With respect to the variations in value, of which everything valuable is susceptible, if we could suppose for a moment that any substance possessed intrinsic and fixed value so as to render an assumed quantity of it constantly, un-

der all circumstances, of equal value, then the degree of all things, ascertained by such a fixed standard, would vary according to the proportion betwixt the quantity of them and the demand, and every commodity would of course be subject to a variation from four different circumstances.

"1. It would be subject to an increase of its value from a diminution of its quantity.

"2. To a diminution of its value from an augmentation of its quantity.

"3. It might suffer an augmentation in its value from the circumstance of an increased demand.

"4. Its value might be diminished by a failure of demand.

"As it will, however, clearly appear that no commodity can possess fixed and intrinsic value so as to qualify it for a measure of value of other commodities, mankind are induced to select as a practical measure of value that which appears to be least liable to any of these four sources of variation which are the sole causes of alteration of value.

"When in common language, therefore, we express the value of any commodity, it may vary at one period from what it is at another, in consequence of eight different contingencies:

"1. From the four circumstances above-stated, in relation to the commodity of which we mean to express the value.

"2. From the same four circumstances in relation to the commodity we have adopted as a measure of value."

The above statement by no means represents the final form of this law, but is here given as being more or less identified in thought with the period I have been speaking of—the pre-capitalist era. In any case I expect to have considerable to say on the subject before I get through.

So far, it has been my purpose to show that the labor and the supply and demand theories developed more or less independently of each other. We have next to consider a period in which they came in conflict and the concepts which arose as a result of their fusion.

MAKING THE PUNISHMENT FIT THE CRIME.

In the matter of making the punishment fit the crime they seem to be ordering things well in Russia. Thus it is pleasant to hear that a young lady of Moscow who was found guilty by the "People's Court" of conducting anti-Semitic propaganda was sentenced to attend a course of study in political science at the University until she should have passed the final examination. Another instance is recorded of certain counter-revolutionaries who, having attacked the Soviet Government's treatment of the intellectuals, were sentenced to prepare a report on the subject giving an exact statement of the facts. This seems to be an excellent way of turning courts of law into courts of justice, and it is to be hoped that Senator France will find time during his trip with a view to enlightening our own Department of Justice thereon.—"The Freeman."

NO USE FOR TEETH.

De Trey and Company, who manufacture and deal in artificial teeth, &c., report that their business in the first six months of 1920 exceeded that of any previous half year. Then there set in that shrinkage of trade which still persists, and the effects of which have been intensified by labor troubles, adverse movements in rates of exchange, and other causes. The result was a considerable reduction in the second half of the year in the demand for the company's products, and at the close of the year, instead of exceeding that of the previous year the net profit was nearly £40,000 smaller.

This report appeared in the "Manchester Guardian."

The Saracenic Contribution to Learning

THE trend eastward among the Mohammedan peoples of the proletarian revolution awakens a desire to know more of these potential allies of ours than the average historian, with his religious prejudices reveals.

Religions being an expression of the central life of a group, i. e., Matriarchal relations, suggest female deities; animism yields to antropomorphism. Feudal religions emphasize authority, etc. Therefore, in dealing with the Saracenic contributions to history it is incumbent on us to investigate the conditions under which it arose.

Saracenic (from the Arabic word Sarquin—to rise) was variously employed by mediæval writers to designate the Mohammedans of Syria and Palestine and the Arabs generally or the Arab-Berbers of northern Africa who conquered Spain, Italy, Sicily and invaded France. At a later date it was employed as a synonym for infidel nations against whom crusades were preached and was thus applied to the Seljuks of Iconia, Turks and others. The work appears as early as the first century of the Christian era, when it was applied by the Greek writers to some Arab tribes of the Syrian desert of Tih.

The rise and spread of Mohammedism has many parallels to the rise and spread of Christianity some six centuries previous. Both founders claimed a common ancestor in Abraham the founder of Judaism, a monotheistic faith. Both claimed divine inspiration from the same God. Both arose and developed in conformity to the economic conditions of time and place.

Although Christ, from whom Christianity derives its name, was supposed to have lived in Judea the religion arose and flourished in certain parts of Europe peculiarly fitted for its growth and development. Judea was entirely untouched and Christianity left no impression upon its historians. It was as though Christ had never lived.

This was because the Jewish religion was sufficient to the Jews; a national God, a God of war to whom they could look for deliverance from the oppressor, as in the days of Moses, Joshua, etc. The pacific Christ did not, and could not find a place in their hearts. But in Rome and Greece the Christians made marvellous headway, first among the slaves, later among the citizens. It suited their needs. Judea was a province of the Roman Empire and the Jewish race had been a subject race many centuries in turn to Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome.

Mohammed was a merchant prince, owner of great caravans plying a lucrative trade over territory which had not been subject to any other nation, having maintained their independence by force of arms, aided by geographical juxtaposition to the great Arabian desert. The people were largely traders carrying between east and west, a sturdy, independent lot. No slave religion for them.

In the hundred years following the Hegira (622 A.D.) a Saracenic empire was established which extended from Turkestan to the shores of the Atlantic. Mohammed made himself master of Mecca from which flowed the trade routes of the east in 629. By 709 the Saracens had extended their sway over northern Africa to beyond the Strait of Gibraltar and had subjugated almost the whole of Spain by 711. From Spain they passed to Gaul, where their progress was arrested by Charles Martel near Poitiers in 732. Sicily was conquered in 827-878, and early in the tenth century their incursions extended into the Burgundian territories.

The disruption of this great Saracenic realm began about the eighth century when the western portion broke away from the rest and became a separate State with Cordova as its capital. The social forces underlying the rise, spread and decay of the empire were many and varied, but as this article started out to deal with the contribution to learning of this particular period, it would be impossible to dwell on any particular phase except to say that slave production prevailed having lingered on in the east after feudalism had obtained in western Europe. Volumes have been written on the religious and mili-

tary aspects of Mohammedism, but of the cultural—far less.

However, in Amer Ali's "Short History of the Saracens" we find this: "No country in the world enjoyed a higher degree of agriculture than Spain under the Arabs. They raised agriculture to a science. Every kind of soil was appropriated to that specie of culture for which it was best adapted. The Spaniards are indebted to the Arabs for the introduction of rice, sugar-cane, the cotton tree, saffron, spinach and that infinite variety of fine fruits which have now become almost indigenous to the peninsula from which the use and culture of them have gradually been introduced into various parts of Europe. Vast groves of palms and olives were left by them in Spain."

The luxury of their palaces rivalled those of Rome herself. The fine arts also flourished as is attested by the arabesques, paintings and mosaics finished with care and accuracy, harmonious in color and design; the graceful columns and brass work grillings gave evidence of a high degree of skill in the more artistic handicrafts.

The sovereigns of Granada rivalled the Caliphs of Cordova in their patronage of learning and art. Under their liberal and enlightened government Granada became the home and birthplace of eminent scholars, distinguished poets and accomplished soldiers. It was not polite literature alone which was fostered by the Arab rulers of Granada. History, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, the natural and exact sciences in general, medicine and music were cultivated with equal eagerness.

The government of each academy was entrusted to a rector who was chosen from the most enlightened scholars. No religious distinction was made in these appointments, and learned Jews and Christians were often appointed to the posts of rector. Real learning, in the estimation of the Arabs, "was of greater value than the religious opinion of the literate." The age of chivalry had no greater devotee than the Arab cavalier. Women and cleanliness held high place in the estimate of the Arab, contrary to the generally accepted idea. The latter probably being a compliment to the former. The knowledge of political science was also well advanced in conformance with their methods of production. In fact we gather that the Saracenic invasion of Europe, carrying with it as it did the knowledge of the arts, science and literature, was a great factor in the recovery of Europe from the anarchy and chaos following the downfall of Rome.

The architecture of the Mohammedans was filled with rich and varied styles based principally on Byzantium and Persian models adapted to new purposes and different ideals. The mosques, mausoleums, minarets, knaus, hospitals, bazaars, palaces, oratories and fountains form a varied group of buildings. The Moorish school of Spain (Cordova and Granada) and the Egypto-Arabic school of Cairo are the best known, but the Syrian and Palestinian centred in Damascus, and the Persian centred at Bagdad and Ispchay, the latter sending offshoots as far as India and Asia Minor. The development of the dome; the stilted, horse-shoe and pointed arches, stalactite vaulting, geometrical decorations are the chief characteristics of the Mohammedan schools. The latest addition to the artistic heritage was through the Turkish conquest of Constantinople in the 15th century which led to a return in greater force of the influence of the Byzantium.

It will be remembered that it was at the siege of Constantinople that the greatest contribution to military science was demonstrated—the first successful gunpowder.

Under handicrafts—rugs, tapestries, and ceramies were widely known products, while the famed Damascus steel had a prominent place in the romantic literature of the Victorian period, the knowledge and technique of which were preserved and introduced into Europe largely by the returned Crusaders.

Oriental rugs are always woven in one piece. Persia is the home of the Oriental rug. The finest in the world, both in past centuries and today, came from Persia, and while very little seems to be known of the rug-making of the ancients, rug-making was introduced into Europe by the Moors, whose palaces and mosques were adorned with magnificent rugs. They were introduced into Europe again in the latter part of the 13th century by the returned Crusaders, who also brought back with them a knowledge of the technique of rugs and also many other Oriental luxuries, two of which were tapestry and ceramies, which laid the foundation of those industries.

Tapestries were the forerunner of rugs, the earliest of which was embroidery work, being the handiwork largely of the women slaves and concubines of the harems. On some pieces a whole life-time was spent. The writer has had the opportunity to see in an exhibition of Persian bronzes and tapestries a rug which was embroidered for the throne room of the Shah of Persia which took one hundred women ten years to finish. Tapestries became the foundation of the era of industrial art, Flanders especially attaining renown for the earliest specimens of this fine art, which was followed by Brussels, Valenciennes and Turnay until in the latter part of the 16th century the richness and beauty of the weavings produced has caused the period to be termed the Golden Age of tapestry.

Ceramies, the art of the potter—the beginning of which Morgan uses to mark the introduction of barbarism—is of course the oldest art known. To trace the development of this art from its earliest conception would be a monumental task. All nations have contributed their quota to the advancement of this art, but it remained for the Saracens to preserve and disseminate the knowledge of the technical processes as it did most of those of the handicrafts which survived the dark ages.

While Christianity, conforming to feudal land-ownership became a stultifying and reactionary power, hid away in the bosom of the church, what little knowledge, mostly of a philosophical nature that it possessed, of the ancient civilizations Mohammedism preserved and spread abroad the scientific knowledge of the wonderful handicrafts to which those ancient civilizations had attained.

The discovery of steam and power machinery which gave such a tremendous impulse to production in western Europe, and the consequent competition of the cheaper manufactured articles has placed the handicraft products of the Mohammedan countries at a great disadvantage for the past few centuries.

In summing up, the historical function of the Saracens seems to have been that of bridging the gap between the ancient and modern civilizations. In view of the events developing in the east one stops to ponder if her bridge-making has ceased, or will she continue to function in that capacity between the present and future societies? Time alone can tell.

KATHERINE SMITH.

FOREIGN MAIL CONNECTIONS

Moscow. — According to a report of the Commissariat for Posts and Telegraphs great success is to be reported recently in respect to the postal connection with abroad. With Germany a provisional convention which has been signed ensures the transmission of mails over Lithuania and Lettland. A convention had been concluded with England as well as with the Danish Northern Telegraph Company who forwarded reports from Pekin, Kiachta, Nagasaki, and Vladivostok. The conventions with Poland and Turkey are about to be signed. The proposed international postal and telegraph convention with the Baltic states is now ready. This convention shall be extended to include Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, and Holland.

Materialist Conception of History

FOR BEGINNERS

Lesson 18—Continued

The Republican party of the States upholds federalism and protection; it is composed of the manufacturing interests, and the free trade party is composed of landowners. They are purely economic and do change whenever their economic interests change. Thus in 1852 the northern capitalist, belonging to the Republican party, passed over to the ranks of the Democratic party with little ado, because the loans they had made to the Southern slave owners gave them a deep interest in the landed property of the south. An analogous position was produced in 1889, when an increase on the duties of raw wool injured the woollen manufacturers and caused them to go over to the Democratic party. At the time of the Presidential election of 1888, large numbers of Republicans went over to the Democratic party, because they had taken up farming in the west, and a Republican victory meant the continuance of protective duties especially injurious to the farming class and enriching the manufacturing class. The same condition exists here in Canada; the manufacturing class favors tariffs while the farmers are free traders.

Loria points out where land rents prevail in Italy, the land rent provinces demand import duties on grain; the province where manufacturing prevails demand tariffs on imports of manufactured goods. The same condition existed in the other European countries previous to the war. If we follow the struggle of the Free Trade party of Britain we find all the labor legislation due to the Tory party which represented the landed interest, e.g., factory, mines and navigation laws. The landed gentry dominated parliament at this time and levied protective duties on grain to enable them to receive higher rents from the farmer. The rising capitalists to offset the increase of wages necessary to buy dearer food employed women and children, and extended the hours of labor. When the industrial workers began to revolt they were told their misery was a result of the Corn Laws. To offset this agitation the Tory party blamed the exploitation of the industrial system and lent their support to shorter hours. Every year a manufacturer named Villier pleaded for the abolition of the Corn Law, and Lord Ashley pleaded for factory legislation. When the industrial lords did get control they abolished quite a lot of land privileges, so if the worker did gain any advantage it was only incidental to the class struggle between the two classes whose revenue came from land or capital. With the abolition of the corn duty and fall in prices of foodstuffs wages fell 12 per cent. While mostly all labor laws restricting female and child labor were passed by Tory governments, none of them dealt with child or female labor in agriculture because this cheap labor was beneficial to the landed class in obtaining higher rents.

The McKinley tariff of America was the result of a Republican victory composed of large capitalists and manufacturers. In Belgium, where manufacturing interests dominate political power, social legislation is practically unknown. All social legislation has been the result of the struggle of two classes of revenue, and not from any consideration of the workers. When those interests enter coalitions all social legislation is checked.

Adam Smith quotes where the landed gentry consented to the prohibition of wool exports to the exclusive advantage of the manufacturers, in order to obtain in return the latter's adherence to a bounty of five shillings on the exportation of corn. Before this the commercial classes had the advantage of the enforcement of the Navigation Act.

One point we must have impressed on every worker that, although social legislation proceeds from proprietary classes, it can never go as far as to endanger the essential rights of property. Its direction has been entirely different according to what revenue class predominated politically. This

social legislation is of no interest to the worker, but is a mere patch on the system. Reformers are tolerated and supported by the ruling class so long as the reforms advocated are not injurious to the essential rights of property. The moment a reformer is intoxicated with success and attempts any measures which threaten property, his glory soon fades away like Robert Owen's, who at first was hailed as a great benefactor by the ruling class of Europe. The capitalist social legislation in England has been a series of English and Irish land acts restricting the power of landed property, and to landed political power we have seen is expressed the most of the factory and mines and other acts of a like nature.

We find any advantages obtained to the workers in all countries have been incidental in this struggle between land and capital. The towns in Italy obtained their earlier advantages because of the struggle between the Pope and the landowners, but in every country, whether under feudalism or capitalism, when the productive workers begin to be restless and show any taint of rebelling against their conditions, we see the owning classes closing their ranks in alliances.

You find the church allied with the nobility, sometimes the capitalist and sometimes with the king, according to the dictates of their economic interests. Loria says the massacre of St. Bartholomew was simply the result of the Catholic bourgeois insurrection against Huguenot nobility, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes was likewise instigated by the Catholic townsmen of France, who, finding themselves overwhelmed by the industrial competition of the Protestants of Nimes and other flourishing cities insisted upon the expulsion of the Huguenots.

The adulteration of the coinage was the trick of the landed nobility and the laws against usury we noticed in a previous lesson were instigated by landed property burdened with debt.

We as workers need not trouble over tariffs; we do not pay the taxes. It just appears on the surface that we do. People used to believe the sun rose, and our language is so impoverished that we have not been able to express the discovery, and we still talk of the sun rising. When the capitalists of England were rejoicing over the fall in wages the income tax was introduced. When the wages rose the income tax was abolished, and when wages fell to the minimum of existence the income tax law was definitely re-established, 1842.

In Germany the introduction of the income tax, May, 1851, corresponded with the reduction of wages to a minimum. The milling tax in Italy was abolished when agricultural wages fell to the minimum. The single taxer has pointed out that all the increase Henry Ford's employees received when they got five dollars a day went to pay increased rents and land values. Capitalism exerts such influence on finance that when war breaks out which makes increased public expenditure necessary, did you ever notice that no attempt is made to meet this increased expenditure with increased taxes but that resort is made to loans; by this means they benefit unproductive capital and shift the burden on to the wage slave to work and produce more is their slogan.

Loria tells us that Necker was forced to raise a loan on the eve of the Revolution in Italy because the rich would not listen to taxes. Pitt was forced to resort to a loan in the war with France, although the expenses could have been borne by taxation, but the property owners put up an energetic opposition to increased taxes. Not content with this success the Bank of England favored the institution of a sinking fund which resulted in immediately increasing the debt of England. Since then the invariable policy of all Chancellors of the Exchequer, no matter what party was in power, has employed the surplus of the Budget to the reduction of

taxes rather than paying off the debt, because the debt is too dear to our patriotic ruling class. If Gladstone's provisions had been followed, the expenses of the Crimean War could have been met out of current revenue, but his successor had recourse three times to loans, not because of unavoidable necessity, but rather a product of the self-interest of the capitalist class, and opening wider a field for unproductive capital. Do you wonder why they have shouted produce more, because all rent, interest and profit comes from unpaid labor?

There is only one source of wealth in any state and that is the labor of the peoples applied to natural resources. Remembering this fact the true nature of the war debt can be analysed. In peace time, the wealthy live upon the unpaid labor of the workers, as we are employed only on the condition we can produce a profit. When war breaks out on a large scale millions of workers are taken away from productive labor and cease to earn profits for their master. The ruling classes must receive some compensation for the loss of this power to exploit labor, and this situation is met by the war loan by means of which, banks, insurance companies and capitalists, lend their credit to the State. The State undertakes to pay interest on this credit, which is treated as if it was real capital, repayable out of the produce of peaceful industry. This payment of interest compensates the wealthy for the loss of profitable workers during their period in the trenches. The war loan substitutes the loss of profit when the worker is in the trenches and enables the wealthy to retain the unearned incomes, and the cry to produce more was based on the fact that the returned men were expected to pay the interest and capital of this debt accumulated in his absence, plus the standard of profit extracted from his labor in peace times.

Our next lesson will deal with the Revolution in Canada, 1837—1838.

PETER T. LECKIE.

RAISING OF THE CARGO FOR THE FIRST SHIPMENT OF RELIEF SUPPLIES FROM NEW YORK TO PETROGRAD

The following contributions were received by the Soviet Russia Medical Relief Committee for the fund to purchase relief supplies for the cargo of s.s. Storaker, due to sail from Brooklyn, New York, direct to Petrograd about the end of this month:—Howard Richards, jr., New York, \$0; Walter J. Conarty, Hammond, Ind., \$1.00; Julius Kohn, Milwaukee, Wis., \$2; Fred Holm, Milwaukee, Wis., \$3; A young friend, through Prof. E. H., \$100; Jacob Berger, Madison, Wis. (collection), \$37; Mrs. M. Frev, New York, \$1; W. Bennett, Vancouver, B. C. (collection), \$17.50; Mrs. T. M. Nagle, Wesleyville, Pa., \$5; Ladies Auxiliary, Winnipeg Committee, \$975; Daily Star Friendship Fund, Minneapolis, Minn., \$52.92; Buffalo Local Committee, \$101.05; E. L. Leapner, San Francisco, Calif., 30c; Jos. Voltz, Hoboken, N. J. (collection), \$68.50; Jos. Lencer, Phila., Pa., \$12—Total to date, \$1,426.27.

The Soviet Russia Medical Relief Committee has placed already \$1,500 order for 3,750 lbs. of dry milk. This order can be easily increased through further donations.

In addition to that the Committee has received a donation of 500 lbs. of dry milk from the "Dryco" Co., 15 Park Row, N. Y. City.

The steamer will carry to Petrograd also over 300 cases of clothing made by sewing circles ("Saturday" groups) formed by the members of Workmen's Circle Branch of San Diego, Calif.

Petrograd—the cradle of the Russian revolution—has been during the last seven years many times the goal of invasions from all sides. The population there had to defend their liberty against severe attacks and to undergo the hardest sufferings.

Let the s.s. Storaker bring over to the people of Petrograd from here this time instead of means of destruction plenty of relief supplies for their sick and children.

Address all the contributions to the Soviet Russia Medical Relief Committee, 110 Wtes 40th St., New York City.

The Effort Towards Convalescence

EVER since the severe collapse of last August the financiers have been making fitful and spasmodic efforts to revive the functioning of the disorganized economic organs and to turn the tide of the chronic malady that brings capitalism to death's door once in every few years. The capitalists are buoyant with hope of a recovery of their enfeebled system from the grip of the dread crisis. Some are hopeful of a very speedy recovery, while others, more conservative of mind, look for a more or less protracted duration of the hated industrial depression. This stage in the life cycle of an industrial period is hated because it is fraught with so many uncertainties to the individual establishment. It is the stage during which industry creeps along at a snail's pace, being rendered sluggish by the plethora of goods on the market; trade is uniformly dull and investors are universally extremely cautious.

The present aim of the masters of industry and finance is very modest. It is to bring the system back to normal conditions, that is, to conditions as they were in the good old days before the war, or as near as it is possible to bring it to those conditions. It is hurried on by the gradual liquidation of concerns that are bankrupt or near bankrupt. The liabilities of such concerns are scored against their assets, paper promises to pay are consigned to the waste basket, and a sound financial footing is usually given to such concerns by their being handed over to large corporations, whose financial strength has enabled them to withstand the crisis. Liquidation thus favors concentration in industry. It puts the control of industry more thoroughly into the hands of the large financial corporations. The backward movement is also helped along by the fall in price of commodities. This fall is a very hopeful sign to the capitalists that business will soon revive, and that economic organs will begin to function somewhat normally. The state of prices has been a bugbear to business ever since last August. The high prices have been held responsible for the industrial collapse by indiscriminating middle class critics. It has been charged that the prices of all commodities have been so high that people have refused to buy. The recalcitrant middle class protestant, going about the street in his old shoddy clothing in preference to buying high priced new ones, has been a prominent figure in newspaper lore for the last twelve months. But prices have begun to drop now—prices not only of sugar and beans, but also of labor-power. The fall in the price of the latter is the hopeful sign, to the capitalist, of the return to the glorious normal conditions. The lowering of wages is the medicine that puts new life into capitalism. One trade paper remarks that there can be no permanent advance in industrial activity until wages and labor disputes are settled. So long as wages remain at a "high" level and so long as laboring men persist in disturbing the industrial machine by strikes, so long the present uncertain conditions will continue. For in such an unsettled atmosphere investors will remain timid, securities will not have a solid foundation and the price of bonds will not advance. And in as much as timidity of investors and insecurity of investments prevent the steady flow of financial aid to industry, the wheels of industry cannot turn smoothly and continuously; besides, strikes eat into profits, and that is the most disturbing factor of all.

The capitalist, accordingly, blames the stagnant condition of industry to the hard-headedness of the worker. For if he would only quietly consent to a cut in wages to a level which the capitalist considers would make business investments safe, and if he would only throw all his cares on the capitalist and rest confident that the latter would soon bring about the rosy dawn of normal conditions, the white streaks of which are already seen in the eastern sky, industry would again be on a normal footing in a short time! In such a temper capitalists consider a demand for higher wages with cynical refusal. Why should the commodity that the worker sells rise in price when that of all other commodities is falling. In keeping with this position the owners of the

Canadian Pulp Mills find it more profitable to close down their plants than to grant a 15 per cent. increase in wages. They argue that wage reduction is the order of the day, the steel mill workers having already consented to a 20 percent. cut, and the American Railway Board has decreed a reduction in the wages of railway employees. The labor organizations, in spite of their boasted skill and power in marketing the commodity in which they deal, stand baffled in the face of the operation of a simple economic law.

But though the capitalists clamor, for the time being, for sharp wage reduction, such reductions are not going to relieve the tie-up in the industrial system to any considerable extent. After every crisis radical adjustments are necessary before the industrial machine will work again. The first, and probably the most important of these is to get rid of the surplus goods that have accumulated on the market, especially as it is this surplus that originally brought on the crisis. A reduction in wages will retard rather than facilitate the consumption of these goods. It lessens the rate at which the working class can consume these goods. But unless the worker can work and draw wages he cannot consume at all, and yet by the act of producing goods he increases the plethora of commodities on the market, thus tending to lower their prices still further as the supply increases. Under this circumstance the first attention of the industrial capitalist is towards lowering the cost of production, more especially that part of the cost of production that is represented by wages. But to stop all industrial operations would be to strengthen the arm of the enemy by increasing the number and the power of the army of unemployed. The closing of the factory doors would mean the opening of the doors of the social revolution. Caught on the horns of this dilemma the capitalist chooses to cut wages, the course that seems the most promising and to labor through the ensuing industrial depression, amidst hardships and difficulties so exacting to his "patience and thrift."

Recent conflicts about wage reductions have been to decide which is to have the larger share of the fruits of industry—the capitalist or the laborer. A reduction in wages means that the profits to the capitalist class will remain approximately at their old level; a non-reduction that these profits would be reduced. For the time being the former has won out. The latter has not yet gained sufficient knowledge to resist the encroachments of the master class on the fruits of his toil. He is still willing to deny his own welfare, to submit to exploitation, to yield to the demands of the master class. Still, his yielding brings very plainly to light the fact that the effort to rise to health of capitalism can only take place at the expense of the living comforts of the working class. C. M. C.

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PLATFORM

Socialist Party of Canada

We, the Socialist Party of Canada affirm our allegiance to, and support of, the principles and programme of the revolutionary working class.

Labor, applied to natural resources, produces all wealth. The present economic system is based upon capitalist ownership of the means of production, consequently, all the products of labor belong to the capitalist class. The capitalist is, therefore, master; the worker a slave.

So long as the capitalist class remains in possession of the reins of government, all the powers of the State will be used to protect and defend its property rights in the means of wealth production and its control of the product of labor.

The capitalist system gives to the capitalist an ever-swelling stream of profits, and to the worker, an ever-increasing measure of misery and degradation.

The interest of the working class lies in setting itself free from capitalist exploitation by the abolition of the wage system, under which this exploitation, at the point of production, is cloaked. To accomplish this necessitates the transformation of capitalist property in the means of wealth production into socially controlled economic forces.

The irrepressible conflict of interest between the capitalist and the worker necessarily expresses itself as a struggle for political supremacy. This is the Class Struggle.

Therefore we call upon all workers to organize under the banner of the Socialist Party of Canada, with the object of conquering the political powers for the purpose of setting up and enforcing the economic programme of the working class, as follows:

- 1—The transformation, as rapidly as possible, of capitalist property in the means of wealth production (natural resources, factories, mills, railroads, etc.) into collective means of production.
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